



Full time MSc (18 month) in Genealogical, Palaeographic and Heraldic Studies FAQ

Background

Since 2006/07, the University of Strathclyde has run the highly successful Professional Postgraduate Programme in Genealogical, Palaeographic and Heraldic Studies. To date, over 880 students have completed or are currently enrolled in the various stages of the Programme, a number of these based overseas.

The University offers a fully online (distance learning) full time Masters (MSc) in Genealogical, Palaeographic and Heraldic Studies running over 18 months, including holidays, which starts in late September.

The Programme also operates a part-time version of this course, also fully online (distance learning) with each of the three tiers running over one academic year:

- Year 1 - PgCertificate by coursework
- Year 2 - PgDiploma by coursework plus final project
- Year 3 - Master's dissertation

There is more information on the Programme at:

<https://www.strath.ac.uk/courses/postgraduatetaught/genealogicalpalaeographicheraldicstudies/>

FAQs

1. What level is this course?

This course is at Postgraduate level (SCQF Level 11, SVQ Level 5), the same as any Postgraduate Masters degree. For comparison, a Bachelors degree is Level 9, a Masters degree is Level 11 and a Doctoral degree is Level 12. For more detail on these levels, see the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels webpage at: <https://scqf.org.uk/about-the-framework/>

2. Why is this an MSc, not an MA?

In Scotland, an MA is an undergraduate degree. This course is postgraduate-level.

3. What areas and topics does this course cover?

Sources from across the world are covered but there is an emphasis on research within the British Isles.

- The first semester is designed to give both breadth and depth of knowledge of and experience with using English/Welsh and Scottish records and research techniques; an introduction to genetic genealogy, heraldry, Latin for genealogists and consideration of issues surrounding professional practice are also included.

- Semester two covers record sources from around the world (Irish records in depth, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, British Empire and European). There are also sessions on genetic genealogy, palaeography and heraldry. Opportunity is given to specialise through various research exercises which give students choice in a topic and/or area of focus.
- Semester three is spent writing the Masters Dissertation

4. What are the entry requirements?

Candidates for the full time MSc need to hold an undergraduate degree in most cases. First degrees may also be augmented by previous postgraduate qualifications, such as an MSc. Some experience in genealogical (or other relevant) research is required and we may ask to see examples of reports and/or charts you have created.

Overseas applicants should be native English speakers, or have IELTS 6.5 overall with no individual component below 5.5. There is further guidance on this at <https://www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/englishlanguage/requirements/>

5. How much study time is required?

The course will involve a considerable time commitment, in the region of 30-35 hours per week, to cover reading, participation in online discussion forums, research and the completion of course work. The time required will vary depending on the semester and the experience level of the student.

There is also a requirement to take part in online tutorial sessions and these will usually take place on a Wednesday. Please see the time table for the proposed tutorial dates. One to one tutorials may also be scheduled for other days based on the agreement of the tutor and student. The time which these will take place is determined each summer based on the time zones of applicants, this is usually set by the beginning of August so those applying after this point will need to accommodate the set time.

6. What software and IT provision/experience do I need?

Intending students need to be technically competent with standard IT software such as Microsoft Word and Excel, have fast internet access available and be comfortable with online interaction. The course materials support Windows based software and the use of family tree software is required. The preferred family tree software for the course is FamilyTreeMaker for Windows (the use of other packages is allowed by students). Students have successfully completed the course using Macs but we cannot provide IT support in these cases.

7. Are there preparatory courses I could do first?

Strathclyde offers a range of beginning to intermediate courses aimed at preparing those with little or no genealogical experience. These can be taken on campus and online – for more information see: <https://www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/centreforlifelonglearning/>

8. Can I transfer in credits?

Students who already hold the PgCert or PgDip in Genealogical, Palaeographic and Heraldic Studies from Strathclyde, or certain other relevant qualifications from specified institutions, will be able to transfer credits, up to a defined limit. However, no fee discounts will be available. If your qualifications are more than five years old, we may require you to re-take certain parts of the curriculum.

10. Who runs this course?

The Genealogical Studies team within the Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL) has years of experience in delivering courses at this level. A number of the tutor team contributes with outside experts providing advice and support as required. Organisationally, the course runs within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HaSS) at the University of Strathclyde.

11. What is the timetable?

The content will be equivalent to the existing postgraduate courses, viz.:

- Semester 1 – PgCert content (late September – mid-March; 23 weeks)
- Semester 2 – PgDip content (late March – late July; 17 weeks)
- Semester 3 – MSc dissertation (late September – late March; 19 weeks, with a 2 week break over Christmas)

(These dates may be subject to change).

- Semester 1 (Year 1)–
 - All class materials will be released on a Friday. Please see the timetable for further details.
 - Assignments and Assessments typically will be due in the Monday following the relevant tutorial.
 - There will be a number of online mandatory tutorials on a Wednesday, which will touch on items of interest arising from the session's topics and deal with general and Assignment issues – these may range from one-two hours.
 - There will be further one-to-one contact throughout the semester, based on Assignment and Assessment returns and feedback. There will be additional and frequent on-line contact as needed via email and forum discussions.
- Semester 2 (Year 2)– as Semester 1 above, except that class materials are released and Assignments and Assessments are due to be returned on a longer schedule. There will still be a tutorial day, as above, though this is moved to every two to three weeks for most of the semester.
- Semester 3 (Year 3) – as this is focused on individual research and writing, most contact will be one-to-one and regular tutor/student online meetings will be scheduled. There will be at least one all-together tutorial slot, on a Wednesday as before. This will ease any feeling of isolation and reinforce the collegial aspect of the course.

Of course, students may contact their tutor (and each other) at additional times, and dialogue and use of the class forums is encouraged.

There will be optional visits to archives and libraries built into the academic year.

All of our postgraduate students are eligible to take part in Strathclyde's Researcher Development Programme (RDP) which offers a range of courses, workshops, events, tools and resources to support personal and professional career development beyond the specific discipline area. See more at: <https://www.strath.ac.uk/theresearcherdevelopmentprogramme/>

12. What are the fees?

For those starting in the 2025-26 academic year:

The MSc (full-time) fee is £11,194 which is broken down into:

- Year 1: £8,382

- Year 2: £2,812

The year 2 fee may be subject to increase.

13. Is there any help with fees, or any grants?

Please consult <https://www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/scholarships/> . Also consult your local Education Authority or equivalent.

Full Time MSc and Student Loans:

As the full time course is split over two academic years, some funding bodies split the loan in two equal payments. As the course fees are front loaded into the first academic year (as this year completes 120 credits) this means the loan amount provided in this year will not cover the academic fees due. You will need to make personal provision for this discrepancy.

- The full time MSc is eligible for student loans through Student Finance England for students resident in **England** – see <https://www.gov.uk/postgraduate-loan/overview> for details. If you intend to take out a student loan for the full time course through Student Finance England, please contact the course administration team on cll-sigs@strath.ac.uk for information on this option.
- **Northern Irish** students can find information on postgraduate funding at: <https://www.studentfinanceni.co.uk/>
- **Welsh** students can find information on postgraduate funding at: <https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/>
- The Full time MSc is eligible for student loans for students resident in **Scotland** through the Student Awards Agency Scotland. Please check with <https://www.saas.gov.uk/> for further details.

14. Is there a deadline for applying?

Applications should be submitted by mid-August (but see point 5 for information on when we set the timing of the mandatory real time sessions). This will allow sufficient time for the application to be processed, the offer to be accepted by you and payment to clear, before the course starts. Early application is advised as numbers may be limited on the course. (Applications submitted after mid-August may be considered if there are still available places on the course.) As we send out a copy of the preferred genealogy software and our step-by-step guides roughly a month before the course begins, early application is also advised to receive these in good time.

15. What should I do next?

There is more information on applying for postgraduate taught courses and the process of application at www.strath.ac.uk/admissions/postgraduatetaught/.

For further information and/or to register your interest in the 18 month full time MSc, please contact our Programme Administrators, Jane MacKenzie or Jennifer Campbell.

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