

Programme Specification¹ (2026 – 27)
Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic (ASNC) Tripos

Programme title	<i>Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic Tripos</i>
Name of final award	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours)</i>
Awarding Body	<i>University of Cambridge</i>
Teaching institution	<i>University of Cambridge Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, Faculty of English</i>
PSRB/Accreditation details and date the course was last accredited	<i>None</i>
UCAS code	<i>QQ59 BA/ASNC</i>
HECoS code(s)	<i>101118 (Celtic studies), 100320 (English studies), 100309 (medieval history)</i>
ATAS code	
Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	<i>English, History, Languages and Related Studies</i>
Qualification framework level	<i>Level 6 (Honours)</i>
Date specification approved	<i>11/12/2026</i>
Linked course	

Brief overview of the course

(Please explain the purpose of the programme in a brief paragraph of no more than 5-6 sentences.)

The Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic Tripos (ASNC) involves the study of the different peoples of the British Isles, Brittany and Scandinavia in the early Middle Ages, from the fifth century to the twelfth. The course is cross-cultural, interdisciplinary, and source-based as it covers the history, languages and literatures of various peoples - Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian and Celtic - separately and in relation to each other. The ASNC Tripos enables students to develop their own interests in what is a very wide field of study, and at the

¹ 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 academic year.

same time gives them a challenging and rigorous intellectual training, which will help in many ways to prepare and equip them for whatever may lie ahead.

Educational Aims

What are the educational aims of the programme?

The course aims:

- to provide an integrated structure of teaching and learning to undergraduate students in the histories, languages, and literatures of the different peoples of Britain, Ireland and Scandinavia in the early Middle Ages.
- to attract high calibre students and to provide them with an excellent education in these areas which is informed by developments in scholarship.
- 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.
- to help students develop a wide range of intellectual abilities and skills, which will enable them to make significant contributions in their chosen careers.

Learning Outcomes - *What is a student expected to learn from the programme? These should have been included on the new course proposal when the course was first approved.*

(Please refer to the guidance on [Learning Aims and Outcomes](#) and the [Office for Students](#) sector-recognised standards for sector expectations of the graduates of higher education qualifications)

Part I

By the end of Part I, students will have:

Knowledge and Understanding:

1. 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.
2. Studied (in the case of the history papers) primary source material and know its use as evidence in relation to a variety of historical issues.
3. Showed 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.
4. Understood (in the case of the paper on Palaeography and Codicology) a manuscript culture in early medieval Britain, Ireland, and Scandinavia and show some proficiency in identifying, localising, and dating the various script-types employed.

5. Showed sufficient knowledge of the range of disciplines to pursue more specialised study subsequently.

Skills and other attributes:

6. 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 questions, written and oral exposition of complex issues, and basic research methods.

Part II

By the end of Part II, students will have:

Knowledge and Understanding:

1. Shown specialist knowledge and advanced understanding of subjects falling within the scope of the Tripos, or more widely across the field.

Skills and other attributes:

2. 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.
3. Worked autonomously, and in a disciplined manner, towards a particular goal.
4. Equipped themselves for the future, whether in further training for their chosen career or in academic research.

By the end of the programme, students will have:

5. Shown **knowledge and understanding** of the subject matter; learned and developed **practical skills**.
6. Understood 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. They will have 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. **(intellectual skills)**
7. Effectively used the printed and electronic resources of the modern academic library, and more generally have effectively used of the wide range of resources available on the Internet. Work for dissertations will necessitate familiarity with appropriate software, and the application of high standards in the presentation of written work in accordance with a specified stylesheet. The study of languages encourages the development of skills such as an understanding of grammar, which enable students to extend their knowledge of modern languages including their own. **(practical skills)**
8. Fostered communication skills 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. They will have also gained organisational skills, which proceed from the self-discipline which is 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. Finally, students will have 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 they undertake.
(transferable skills)

Programme structure

Please give a brief outline of the course structure and how it supports progress. Please note details of individual papers/modules are not needed. What elements does the programme contain? If you have a part-time route show how this is aligned with the full-time course.

The three-year ASNC tripos is divided into two main academic phases - Part I and Part II. Part I spans two years and consists of the 'Prelim to Part I' year (first year of study) and the 'Part I' year (second year of study). Students then move onto Part II (the third and final year).

Prelim Candidates

'Prelim to Part I' candidates must offer six papers chosen from a list of papers. Four of these will be examined in the Easter Term. Further informal assessments may be assigned at the discretion of individual paper convenors, for the purpose of monitoring students' progress in their other two chosen papers.

Part I Candidates

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)
- The paper on Palaeography and Codicology.

Students take six papers, or five papers plus an optional dissertation. These candidates have a wider selection of papers to choose from. They have the additional option of 'borrowing' a maximum of two papers from MMLL, English, Archaeology and Divinity.

Part II Candidates

Part II provides students with an opportunity to extend their knowledge and to develop further the intellectual abilities and skills which they have acquired in Part I. Aspects of Part I papers are pursued in greater depth 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 MMLL, English, History, Classics, and Divinity. Students take four papers and write a compulsory dissertation.

Teaching and Learning

Please indicate which methods are used, i.e., lectures, seminars, practical sessions etc. Include any activity that does not lead to summative assessment. How is the programme taught? How do students learn?

Teaching is delivered by lectures, seminars and classes, and by supervisions which include discussion and feedback on students' weekly essays. Students are always encouraged to undertake independent reading and study to consolidate their knowledge and understanding of the subject.

Formative assessment is provided in the regular seminars and language classes, and (for all students) through the supervision system, where feedback is given in oral and written form. Students receive written feedback on the Preliminary Examinations taken at the end of the first year via their Directors of Studies.

Year 1 (Part I)

Students study the various disciplines which form the core of the course.

There are no compulsory papers. Students choose six historical, language and literature subjects, from a choice of ten. Students will take an examination in four of them.

Historical subjects:

- Anglo-Saxon history
- Scandinavian history
- Gaelic history (Scotland, Ireland and the Isle of Man)
- Brittonic history (Wales, Brittany, Cornwall, the Pictish kingdoms and the North Britons)

Language and literature subjects:

- Old English
- Old Norse
- medieval Welsh
- medieval Irish
- Insular Latin
- palaeography (the study of manuscripts and handwriting)

Year 2 (Part I)

Students can continue to study their chosen subjects and take an examination in all six of them.

Or they can replace up to three of their first-year subjects with a dissertation and/or one or two papers from related undergraduate courses:

- Divinity
- English

- Modern and Medieval Languages
- Archaeology
- History

Year 3 (Part II)

This is where students develop and use skills they learned in their first and second year. They will explore their chosen fields and apply their newly acquired knowledge in original and imaginative ways.

They study four subjects selected from a range of usually seventeen or eighteen papers, which are published by the department each year. One of the four chosen papers may be from another related undergraduate course. The range of subjects currently includes:

- medieval English literature
- medieval French literature
- historical linguistics
- subject from the Faculty of Divinity
- subject from the Faculty of Classics

Students can also replace one of their third-year subjects with a Part I paper they did not take an exam in at the end of their second year.

Students will also write a dissertation between 9,000 and 12,000 words on a specific subject of their choice within the scope of the course.

Assessment

Please list below summative assessments for the course and how they meet the learning outcomes listed above. Ensure these are aligned with your course regulations ([Statutes and Ordinances](#)).

Assessment	Learning Outcome
The learning outcomes for the course are divided into Part I and Part II and are met through summative assessment, which takes place at the end of the first, second, and third years, by examinations. Students also submit a dissertation (optional in Part I, compulsory in Part II). (Part II learning outcomes 2, 3, and 4). At Part I the dissertation is to be 7,000 to 10,000 words; at Part II the dissertation is to be 9,000 to 12,000 words.	<p>Assessment will focus on the following key learning outcomes:</p> <p><u>Part I</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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. 2. Studied (in the case of the history papers) primary source material and know its use as evidence in relation to a variety of historical issues. 3. Showed a firm foundation (in the case of the language and literature

	<p>papers) for their understanding of a medieval language and for their appreciation of its literature.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Understood (in the case of the paper on Palaeography and Codicology) a manuscript culture in early medieval Britain, Ireland, and Scandinavia and show some proficiency in identifying, localising, and dating the various script-types employed. 5. Showed sufficient knowledge of the range of disciplines to pursue more specialised study subsequently. 6. 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 questions, written and oral exposition of complex issues, and basic research methods. <p><u>Part II</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shown specialist knowledge and advanced understanding of subjects falling within the scope of the Tripos, or more widely across the field. 2. 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. 3. Worked autonomously, and in a disciplined manner, towards a particular goal. 4. Equipped themselves for the future, whether in further training for their chosen career or in academic research.
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	<p><u>General</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and understanding of the subject matter. • Intellectual skills. • Practical skills. • Transferable skills.
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Progression and Career Destinations

Please describe the opportunities for the students' personal and professional development (including transferable and employability skills). Please include information relating to successful graduates' prospects for employment.

Preparation for employment is provided in the opportunities for acquisition of relevant skills outlined above. Where programmes with a significant vocational or professional element are accredited by professional or statutory bodies details are given in the programme specification.

For example, this challenging degree will develop your powers of argument and sharpen your analysis. Some transferable skills you'll develop on the course include:

- critical thinking and evaluation
- communicating effectively and presenting clear arguments
- organisation and time management
- working creatively and effectively with others
- research skills

The course equips you for a wide range of careers where intellectual and analytical skills are important.

Some of our graduates take advantage of the specialist opportunities open to them. They go on to:

- research and teaching in schools and universities (following further study)
- work in museums and libraries
- language instruction, translation, and language policy