



## Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an award from

The University of Sheffield

1	<b>Programme Title</b>	Human Osteology and Funerary Archaeology
2	<b>Programme Code</b>	AAPT112 / BIST10
3	<b>JACS Code</b>	F420
4	<b>Level of Study</b>	Postgraduate
5a	<b>Final Qualification</b>	Master of Science (MSc)
5b	<b>QAA FHEQ Level</b>	Masters
6	<b>Intermediate Qualification</b>	Postgraduate Diploma (PG Dip)
7	<b>Teaching Institution (if not Sheffield)</b>	Not applicable
8	<b>Faculty</b>	Arts and Humanities
9	<b>Department</b>	School of Biosciences
10	<b>Other Departments involved in teaching the programme</b>	History
11	<b>Mode of Attendance</b>	Full-time
12	<b>Duration of the Programme</b>	1 year
13	<b>Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body</b>	Not applicable
14	<b>Date of production/revision</b>	August 2023

### 15. Background to the programme and subject area

Archaeology is the study of the past through material culture – the objects, monuments, landscapes, texts etc. that human beings have created in the course of the last five million years. The study of Archaeology provides students with a unique insight into humanity's place in history and in nature, with an appreciation of human creativity, and with an awareness of the diversity and difference of human populations in the past. In this way a degree in Archaeology contributes to the forging of the knowledgeable and tolerant citizen of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In addition, it constitutes one of the principal bases on which the burgeoning 'heritage industry' is constructed, and so contributes to the economic well-being not only of its graduates but also of the country as a whole.

The University of Sheffield is an acknowledged centre of excellence for teaching and archaeological research, whose staff have a strong international reputation and are involved in a wide range of research projects. Staff bridge the divide between the sciences and humanities, thus offering students the opportunity to integrate the two approaches in research-led teaching and learning.

Master's programmes at Sheffield deliver advanced research training covering a range of humanities and science-based enquiry in archaeology. Students will develop IT and general research skills as well as a detailed knowledge and understanding of a specialist field of enquiry. The programmes are designed both for students who wish to pursue advanced independent research at doctoral level and those who wish to take up employment in the heritage industry. The programmes provide a suite of transferable skills and intellectual abilities which are valued in a wider professional context.

The study of human skeletal remains, together with the analysis of the contextual and material evidence that accompanies burials, provides unique insights into the attributes and lifeways of past peoples. This programme provides research skills and vocational training in the identification, analysis and interpretation of human skeletal remains from archaeological sites, and develops awareness of funerary ideology and ritual, and of the theory and methodology of funerary studies in archaeology.

## 16. Programme aims

Master's programmes in archaeology have the following general aims which are consistent with the Mission Statement of the University of Sheffield:

1. To offer students a programme of study that is qualitatively different from BSc-level study by maximising opportunities for independent study and reflective practice;
2. To enable students to increase their knowledge and understanding of the major aspects of a specialism and to undertake independent analyses of relevant issues in this area;
3. To enable students to acquire key transferable skills that are applicable both within and outside the discipline;
4. To enable students to evaluate whether or not they possess the ability, motivation and interest to pursue a research degree.

The MSc in Human Osteology and Funerary Archaeology has the following specific aim:

5. To provide intensive advanced research training in the archaeological study of human remains, combining the scientific analysis of skeletal remains with the cultural interpretation of funerary practices as evidenced in the archaeological record.

## 17. Programme learning outcomes

### Knowledge and understanding - upon successful completion of the programme:

#### Master's and Diploma students will have developed:

<b>K1</b>	Advanced knowledge of analytical methods and theoretical approaches within Human Osteology and Funerary Archaeology.
<b>K2</b>	Critical understanding of the most important current issues and controversies within Human Osteology and Funerary Archaeology.
<b>K3</b>	A conceptual understanding that enables students to critically evaluate written sources in Human Osteology and Funerary Archaeology.
<b>K4</b>	A sophisticated understanding which enables students to undertake independent analyses of relevant issues in Human Osteology and Funerary Archaeology.

#### In addition, students achieving a Master's will have:

<b>K5</b>	Developed the ability to identify an area of enquiry in Osteology and/or Funerary Archaeology and engage in independent archaeological research.
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### Skills and other attributes - upon successful completion of the programme:

#### Master's and Diploma students will have developed:

<b>S1</b>	Transferable lifetime skills in written and oral communication and in both independent and collaborative working.
<b>S2</b>	The ability to select and apply techniques to particular data with the aim of examining and resolving problems in Osteology and Funerary Archaeology.
<b>S3</b>	The ability to respond constructively to debate and criticism.
<b>S4</b>	Skills in effective time management, including the ability to work productively alone.
<b>S5</b>	Familiarity with a variety of IT skills, encompassing a range of bibliographical, statistical and other computer programmes and their application, as well as electronic sources for research.

#### In addition, students achieving a Master's will have:

<b>S6</b>	The skill and competence to formulate a research design, to generate and analyse relevant data, and to interpret the results, and to present the findings in a publishable form.
<b>S7</b>	The skills needed to undertake doctoral research or to take up professional positions in their chosen field.

## 18. Teaching, learning and assessment

**Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:**

### **For Master's and Diploma students**

**Lectures** provide in-depth understanding of the development, current standing and theoretical basis of Human Osteology and Funerary Archaeology (K1-2).

**Laboratory classes** require students to work both alone and in groups. Laboratory-based training in identification and analytical skills emphasises transferable principles and practices (S1). They introduce relevant instruments, and procedures for collecting and analysing data (S2). The practical teaching concentrates on the specialist skills of anatomical dissection, skeletal identification and recording and the analysis of quantitative and qualitative anthropological data. Laboratory classes provide students with the skills and confidence necessary to carry out the independent research linked to the dissertation and to become able archaeological practitioners (K5, S2-3 & S6-7).

**Seminars** are student or staff-led and they reinforce information imparted through lectures, laboratory classes and independent study. They are used throughout the programme to encourage the oral expression and exchange of views (S1), to cultivate the ability to respond constructively to the presentation of alternative views (S3) and to assess critically research methodologies (K3). They also provide a forum for students to work co-operatively in the evaluation of the research issues raised by the teaching (S1, S3). Seminar learning thus contributes to students' attainment of archaeological knowledge and understanding and to the acquisition of key skills.

**Written assignments** encourage students to develop their ability to summarise material critically, to present coherent and independent arguments and to support their arguments with appropriate evidence. Preparing such assignments – particularly defining and researching an appropriate topic and formulating independent questions – is essential to the acquisition of archaeological knowledge and understanding. As both the form and the length of written assignments varies – from essays, through extended laboratory and project reports to the dissertation – students develop a range of learning and time-management strategies in response to them (S5).

### **For Master's students**

Through the **dissertation**, Master's students demonstrate their ability to engage in independent and extended archaeological research and to construct and sustain an argument on the basis of the data collected, presenting the findings in an extended (8,000 words maximum) piece of writing (S6). Dissertation work, under one-to-one supervision, allows specialist knowledge to be further extended up to the level required to begin a PhD or specialist employment and provides an opportunity to use and refine research methodologies defined in lectures, seminars and practical classes to address specific problems in Human Osteology and Funerary Archaeology (K5, S7).

**Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:**

### **For Master's and Diploma students**

All written assignments are judged against marking criteria for work at master's level and are expected to be well presented and written (S1), using the advice given in the Postgraduate handbook.

**Practical examinations** are conducted to allow demonstration of the acquisition of core knowledge and identification skills in Human Anatomy and in Human Osteology (K1, S2).

**Project reports** allow students to show their ability to collect, analyse and present anthropological data. This allows for the evaluation of learning outcomes K1-K3 and S1, S2 & S4. Full assessment of Biological Anthropology I and Biological Anthropology II is achieved through project reports.

**Essays** allow students to demonstrate their familiarity with the relevant theoretical issues and their ability to handle theoretical or methodological material as well as their critical and analytical capacity. This allows for the evaluation of learning outcomes K1-3 and S1 & S4. Essays are used as the principal method of assessment in the following modules: Funerary Archaeology, Human Osteology, and Research Design: Planning, Execution and Presentation.

### **For Masters students**

The **dissertation** (8,000 words maximum) makes it possible to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes K5 and S2, S4, S6-7.

### **19. Reference points**

#### **The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:**

The research interests of departmental staff and the research strategy of the Department of Archaeology.

Subject Benchmark Statements

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements>

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks>

University Vision and Strategic Plan

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/vision>

### **20. Programme structure and regulations**

The programme is modular in format. Both the Master's and Diploma students must accumulate the following:

- over the academic year – two modules: Advanced Scientific Skills (15 credits) and Research Design: Planning, Execution and Presentation (15 credits);
- in semester 1 – three modules: Human Anatomy (15 credits), Human Osteology (15 credits) and Biological Anthropology 1 (15 credits);
- in semester 2 – three modules: Funerary Archaeology (15 credits), Biological Anthropology 2 (15 credits), plus one elective (15 credits): either Assemblage Analysis (15 credits) or Applied Bioarchaeological Science (15 credits). This provides a total of 120 credits which entitles students to the Postgraduate Diploma in Human Osteology and Funerary Archaeology. To proceed to the dissertation a candidate must first have been awarded 120 credits in the taught modules and progression is dependent upon the recommendation of the examiners based on performance in the taught units.

In addition to the taught modules, students must accumulate further credits from the following to be eligible for the award of MSc in Human Osteology and Funerary Archaeology:

- Dissertation (journal-style) carrying 60 credits (summer).

This provides a total of 180 credits.

Master's students accumulate the credits over 12 months (full-time study); Diploma students over 8 (full-time study). Students are expected to take 60 credits in each semester in order to ensure that their workload is evenly balanced. For Master's students the period between the end of the Spring Semester and the end of the period of registration is devoted entirely to the dissertation. Field trips are carried out throughout the course and students may be required to pay a small contribution towards the costs of running them.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available on-line at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar/>

## 21. Student development over the course of study

For both Master's and Diploma students the modules taught in the Semesters 1 and 2 ensure a steady process of deepening and broadening engagement with the field of Osteology and Funerary Archaeology and an appreciation of the diversity of approaches utilised within it. In addition, in the course of the programme a skills base is developed so that, by the end of semester 2, students will have built up expertise in the full range of specialisms offered.

For Master's students, the programme is structured so as to lead up logically to the writing of the dissertation, the major indicator of successful achievement of learning outcomes. The teaching in semesters 1 and 2 provides the student with an opportunity to select a specialist analytical approach which can be developed in depth during the dissertation through application to a specific archaeological problem. The dissertation is written over the summer, after completion of the taught modules.

## 22. Criteria for admission to the programme

Applicants would normally be expected to have at least a good 2i degree, or the equivalent, in a relevant discipline such as Archaeology, Anthropology or one of the Biological, Natural or Earth Sciences.

For applicants whose first language is not English, IELTS is the preferred test of language. Students need an IELTS score of 6.5, with at least 5.5 in all the component tests.

Further information regarding application to the programme can be found at:

[http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/archaeology/postgraduate\\_taught](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/archaeology/postgraduate_taught)

## 23. Additional information

For further information students are directed to the Departmental web pages at:

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/archaeology>

These provide full details about the content of the MSc. degree programme, information about the research interests of individual members of staff, as well as advice about how to apply and funding opportunities.

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at [www.shef.ac.uk/ssid](http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid).