

## 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	BA Persian (4 years)
Final award	BA Honours
Intermediate awards	Certificate in Persian Studies (After 1 year)
Mode of attendance	Full-time
UCAS code	T660 BA/P
Professional body accreditation	N/A
Date specification created/updated	April 2016 (updated)

#### WHY CHOOSE THIS PROGRAMME?

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 four-year single subject Persian degree programme at SOAS not only offers the students the opportunity to study the Persian language in-depth and intensively but also to focus on the literature and culture of a vast geographic area extending beyond the borders of modern Iran and into Central Asia and the Caucuses. SOAS is one of only a handful of British universities that offers the comprehensive study of modern and classical Persian language and literature at full degree level. Furthermore, the introduction of the year abroad in Iran will enable the students to become fluent in the formal and learned as well as the modern Persian vernacular, and to become linguistically equipped for a deeper study of the subject when they return to SOAS. The presence of expertise in Iranian studies related disciplines at almost every

	<p>other academic department at SOAS, as well as a vibrant an active Centre for Iranian Studies further enhances this programme.</p>
<p>Who would it suit?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anyone who is interested in studying one of the oldest languages of the world, both in its modern usage in Iran, Afghanistan and parts of Central Asia, and as the lingua franca of the Mughal empire until the conquest of South Asia by Britain.</li> <li>• Anyone who relishes the academic challenge of learning a new Indo-European language, with a non-roman script, that speakers of modern European languages find comparatively easier to learn than say a Semitic or Sinitic language.</li> <li>• Anyone who wishes to learn about the sphere of Persian literary influence as well as the second language of Islam and spread of the faith and its manifestations in the Indian subcontinent.</li> <li>• Anyone who wishes to proceed to postgraduate studies in the fields of study of Shi'ite Islam, Persian and Islamic art, miniature paintings, gardens of paradise, Sufi tradition of poetic literature and film and media studies.</li> <li>• The programme is an excellent base from which to proceed to postgraduate study. Recent graduates of Persian have found employment in the UK, Europe and the Middle East, working in the print, digital and broadcast media, publishing, finance and commerce with multinational corporations, NGOs and global charitable organizations, libraries, law, film and journalism, galleries, museums and teaching. Many have gone on to complete postgraduate studies and have commenced their academic careers.</li> </ul>
<p>Programme structure:</p>	<p>BA Persian as a 4-year degree gives students the opportunity to study the language of Iran and a wider Persian speaking world from <i>ab initio</i> to advanced levels in four years and to develop an informed understanding of the literary traditions of the Persianate world, enhanced by taking Iran related modules as open options from various disciplines offered at SOAS such as History of Art and Archaeology, Religions and Philosophies, History, Politics, and more.</p> <p>In Year 1, students begin the intensive study of modern Persian language (known to native, Iranian speakers as Farsi) as well as a course that surveys the Literature of the Near &amp; Middle East. Depending on their interest</p>

	<p>the students choose one further module related to the study of Iran or the Middle East offered by other departments. (Lists B &amp; C programme website).</p> <p>Year 2 will be spent in Iran under the compulsory Year Abroad Programme, currently in partnership with the Ferdowsi University, Mashhad, where they will continue to study Persian intensively, as well as taking advantage of the many comparative literature and art history courses open to them. (Full name of the institute: Ferdowsi Centre for Teaching Persian to Non-Persian Speakers, Ferdowsi University, Mashhad (<a href="http://ctpl.um.ac.ir/index.php/en/">http://ctpl.um.ac.ir/index.php/en/</a>))</p> <p>In Year 3, back at SOAS, students will take the compulsory advanced Persian language module and a literature course such as classical poetry or prose, Nation and Nationalism in Middle Eastern Fiction, and either a module related to Iranian or Persian studies, or an open option.</p> <p>In Year 4 students continue to consolidate their Persian proficiency by taking the Translation into and from Persian module, a literature module such as Modern Persian Poetry or Modern Persian Prose, and an Independent Study Project in Persian. They may select another Persian language use option or a further module from the range of options that would complement their academic profile or narrows their focus on a particular area of Iranian studies.</p>
Assessment summary	<p>Assessment for language modules typically involves a 20/20/30/30 or 20/20/60 balance between mid-term tests during the year, and written and oral end of year exams.</p> <p>Assessment for literature and other language use modules typically varies between a 40/60 or 20/80 balance of coursework and final written exams.</p> <p>Courses such as Literatures of the Middle East and Nation and Nationalism are assessed by 100% coursework essays.</p>

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

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/>)

- **A Levels:** AAB - ABB
- A Level language preferred
- **IB:** 35 (6/6/5)

- **BTEC:** DDM
- **Access to HE:** Minimum of 30 Level 3 Credits at Distinction
- **Scottish Highers:** AAABB
- **Scottish Advanced Highers:** AAB
- **Irish LC:** 340 points from 5 Higher level subjects at grade C1 or above
- **Advanced Placement:** 4 4 5 (Two semesters - UCAS Group A) plus US HSGD with GPA 3.0
- **Euro Bacc:** 80%
- **French Bacc:** 14/20
- **German Abitur:** 2.0
- **Italy DES:** 80/100
- **Austria Mat:** 2.0
- **Polish Mat:** Overall 75% including 3 extended level subjects

**Subjects Preferred:** A good pass in a foreign-language A-level, or equivalent, is desirable but not essential

**Interview Policy:** Candidates with "non-standard" qualifications may be invited for interview

### **PROGRAMME AIMS**

- To give students a solid proficiency in modern Persian language and equip them to exercise the four language skills of writing, reading, listening and speaking at an advanced level of competence.
- To familiarise students with the major styles of modern and classical Persian literature and a broad knowledge of the historical, political, religious and cultural background.
- To develop the skill of independent thinking and writing, drawing on an informed and practical knowledge of cultural, historical, literary and linguistic aspects of Iran, and a sensitive understanding of the complexities of the wider Persian culture in the past and the present.
- To prepare the student for working in Persian speaking societies or in a context with Persian, Central Asian and/or Middle Eastern connections.

### **PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES**

#### **Knowledge**

- Advanced Knowledge of written and spoken Persian Language
- A coherent, in-depth and detailed knowledge of Persian literature and culture in its historical and contemporary context.
- Intercultural awareness and understanding
- Key methods and concepts of linguistic, literary and cultural analysis

#### **Intellectual (thinking) skills**

- Ability to identify, describe and analyse problems and devise and sustain appropriate strategies for their resolution
- Communicate information, ideas and arguments cogently and coherently both orally and in writing with due regard for the target audience
- oral and written application of linguistic and literary concepts and methods of inquiry
- Gather, process and evaluate information, critically and from a non-Eurocentric perspective

- ability to structure and manage independent learning and to make use of scholarly and other primary sources related to Iran, Persian and the wider Persianate world
- appreciate the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge

#### **Subject-based practical skills**

- Gather, sift, process and evaluate information from a variety of print, audio-visual and electronic sources
- Communicate orally and in writing in Persian, fluently, effectively and appropriately with grammatical accuracy and idiomatic knowledge with native and other competent speakers
- Read and understand modern Persian to an advanced level of proficiency
- contextualize and comment satisfactorily on Persian texts from a variety of sources from medieval to modern print and digital media
- Demonstrate a good level of knowledge and understanding of the structures, registers and varieties of Persian
- Demonstrate a broad knowledge and, using appropriate methodologies, a critical understanding of the culture, politics, history, religion and society of Iran and other Persian speaking countries
- Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge and useful understanding of the linguistic principles required to analyse Persian
- Plan, undertake and produce a bibliographically based piece of research on a topic within the broader spectrum of Persian language, literature or culture if the option of an ISP is selected
- Adapt to diverse situations, customs and traditions by living and studying in Iran

#### **Transferable skills**

The programme will encourage and equip students to:

- Gather, process and evaluate information efficiently from a variety of paper, audio-visual and digital sources
- Structure and communicate ideas effectively and with clarity, both orally and in writing
- Use IT effectively both as a means of communication and as an aid to learning
- Manage time and work to deadlines
- Work independently
- Be self-reliant, confident and make judgments on complex issues
- Assess the relevance and importance of others' ideas and develop an understanding of relativity of cultures and traditional attitudes
- Participate constructively in groups

### **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 undergraduate programmes and for the award and classification of these programmes.

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

Students take the equivalent of 4 module units in each year of their study at SOAS. In years 3 and 4 one module may be selected as an open option module.

### Programme structure diagram

Below is a structure diagram for this programme.

Level	Year of study	Module code	Module title	Credit	Status	Notes
5	1	155901242	Intensive Persian Language previously <u>Persian Language 1</u>	60	core	Students with any prior knowledge of Persian should contact convenor
4	1	155900991	<u>Literatures of the Near and Middle East</u>	30	compulsory	
4	1		A module from list B or C OR Another module at an approved level	30	optional	
5	2	<b>Language Year Abroad in Iran (Compulsory)</b> Students will spend their Year Abroad at Ferdowsi University in Mashhad.				
6	3	155900802	Advanced Persian Language- previously <u>Persian Language 3</u>	30	core	
5	3	155901372  155900334	<u>Classical Persian Poetry</u>  <b>OR</b> <u>Classical Persian Prose Texts</u>	30	compulsory	Choice may be determined by rotation. Contact programme
5	3	155901380	<u>Nation and Nationalism in Middle Eastern fiction (in Translation)</u>	30	compulsory	Students will be asked to read the course material related to Persian fiction in the original Persian language.
			A module at an approved level from list B or C, or an approved other module	30	optional	
6	4		Practical Translation from and into Persian	30	core	
6	4	155901184	<u>Independent Study Project in Persian Studies</u>	30	compulsory	
6	4	155900336	<u>Modern Persian Prose Literature</u>	30	compulsory	Choice may be determined by rotation.

		155901379	<b>OR</b> <u>Modern Persian Poetry</u>			Contact programme convenors.
6	4		A module at an approved level from list B or C, or an approved other module	30	optional	

*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 A. List of Persian-language modules**

- Intensive Persian Language - 155901242 (2 Unit) - Full Year
- Intermediate Persian Language - 155900801 (1 Unit) - Full Year, available 2016-17 only
- Advanced Persian Language - 155900802 (1 Unit) - Full Year
- Classical Persian Poetry - 155901372 (1 Unit) - Full Year
- Modern Persian Poetry - 155901379 (1 Unit) - Full Year
- Classical Persian Prose Texts - 155900334 (1 Unit) - Full Year
- Modern Persian Prose Literature - 155900336 (1 Unit) - Full Year –
- Independent Study Project in Persian Studies - 155901184 (1 Unit) - Full Year

### **List B. Approved options in the NME department subject to availability. Always check with the programme convenor.**

Please note that some of these modules will be subject to pre-requisites.

- Introduction to Arabic Culture - 155901205 (1 Unit) - Full Year
- The Muslim World: Unity in Diversity
- Introduction to Sufism - 155901375 (1 Unit) - Full Year
- Nation and Nationalism in Middle Eastern fiction (in Translation
- Introduction to Israeli Culture
- Islamic Intellectual Tradition
- Cinemas of the Middle East and North Africa 1 - 155905000 (0.5 Unit) - Term 1
- Cinemas of the Middle East and North Africa 2 - 155905001 (0.5 Unit) - Term 2
- Middle Persian - 158000183 (1 Unit)
- Elementary Written Turkish - 155901051 (1 Unit) - Full Year
- Arabic 100 - 155901202 (1 Unit) - Full Year
- Arabic 200 - 155901203 (1 Unit) - Full Year
- Arabic 300 - 155901204 (1 Unit) - Full Year
- Modern Hebrew Language: Elementary- 155901407 (1 unit)- Full Year

### **List C. Other Persian and Middle East-related modules**

These are taught by the Departments of History, Study of Religions, Art and Archaeology, Music, Law, Politics and International Studies, and Economics. Before

selecting a module, student's must first check that the module is at the correct level. They must also ensure that they meet any pre-requisites.

- H130 Introduction to the History of the Near and Middle East - 154800230 (1 Unit) - Full Year
- H248 The Making of the Modern Middle East - 154800227 (1 Unit) - Full Year
- H246 Cities of Paradise and Empire - 154800211 (1 Unit) - Full Year
- H247 Medieval Iran: Nomads, Settlers and Dynasts
- H434 The Mongols and the Islamic World (II)
  
- Islam and the West
- Islam: Foundations - 158000189 (0.5 Unit)
- Zoroastrianism: Foundation - 158000187 (0.5 Unit)
- Mysticism in the Great Traditions - 158000022 (1 Unit) - Full Year
- Developments in Muslim Religious Thought - 158000188 (0.5 Unit) - Term 2
- Messianic Movements in Muslim History - 158000149 (0.5 Unit) - Term 1
- Minority Religions in the Contemporary Middle East - 158000163 (0.5 Unit)
- Zoroastrianism in the Ancient and Modern Worlds - 158000029 (1 Unit) - Full Year - Shi'a Islam: Religious Authority and Community Identity - 158000147 (1 Unit) - Full Year
  
- Perspectives and Themes: Art and Archaeology of the Near and Middle East - 154900101 (0.5 Unit) - Term 2
- Art and Material Culture of the Islamic World: 7th to 14th Centuries - 154900138 (1 Unit) - Full Year
- Mosaics, Manuscripts, and Wall Painting in Islamic Art - 154900134 (1 Unit) - Full Year
- House and Tomb in the Muslim World
- Islamic Art and Architecture of Medieval Iran and Central Asia (10th-13th centuries)
- Mosque and Palace in the Muslim World
  
- Islamic law - 155200037 (1 Unit) - Full Year
- Government and politics of the Middle East - 153400060 (1 Unit) - Full Year
- International Relations of the Middle East
- Economic development of the modern Middle East - 153400031 (1 Unit) - Full Year

## TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

### Knowledge

- Competence in reading, writing, oral and aural skills in Persian will be achieved through a progression of language acquisition and language use modules taught in classrooms and supported by bespoke virtual resources, assessed by formative and summative evaluation throughout the degree. Classes with native speaking instructors and the year abroad especially underpin linguistic acquisition from beginner to advanced levels.
- A broad knowledge and understanding of literature and culture developed through reading, translation, formalised discussion and presentations as well as analysis and interpretation of literary genres and directed readings and essays.

- The Year Abroad in Iran will provide total immersion in the modern language and culture and will shape intercultural awareness and understanding
- Assessments will take the form of mid-term and final written and oral examinations, assessed coursework, regular homework, role-play, pair and group activities, essays

#### **Intellectual (thinking) skills**

- Intellectual skills are developed through the teaching and learning programme outlined above. Each course, whatever the format of teaching, involves discussion of key issues, practice in applying concepts both orally and in writing, analysis and interpretation of material, and feedback on work submitted.
- The ability to identify, analyse and resolve issues, and the appreciation of uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge, are developed through readings and preparations for lectures and through classroom activities and discussions as well as essay writing.
- Guided readings, classroom discussions and essays and exams are the primary way for students to demonstrate their ability to gather and synthesize information. Preparation for literature and non language use modules and tutorial discussions provide a progressive introduction to the skills necessary to do this.
- The ability to structure and manage independent learning, as well as best use of primary and research articles on Iran or Persian will be developed by encouraging and guiding students to choose their own topics for coursework essays in years 3 and 4 and for their Independent Study Project.

#### **Subject-based practical skills**

- The ability to learn, comprehend, and communicate in Persian, orally, aurally and in writing, will be fostered in the language modules and the Year Abroad, and where appropriate supplemented by course packs.
- The ability to gather and analyse linguistic and cultural data is through regular attendance at language classes, use of Audio Visual material provided and accompanying the course, computer assisted learning, classroom discussions and independent study through weekly homework, directed readings and essay writing.
- All learners receive initial guidance on how to identify, locate and use material available in libraries and elsewhere. Comprehensive bibliographies and reading lists are provided for each course at the outset, as are guidelines for the research and production of coursework essays and extended essays. Facilities such as Virtual Learning Environment dedicated to specific courses also enhance practical skills.
- Linguistic, literary and historical concepts are introduced and discussed during the course of classroom instruction.
- Language use skills are assessed in regular formative tests, and written and oral examinations at the end of the academic year. Research, analysis and literary or cultural comprehension are primarily assessed through coursework, especially written essays, and through the Independent Study Project in the final year.

#### **Transferable skills**

- All courses require regular written work, usually in the form of essays, and regular feedback on this is given to the learner to develop not only understanding but also research techniques and powers of concise and clear expression.
- Time management and adherence to deadlines, as well as working independently are skills that are acquired progressively through essay writing and Independent Study Project, and where relevant scholarship and travel grant application deadlines.
- Understanding the relevance and importance of other cultures and ideas is developed through classroom discussion and the Year Abroad, which will also strengthen the benefits of constructive participation in group activities.
- The use of Virtual and Digital Learning resources, encouragement to use Persian word-processing for homework and other communication as they progress through the degree and retrieval of information and data from printed and on-line material will reinforce the effective use of I.T.
- Where appropriate the students are encouraged to conduct interviews and carry out field research for their Independent Study Project in the final year which will further aid their ability to structure their studies, assess the validity of arguments and to be receptive to others' ideas.

#### **REFERENCE POINTS**

- School learning and teaching strategy
- Staff research and teaching experience
- Student and Visiting Examiner's feedback
- Review of BA Programmes in Persian Studies in other UK universities
- QAA framework for higher education qualifications
- QAA subject benchmark statement Languages and related studies (2007)

#### **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;

- *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 website: [www.soas.ac.uk/nme](http://www.soas.ac.uk/nme)
- [Quality Assurance Handbook](#);
- [UCAS website](#);
- [QAA website](#);