

Programme specification

SOAS, University of London

The following information forms the programme specification at SOAS, 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 base-line information for all statements relating to the programme and is updated as approved amendments are made.

CORE INFORMATION

Programme title	MRes in Law
Final award	MRes in Law
Intermediate awards	
Mode of attendance	Full-Time/Part-time
UCAS code	<i>N/A if Postgraduate</i>
Professional body accreditation	n/a
Date specification created/updated	2018/2021

WHY CHOOSE THIS PROGRAMME?

(This information will be used for marketing purposes as summary information about the programme for prospective students. It should be written accordingly, using brief, headline statements and bullet points. The first section is standard text for all programme specifications and should therefore not be amended: subsequent sections should be completed by individual authors.)

Why study at SOAS?	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.
What is special about this programme?	The SOAS MRes in Law is a unique qualification that brings together in-depth training in research and research methods focused on the research done in the School of Law. This is combined with other courses that are specific to SOAS and often not available anywhere else.
Who would it suit?	The degree has been developed to meet the needs of both researchers and practitioners. The programme is thus ideally suited to prepare for a PhD in Law at SOAS, or alternatively as a stand-alone

	qualification, for instance, for jobs requiring in-depth policy research.
Programme structure	This course includes a total of 180 CATS points. 30 CATS points in Research Methods in Law 15 CATS points in Research Methods in Management 15 CATS points from any PGT Law module 30 CATS points drawn from any PGT course options in Law OR any language offered by SOAS 90 CATS points for MRes dissertation
Assessment summary	A diverse mixture of teaching and learning methods will be used on this programme: - The methods course is taught through a combination of traditional lecture and seminar format (assessed 100% via coursework) - The two methods courses in law and research methods are taught courses assessed in the case of in foundations of comparative law through 100% coursework and in the case of research design and epistemology 50% by coursework and 50% through a 2-hour exam. - The option chosen from existing PGT courses or language will be assessed in the way other students are assessed for this course - The dissertation is based on students' independent work but supported by a series of group lectures and individual supervisory meetings

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

(The initial statement below is standard text regarding the School's general entrance requirements and should not be amended. There is then the opportunity for authors to add any requirements/arrangements specific to the programme.)

SOAS has general minimum entrance requirements for registration for an undergraduate degree and these can be viewed at (<http://www.soas.ac.uk/admissions/ug/entryreq/>)

(Authors to add any additional requirements specific to the programme. Authors should also insert any relevant information regarding admission processes e.g. interview.)

The qualification for entry is normally a first or upper-second class honours degree (or equivalent) in law or the social sciences, and preferably a demonstrable interest in research and research methods. Work and other experience may be taken into account. Students whose first degree is not law will be required to take the Preliminary Law, Legal Reasoning and Legal Methods course (15PLAC162).

PROGRAMME AIMS

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

(Programme aims are broad statements of intent which should reflect the School's purpose in offering the programme of study. They are overall, synoptic statements which should be presented as bullet points (there should not normally be more than three or four of them). They should be written in language which is accessible to a lay audience (the use of jargon should be avoided, and any acronyms should be explained).)

This master's programme allows students to combine the study of law with advanced methodological training in law, research methods and the option of an African/Asian/Middle Eastern language.

The programme is designed to prepare students for further research, particularly PhD research, in law with an area specialism.

PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

What will the student learn?

(Learning outcomes are statements of what a student is expected to know/understand/do by the end of the programme. They are set at a level appropriate to the award, and authors might find it helpful to refer to the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications

(<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/Quality-Code-Chapter-A1.pdf>) for further information on levels of awards. Learning outcomes are related to teaching, learning and assessment methods described later in the programme specification, and to the curriculum, but are expressed as general statements of learning under four headings:

Knowledge: normally subject-based, describing the factual/conceptual base of the field of study and the level of complexity to be achieved.

Intellectual (thinking) skills: might encompass independent research, analysis, synthesis, evaluation of concepts, problem solving, interpretation of statistical data, critical literature review, resource discovery (electronic and print) etc.

Subject-based practical skills: these will be discipline specific, for example performance skills, design and creative skills, IT skills for data processing etc.

Transferable skills: broader skills for life, which might include problem solving, oral and written communication, accessing and exploitation of electronic information resources, teamwork or other skills particularly relevant to specific subsequent employment.

Again, bullet points should be used and three or four learning outcomes in each section would be appropriate. Please keep in mind the student audience and use language which is fit for purpose. It is also helpful to focus on aspects which might make the programme distinctive or even unique. Where a programme has a number of pathways, it is useful to identify any learning outcomes that are specific to each pathway.)

On successful completion of this programme a student will be expected to be able to:

Knowledge

- be familiar with legal approaches to research and have the ability to apply these to their own research;
- have an understanding of the philosophical, ethical and political issues at the heart of legal research, as well as a conception of some possible solutions to such problems;
- comprehend and critique a range of theoretical and empirical literature;

Intellectual (thinking) skills

- plan and execute an appropriate research design;
- understand and utilise appropriate research methods;

- be able to perform qualitative analyses in a variety of settings in an intelligent and thoughtful manner;

Subject-based practical skills

- be able to interpret and critique published research;

Transferable skills

- be aware of a wide range of research resources available to law researchers;
 - be able to write up and present the findings of legal analysis.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS FOR GAINING AN AWARD

How will the student’s study be structured? How will they achieve an award?

(The initial statement below is standard text regarding SOAS requirements relating to the structure and duration of programmes and requirements for gaining an award and should not be amended. Individual authors should then complete the programme structure diagram with information relevant to this programme.)

Structure, duration and requirements for gaining an award

SOAS has standard requirements relating to the structure and duration of undergraduate programmes and for the award and classification of these programmes.

Details can be found at <http://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/degreeregulations/>

Programme structure diagram

Below is a structure diagram for this programme.

(To be completed by individuals completing the template. It is intended that the structure grid should provide a clear picture of the course units to be taken as the student progresses through the programme. The “status” column should indicate whether the course is “core”, “compulsory” etc. The final column provides an opportunity for authors to add any further relevant information which might relate to options, prerequisites, pathways etc.)

Level	Year of study	Course code	Course title	Credit	Status	Notes
Postgraduate	1	15PLAC181	Research Methods in Law	30	Existing	
Postgraduate	1	15PFMC062	Research Methods in Management	15	existing	
Postgraduate	1	Any PGT law	PGT law courses	30	existing	
Postgraduate	1	Any PGT law OR Language option	PGT law courses or language courses	30	existing	
Postgraduate	1	15PLAD179	MRes in Law Dissertation	90	Existing	

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.

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

What methods will be used to achieve the learning outcomes?

(Provide details of the teaching, learning and assessment methods to be used, cross-referenced to the learning outcomes given above (listing under the same four headings might be helpful). Audience awareness is again important in relation to language used. The following examples might provide general guidance:

Knowledge: *subject knowledge is often developed through lectures and seminars, supplemented by directed study of texts/journal articles and by assignment or project work. Assessment is generally through unseen written examinations, but most assessment methods will require some demonstration of subject knowledge and understanding.*

Intellectual (thinking) skills: *skills such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation and application are often practised and demonstrated through active learning processes involving assignments or projects, and group learning activities (seminars/tutorials, workshops, fieldtrips etc). Assessment might utilise written examinations or problem-based exercises. Independent project work or research dissertations might be used to demonstrate subject-specific intellectual skills.*

Subject-based practical skills: *this will vary from discipline to discipline, but will generally require development through opportunities to practise the activity in an appropriate learning context (for example in a laboratory, studio or work placement). Workbooks/practice manuals might also be provided. Assessment of competence in exercising a practical skill must involve demonstration of it.*

Transferable skills: *skills that are readily transferable to employment and related contexts such as communication, teamwork etc can be developed through naturally arising opportunities within the curriculum or through work placements. Written communication will be enhanced through essay/dissertation writing or writing up projects. Oral communication can be developed in presentations and group work. Team working skills may be demonstrated and assessed through collaborative projects.)*

Knowledge

- familiarity with legal approaches to research will be developed through lectures, seminar discussions, compulsory reading assignments, and the dissertation;
- an understanding of the philosophical, ethical and political issues at the heart of law research (as well as possible solutions to such problems) will also be developed through lectures, seminar discussions, compulsory reading assignments, and the dissertation;
- critical comprehension of theoretical and empirical literature will be encouraged through substantive courses, compulsory reading assignments, lectures, and seminars;

Intellectual (thinking) skills

- planning and execution of an appropriate research design will be developed through independent projects, essays, and the dissertation;
- understanding and utilization of appropriate research methods will be encouraged through independent projects (e.g. essays), oral presentations, and the dissertation;

Subject-based practical skills

- the interpretation and critique of published research will be encouraged via compulsory reading assignments, synthetic/critical lectures, and regular seminar discussions, as well as long essays and the dissertation;

Transferable skills

- an awareness of research resources available to social scientists will be provided via
1) the provision of detailed reading lists, which include, where appropriate, reference to on-line materials and 2) compulsory reading assignments which familiarize students with secondary sources;
- an ability to write up and present the findings of analysis will be encouraged via long essays, coursework, exams, and the dissertation.

REFERENCE POINTS

What has been the basis for the design of this programme?

(Include reference points to demonstrate that what students will achieve has currency in academic, professional or employer communities. These might include:

- *institutional mission statements and any institutional policies on the development of general skills in fields such as communication, information technology, team working and career management;*
- *subject benchmark statements;*
- *current research or other advanced scholarship carried out by academic staff;*
- *requirements of professional and statutory regulatory bodies;*
- *occupational standards in fields where these are relevant;*
- *qualification descriptors used in the national qualifications framework;*
- *relevant European or international reference points.)*

1. UCL Bloomsbury and East London DTP programme
2. School learning and teaching strategy
3. QAA framework for higher education qualifications

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

(The following text is standard information common to all programme specifications and should not be amended by individuals completing the template except where indicated.)

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;
- *Authors to add any further methods which are particularly relevant to this programme.*

FURTHER INFORMATION

(The following text is standard information common to all programme specifications and should not be amended by individuals completing the template except where indicated.)

Add in links to other relevant information, both internal and external, including:

- [SOAS Vision and Strategy Statement](#);
- [Undergraduate](#) and [Postgraduate](#) Handbooks;
- *Departmental handbooks*;
- [Quality Assurance Handbook](#);
- *Separate regs link*;
- [UCAS website](#);
- [QAA website](#);
- *Authors to add any further links which are particularly relevant to this programme.*