Programme specification 2012/2013

School of Oriental and African Studies

The following information forms the programme specification at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. It gives definitive information relating to a programme of study and is written for a public audience, particularly prospective and current students. It is also used for other purposes such as initial programme approval, and is therefore produced at the start of the programme development process. Once approved, it forms the baseline information for all statements relating to the programme and is updated as approved amendments are made.

CORE INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme title</th>
<th>MA Sinology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final award</td>
<td>MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate awards</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of attendance</td>
<td>Full-time (1 year) or part-time (2 or 3 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCAS code</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional body accreditation</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date specification created/updated</td>
<td>03 March 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHY CHOOSE THIS PROGRAMME?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why study at SOAS?</th>
<th>SOAS is unique as the only higher education institution in the UK specialising in the study of Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The School also has the largest concentration of specialist faculty concerned with the study of these areas at any university in the world. SOAS is consistently ranked among the top higher education institutions in the UK and the world and it also offers a friendly, vibrant environment for students in a diverse and close-knit community.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is special about this programme?</td>
<td>This programme provides unparalleled training in research skills (Sinological Methodology) and text-reading skills (Classical or Modern Documentary Texts) necessary to pursue advanced research in the field. It also offers excellent dissertation supervision by a team of four specialists in modern language, literature and film, and three specialists in pre-modern literature and intellectual history.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Who would it suit?

Students who are planning to apply for a more advanced graduate programme (MPhil/PhD). Many graduates have gone on to pursue a doctoral degree at SOAS as well as at other universities in Europe, US, and East Asia. Other graduates have found employment in libraries, galleries, museums, government organisations such as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and a range of other agencies and industries.

### Programme structure

Students take three taught courses (one compulsory and two other courses) and write a 10,000 word dissertation. The compulsory course is Sinological Methodology. One of the two other courses must be either the Classical Documentary Texts or the Modern Documentary Texts. A third course can be chosen from a range of courses listed on the programme website.

### Assessment summary

Progress is assessed through long essays, examinations, and a dissertation. The balance between coursework assessment and final examinations is course-specific and information can be found on the respective course websites.

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**ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

SOAS has general minimum entrance requirements for registration for a postgraduate taught degree and these can be viewed at [http://www.soas.ac.uk/admissions/pg/howtoapply/](http://www.soas.ac.uk/admissions/pg/howtoapply/)

Students are expected to have a degree of at least upper-second class level or equivalent and to have proved to our satisfaction that they have a competence in Chinese equivalent to at least the level reached by the end of SOAS a third-year BA Chinese course.

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**PROGRAMME AIMS**

What will this programme give the student an opportunity to achieve?

- To provide training in advanced Chinese literature and documentary sources for those who already have a good knowledge of Chinese (both classical and modern), in preparation for a subsequent degree by research.
- To foster the skills of independent thought and study required for more advanced graduate work.
PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES
What will the student learn?

Knowledge
1. To enhance practical skills and understanding of the basic literature and documentary sources which permit research in the broad field of Sinology. Research aids such as research guides, dictionaries, bibliographies, library catalogues, commentaries, concordances and digital sources are explored and studied, and skills in locating materials, dating texts, tracing pseudonyms, identifying and comparing official titles and responsibilities, and understanding the political, legal and social structures and their development through time will be fostered.

2. To obtain an understanding of the wealth of Chinese documentary sources, and to study representative genres in the classical corpus. Understanding of the content and research value of documents is stressed rather than their merit as literature. Different calligraphic scripts are introduced, and selections from the classics, diaries, gazetteers, legal texts, anecdotal writings, collected works, critical writings and other texts are read. Data and evidence are assessed critically, and problems of conflicting sources and interpretations are discussed.

3. To enhance students’ Chinese reading skills and take them beyond the level of word-for-word translation which typifies undergraduate reading courses; to increase students’ modern Chinese reading speed to an average of thirty pages per week; to introduce twentieth-century articles in Chinese which have had a major influence on Chinese history, society or culture; to familiarise students with secondary sources (scholarly articles and reference texts) in modern Chinese.

Intellectual (thinking) skills
1. Students will learn to be precise and cautious in their assessment of evidence, and to understand through practice what documents can and cannot tell us.

2. Students will develop an awareness of the interconnectedness of different texts and to develop a broader view when considering problems and to come up with a balanced opinion through utilizing a combination of different sources.

3. Students will learn to appreciate different viewpoints of a problem through critical writings.

4. Students will learn to question interpretations, however authoritative, and reassess evidence for themselves.

Subject-based practical skills
The programme aims to help students with the following:
1. To improve their knowledge and usage of basic reference sources.

2. To gain an understanding of the research methods of sinologists.

3. To improve their reading ability of various styles of classical and modern Chinese.

4. To practise research techniques in specialised SOAS research library.

5. To improve their awareness of the content and research value of documents, and their knowledge of Chinese literature and culture.
Transferable skills
The programme will encourage students to:
1. Write good essays and dissertations.
2. Structure and communicate ideas effectively both orally and in writing.
3. Understand unconventional ideas.
4. Study a variety of written and digital materials that they will not have been exposed to as undergraduates.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS FOR GAINING AN AWARD

Structure, duration and requirements for gaining an award
SOAS has standard requirements relating to the structure and duration of taught postgraduate programmes and for the award and classification of these programmes. Details can be found at http://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/degereeregulations/file60379.pdf

Programme structure diagram
Students taking the course part-time over 2 years tend to take 2 units in their first year and the remaining unit and the dissertation in their second year. Students taking the course part-time over 3 years tend to take one course unit per year. Below is a structure diagram for this programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Year of study</th>
<th>Course code</th>
<th>Course title</th>
<th>Credit</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>15PEAC005</td>
<td>Sinological Methodology</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Compulsory core course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>15PEAC006</td>
<td>Classical Documentary Texts</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Option 1</td>
<td>Students must take either this course or “Modern Documentary Texts”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>15PEAC007</td>
<td>Modern Documentary Texts</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Option 1</td>
<td>Students must take this course or “Classical Documentary Texts”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>15PCHC999</td>
<td>Dissertation in the Languages and Cultures of China and Inner Asia</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Compulsory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td>One full-unit course or two half-unit courses</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Option 2</td>
<td>Students can choose from a wide range of courses from the list below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The availability of optional/elective courses may vary in a given academic session due to factors such as staff absence and student numbers. For an up to date list of
courses running in a given academic session please refer to the degree structures as listed on the SOAS website for the degree programmes taught by each Department.

List of optional courses (option 2)
Students should note that not all courses are offered every year.

- Art and Archaeology of the Silk Road
- Ancient Chinese Civilisation
- Chinese Art History: Critical Writing
- Practical Translation: Chinese to English (half-unit, term 1)
- Practical Translation: English into Chinese (half-unit, term 2)
- Modern Chinese Literature
- Traditional Chinese Literature in Translation
- Modern Chinese Film and Theatre (half-unit, term 1)
- Modern Chinese Literature in Translation
- Modern Film from Taiwan and the Chinese Diaspora (half-unit, term 2)
- Knowledge and Power in Early China (half-unit)
- Chinese Religious Texts: A Reading Seminar (half-unit, term 2)

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT
What methods will be used to achieve the learning outcomes?

Knowledge
- Acquisition of 1 through seminars and classes in the Sinological Methodology course. This is the compulsory course, and students are required to attend all classes, study extensively on their own and prepare non-assessed work regularly.
- Acquisition of 2 through seminars and classes in the Classical Documentary Texts course. Students will be expected to prepare annotated translations for class discussion weekly.
- Acquisition of 3 through seminars and classes in the Modern Documentary Texts course. Oral presentations by students on the articles will be discussed.
- Assessment through long essays, examinations, and a dissertation.

Intellectual (thinking) skills
- Acquisition of 1 to 4 is fostered in all courses offered in the programme through reading, discussion and writing.
- Assessment through long essays, examinations, and a dissertation.

Subject-based practical skills
- Acquisition of 1 in all three courses through coursework, and through dissertation.
- Acquisition of 2 in the Sinological Methodology course through reading assignments and reports.
- Acquisition of 3 in all three courses through regular assignments and class discussion.
- Acquisition of 4 in all three courses through assignments.
- Acquisition of 5 in all three courses through assignments and class discussion.
- Assessment through long essays, examinations, and a dissertation.

Transferable skills
- Acquisition of 1 through coursework, long essays and dissertation.
- Acquisition of 2 through seminar presentations, discussions and essays.
- Acquisition of 3 through seminar discussions.
- Acquisition of 4 through coursework, long essays, and dissertation.
- Assessment through long essays, examinations, and a dissertation.

REFERENCE POINTS
What has been the basis for the design of this programme?
1. School Learning and Teaching Strategy
2. Staff research
3. QAA framework for higher education qualifications

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT
SOAS has internal procedures to assure the quality of provision to be offered to students and to enhance the quality in the light of experience following delivery, taking into account the input of external experts and students. The procedures are set out in the School’s Quality Assurance Handbook and can be viewed at http://www.soas.ac.uk/add/qualityassurance/quality-assurance-handbook/.

SOAS is also subject to periodic external review from bodies such as the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and relevant professional and statutory regulatory bodies.

The procedures described in the Quality Assurance Handbook are in place to provide a high quality student experience for those choosing to study at SOAS, and student input and evaluation of their experiences is greatly valued. Students make an input to the ongoing development of their programmes, and the environment in which they operate, in a number of ways, including:
- formal student evaluation as part of the annual programme review;
- student representation on School committees at various levels (through the Students’ Union) where many relevant issues are discussed.

FURTHER INFORMATION
Add in links to other relevant information, both internal and external, including:
- SOAS Vision and Strategy Statement;
- Postgraduate Handbook;
- Quality Assurance Handbook;
- UCAS website;
- QAA website.