

MSc, PgDiploma and PgCertificate in Genealogical, Palaeographic and Heraldic Studies (part-time, distance learning)

Frequently Asked Questions:

(please see the one-year MSc FAQ for specific details on that option)

- Why should I choose Strathclyde's programme?
- What are the aims and objectives of the programme?
- What is the structure of each programme level?
- What are the entry requirements for each course?
- What is the course schedule for 2018-19?
- What will I have to do to complete the programme successfully?
- Are there any computer, software, online subscriptions or book requirements?
- How much study time is required?
- How is assessed course work managed?
- Is there a deadline for applying?
- How do I make an application?
- What will it cost, and what is included in the fee?
- Is there any form of financial assistance or grant for the programme?
- Whom do I contact if I have any further queries?

The University of Strathclyde is a charitable body, registered in Scotland, number SC015263.

Why should I choose Strathclyde's programme?

Strathclyde is the UK's largest provider of postgraduate education. The Genealogical Studies programme represents a major advance in the process of academic certification of Genealogy and related studies. This programme was the first in the field to place the various genealogical disciplines within a rigorous academic framework while carrying credit at a postgraduate level from a UK university. The PgCertificate, PgDiploma and MSc are awarded at SCQF Level 11. The Programme is now in its 11th year and has over 350 alumni located across the world.

The Centre for Lifelong Learning has, for a number of years, offered adult education courses in aspects of family history research and related subjects. The Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma build upon and expand these into courses suitable not only for the interested public but also existing and intending professionals who wish to use such skills in their work, or who would value an academic qualification.

The Postgraduate Certificate course deals primarily with English and, Scottish records with an introduction to Irish records. The Certificate also provides a firm grounding in genealogical practice, genetic genealogy, heraldry and palaeography (the study of handwriting).

The Postgraduate Diploma extends the geographical focus and adds American, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, British Empire, Jewish, European and more advanced Irish sources. A series of written etudes on such topics as a house history and a client study brings a more academic slant to the Diploma level which is capped by the submission of a 5,000 word research project.

The part time MSc is by dissertation (12,000-16,000 words) on a topic chosen by the student with input from tutors. We also offer a full time MSc which combines the materials from the PG Certificate, Diploma and is capped by a dissertation of 12,000-16,000 words. Please see the separate Full time MSc FAQ.

There is collaboration with the National Records of Scotland, the National Archives (Kew, England), and support from professional and commercial bodies including the Association of Scottish Genealogists and Researchers in Archives (ASGRA), the Association of Genealogists and Researchers in Archives (AGRA), the Register of Qualified Genealogists (RQG), FindMyPast, DeceasedOnline, MacKiev Family Tree Maker and FamilyTreeDNA.

Academic input is provided by the Centre for Lifelong Learning, the University's Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences and appropriate external specialists.

What are the aims and objectives of the programme?

All genealogists and researchers in archives must acquire a common body of knowledge and a standard of praxis in order to work effectively. The requisite body of knowledge is essentially transferable across the wide range of sectors in which these practitioners are engaged, be it libraries, archives, or dedicated family history centres as well as private concerns, including law firms or as private individuals desirous of expanding their knowledge. Irrespective of the particular environment, the principles and practices of genealogy and archives must be fully understood in order to be effectively applied, and common standards adhered to (e.g. levels of "proof", recording and reporting, citations and referencing).

Given the postgraduate or post-experience focus, particularly of the Diploma, the programme aims to develop individuals who:

- have a broad strategic outlook and a wider understanding of the core records and what is available within archives and other bodies;
- possess advanced research and investigative skills, techniques and understanding;
- adopt and accept certain professional standards of ethics, confidentiality and practice;
- have the necessary skills for problem-solving;
- have, or can develop, business skills, IT skills and interpersonal skills;
- understand the social, political and historical contexts in which records, archives and surveys (e.g. censuses) were instigated;
- can interpret the palaeography and diplomatic of important classes of documents.

General objectives

By the conclusion of the PgCertificate and PgDiploma, a student should be able to:

- understand what various records and archival sources contain and how to obtain the information contained in them;
- demonstrate an understanding of recording and reporting results of searches in an acceptable common model format (physical and in terms of information systems);
- hold to accepted standards of proof and praxis;
- evaluate available evidence;
- critically examine the significance of information gleaned, in terms of its correctness, context and relevance;
- identify personal strengths and weaknesses, and likely areas for development;
- provide a personal and professional development action plan;
- demonstrate critical thinking, organisational skills, ability to communicate in written form and facility with various archival sources;
- if desired, apply for membership of the Association of Genealogists and Researchers in Archives (AGRA) <http://www.agra.org.uk/> and/or the Association of Scottish Genealogists and Researchers in Archives (ASGRA) <http://www.asgra.co.uk/> and/or the Register for Qualified Genealogists (RQG) <http://www.qualifiedgenealogists.org/> . There are different membership requirements for each of these bodies for our graduates and current students, please see their websites for more information.

By the conclusion of the MSc, a student should be able to:

- research independently and produce a dissertation at the appropriate academic level;
- produce publishable work.

Core objectives

The programme also aims to develop core transferable skills in the following areas:

Communication and presentation

- Writing clearly, correctly and concisely for a range of contexts
- Using effective presentational aids and techniques

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- Using numerical, graphical and statistical information in communication

Problem-solving and creativity

- Using strategies for achieving realistic solutions to a range of problem types
- Researching and managing a wide range of information
- Identifying key issues and questions
- Selecting and adopting effective methods of analysis, including statistics
- Drawing logical conclusions
- Using strategies for developing novel ideas

Teamwork and collaboration

- Supporting the achievement of consensus within a group
- Collaborating in learning and sharing information
- Showing respect towards, and interest in, the views of others
- Performing agreed tasks or roles
- Assessing your own work and the work of others
- Negotiating in a professional context

Project planning and organising

- Developing formal task plans
- Showing consistency of commitment
- Making decisions on a rational basis

Personal development

- Managing time and meeting deadlines
- Working on your own initiative
- Recording and reflecting on your own work and skills
- Learning independently
- Developing inter-personal networks
- Taking an ethical approach in actions

Professional development

- Adhering to ethics standards and codes of practice
- Engaging with continuing professional development

What is the structure of the Programme and each level?

Postgraduate Certificate

The Postgraduate Certificate consists of six modules all of which are compulsory. Students explore a wide range of record sources (mostly British focused) and develop expertise in searching, recording and presenting research, with additional units covering genetic genealogy, Latin, palaeography and heraldry. Students complete substantial study and work on their own, guided by the course tutor team.

Assessment is done continuously throughout the Certificate programme; there is no final exam. You are asked to complete shorter written work (Assignments) for each module, as well as six summative Assessments, the fulfilment of which should help advance your learning and indicate to your tutor the possession or development of the requisite knowledge and skills. There is more information on assessment elsewhere in the FAQ document.

The Certificate is where most students begin. The main aim of this level is to produce genealogists with an in-depth knowledge of a broad range of (mainly) British resources who have experience in searching, assessing, recording and presenting research results. There is a focus on the research process and the importance of referencing your sources. The one-year version course timetable will give an idea of the specific areas covered throughout the course.

The Pg Certificate can be taken on one of two versions:

One-year version

The one year version's teaching runs from October to May, with time to complete the final Assessment for submission in late June. Choose this version if you want to complete the Certificate in one year and can devote around 20 hours a week to the course.

Modular version

The modular version allows students to take the six modules individually over 2-3 years and students can start on this version in October, January or April. The modules must be taken in order and all are compulsory to complete the PG Certificate. This version allows more time for each module and for possible short breaks in study. Choose this version if you have time or financial constraints; we suggest a work load of 14 hours a week during each module and you can pay per module.

Once the Certificate is successfully completed, there is an option to progress to the Diploma level. This can be done directly after completing the Certificate or after taking a break from study. There is, however, no requirement to go onto the Diploma level.

Postgraduate Diploma

This advanced course extends the range of record sources used both in area of the world and time frame covered; develops a greater understanding of social and historical contexts; and provides an in depth study of the professional and academic aspects of genealogical work.

The Diploma consists of three modules: 1. Genealogy, heraldry and social history, 2. Documents, palaeography and research studies and 3. Methods of Professional Enquiry.

Module 1: Genealogy, history and social history covers topics such as: Irish records in depth, Australian and New Zealand sources; genetic genealogy and British Empire sources. This module has shorter assignments designed to get students working directly with resources for each topic.

Module 2: Documents and palaeography is a series of shorter written work allowing students to explore records in depth. There are two set pieces of work around Scottish and English documents; one of these is a group project and then there are four pieces of work for which the student can choose the focus within set parameters (an area, a house/building, a geographical area/migration study and a client study).

Module 3: Methods of professional enquiry and final project is a University requirement for those undertaking postgraduate study. As well as integrating aspects of Module 2, this Module provides practical skills in record keeping, analysis of evidence and professional ethics, standards and practice. The final project is the major piece of assessed work here but there are shorter assignments included which are milestones towards the final project. The final project topic is chosen by the student (with guidance from the tutor team) and is a 5,000 word research report.

The PG Diploma can be taken on one of two versions:

One-year version

The one year version's teaching runs from October to May, with time to complete the final research project for submission in mid-July. Choose this version if you want to complete the Diploma in one year and can devote around 20-25 hours a week to the course.

Modular version

The modular version allows students to take the three modules individually over two years and students can start on this version in October or March. The modules must be taken in order and all are compulsory to complete the PG Diploma. This version allows more time for each module and for possible breaks in study. Each module will take around four and a half months to complete. Choose this version if you have time or financial constraints; we suggest a work load of 14 hours a week during each module and you can pay per module.

Once the Diploma is successfully completed, there is an option to progress to the MSc by dissertation level with tutor agreement. This can be done directly after completing the Diploma or after taking a break from study. There is, however, no requirement to go onto the MSc level.

Masters Degree (MSc)

Taken part time as the final year in the Postgraduate Programme (i.e. post PG Diploma):

Students on this level undertake the planning, implementation and evaluation of a major piece of research which involves carrying out a research project of genealogical relevance assessed on the basis of a Dissertation of 12,000-16,000 words. The work is undertaken from October, with the Dissertation submitted the following late June/early July. There is tutor guidance on academic writing, study and research skills.

Full time MSc option (please also see the separate full time MSc FAQ document)

This full time MSc option will be of particular interest to those with an undergraduate degree, who have the time to devote to the course and who have pre-existing experience in genealogical research. You'll need to commit around 35-40 hours per week and there will be mandatory online tutorials weekly or bi-weekly.

This option begins in mid-September and run through late July. The course content is the same as the 3 levels of the programme (PG Cert, Diploma and MSc) and is offered over three terms:

- Term one is designed to give both breadth and depth of knowledge of and experience with using English/Welsh and Scottish records and research techniques; professional practice and search strategies are also covered.
- Term two covers record sources from around the world (Irish records in depth, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, British Empire and European). There are also modules 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. Work on the MSc dissertation begins through the methods of professional enquiry module.
- Term three is largely spent writing the Masters Dissertation which requires the student to plan, implement and evaluate a major piece of research and development work which involves carrying out a research project of genealogical relevance assessed on the basis of a report of 12,000-16,000 words. There is tutor guidance on academic writing, study and research skills

What are the entry requirements for each course?

Normally an undergraduate degree is required for entry however, non-standard education or professional qualifications will be considered; we do have to be sure, for your benefit, that you have the appropriate study skills and IT ability, as well as some relevant genealogical or related experience. Some of this we can assess from references and previous education, training and work. However, in some cases we may require a telephone interview, or that you submit an assessment, in the form of a genealogical exercise, which we will set.

The Centre for Lifelong Learning also offers a series of eight week courses, available online and on-campus, which are intended to provide the basic skills and knowledge required to facilitate progression to the Postgraduate Certificate. Successful completion of one or more of these may be used to show appropriate study skills and/or genealogical experience. For more details on this, please contact the Programme Administrators.

Entry to the Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) typically requires successful completion of the Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert). However, evidence of extensive previous genealogical experience and completion of the Higher Certificate in Genealogy through the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies (IHGS) or other similar level courses may allow direct entry to the PGDip; please contact us if you have questions on this. Entry to the MSc (aside from the full time MSc option) requires successful completion of the PgDip, but there is no guarantee of acceptance.

Some students choose to advance only as far as the PgCert or PgDip. Some choose to take a year away, and return for the next stage at a later date.

What is the course schedule for 2018-19?

Except for the full time MSc which begins in mid-September (see the separate FAQ for this option), all courses start in early October (with additional start times for the modular PG Certificate & Diploma).

The **PgCertificate** can be taken on one of two formats:

1. The one year version's teaching runs from October to May, with time to complete the final Assessment for submission in late June.
2. The modular version allows students to take the six modules individually over 2-3 years and students can start on this version in October, January or April (if student numbers allow).

The **PgDiploma** can be taken on one of two formats:

1. The one year version's teaching runs from October to May, with time to complete the final project through mid-July.
2. The modular version allows students to take the three modules individually over 2-3 years and students can start this version in October or March (if student numbers allow).

The **part-time MSc** begins in October and the dissertation is due at the end of June.

The PgCert has six modules and the PgDip has three modules. Materials are released to a set schedule; for the one-year PGCert roughly every three weeks and for the PGDip roughly every month. A timetable of material release dates and assignment and assessment submission dates is provided in the Student Handbook. Account is taken of Christmas/New Year holiday and extra time is given to work on assignments and assessments during this period.

The modular version of the PGCert has a set schedule for modules available over a 2 year period which will be available to the modular PGCert students for planning purposes. Each module will be completed over 10 weeks with the last 2 weeks being devoted to completing the module's major assessment.

The modular version of the PGDiploma has a set schedule for modules available over a 2 year period which will be available to the modular PGDiploma students for planning purposes. Each module will be completed over 4 and a half months.

There is an online induction period which runs the week before the courses begin – this is designed to give students the chance to familiarize themselves with the virtual learning environment and is totally optional.

Please see the course timetables on our website for more details.

Online only: Please note that these courses are offered online and there is no attendance requirement. However, there may be optional opportunities to visit Scottish and English archives.

What will I have to do to complete the programme successfully?

This programme is for those who are highly motivated to develop careers in genealogical studies, or who have a commitment to their own continuing personal development in this area.

To complete the programme you are required to:

- follow the online materials
- submit all Assignments and Assessments to a satisfactory standard, and according to deadlines
- complete a Learning Log

Are there any computer, software, online subscriptions or book requirements?

Computer and software

It is important that you have regular access to a computer AT HOME. The reason for this is that we will be issuing you with various log-ins and passwords that cannot be placed on public computers. Also, it will simply not be possible to fulfil the considerable workload this course imposes if using a computer solely at work or in a library.

Your computer should be PC-compatible, and have a recent version of Microsoft Windows and Microsoft Office or LibreOffice. Office365 ProPlus is available to all registered undergraduate and postgraduate taught students. This is a suite of Microsoft Office applications which can be downloaded onto a variety of devices and is completely free of charge, during the time that you are a registered student with us. Office365 ProPlus is a full version of Office; the programs have the same features and functionality as other versions of Office. For more information on software available to students, see: <http://www.strath.ac.uk/is/software/>

We cannot format or support our materials for all possible combinations of software, and therefore cannot guarantee that the various services will work on Mac, Unix/Linux, etc. or with other software suites (such as Microsoft Works). Your computer must be capable of running Java, and enabled for pop-ups.

A number of students using Macs have successfully completed the course however, we can't offer the same level of IT support to these students as the course is standardized on Windows.

As we will be communicating mostly by e-mail and via the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), we have to be sure that you can use the following programs

- Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint, or fully compatible programs (e.g., LibreOffice)
- An e-mail program compatible with Microsoft software (Outlook is recommended)
- A graphics program compatible with Microsoft software (Irfanview is recommended)
- Standard web browser software. The University's IT people say that Google's Chrome browser works particularly well with the VLE with FireFox also working well. Internet Explorer is known to have a few issues with the VLE.
- WinZip or the ability to zip and un-zip files and folders
- Adobe Acrobat Reader

Family tree software

Family Tree Maker (FTM) is the course's preferred family tree software package and we provide a copy of the Windows based program to PG Certificate students at the beginning of their course. The course team has created step-by-step guides for FTM and example files which are provided to

incoming students. Some assignments and assessments require the extensive use of family tree software. Any students who have not previously used such genealogy software should familiarise themselves with the basics before the course begins.

Online subscriptions

Much of the course will involve online searching on third-party sites over which the University has no control. At the very least you will need a Worldwide subscription to Ancestry.co.uk and you will be visiting www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk, a pay-per-view service. We also suggest a subscription to FindMyPast; the British only membership package is suitable. Use of these will incur costs, and you must be prepared to use a credit card or other suitable payment method over the internet.

Books

There is a recommended reading list in the Course Handbook. This reading list will be circulated to successful applicants over the summer or before the term begins to allow them time to acquire necessary books and to get a head start on reading for the course.

How much study time is required?

Although the courses are regarded as part-time (aside from the full time MSc), you should be aware that they involve a considerable time commitment, in the region of 20-25 hours per week (14 for the modular version of the PG Certificate and modular PG Diploma), to cover reading, participation in online discussion forums, research and the completion of course work.

How is assessed coursework managed?

There is no formal examination for any of these courses. Instead results are based on continuous assessment. This will normally mean completing shorter written work (Assignments) for each module, as well as formal summative Assessments, the fulfilment of which should help advance your learning and indicate to the assessor the possession or development of the requisite knowledge and skills. One of these is a Final Research Project (PgDip) to be completed over the duration of the course and is submitted in mid-July. The part time MSc Dissertation is submitted in late June.

Postgraduate Certificate SCQF Level 11

Total: 6 x 10 SM credits 6 modules 600 hours

Assessing your work

Each module will be assessed separately and credit awarded accordingly. This normally takes the form of:

1. Smaller Assignments submitted throughout, usually one per session. These are marked on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis.
2. Larger Assessments, one per module, designed to test your depth of knowledge, ability to analyse, evaluate and apply a range of relevant information and ideas. These are marked on a numerical basis.
3. A Learning Log, to be submitted at the middle and end of the course.

All assessment within the course is intended to provide evidence that appropriate academic standards have been achieved. You will be informed of the assessment criteria in advance of each Assessment. You should note that there may be some group work, which will involve collaboration and joint assessment.

Postgraduate Diploma SCQF Level 11

Total 3 x 20 SM credits 3 modules 600 hours

Assessing your work

Each Module will be assessed separately and credit awarded accordingly. This normally takes the form of:

1. Smaller Assignments submitted throughout. These are marked on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis.
2. Larger written Études designed to test depth of knowledge, ability to analyse, evaluate and apply a range of relevant information and ideas. These are marked on a banded basis;
3. A 5,000 word Final Research Project, this is marked on a banded basis.
4. A Learning Log, to be submitted at the middle and end of the course

All assessment within the course is intended to provide evidence that appropriate academic standards have been achieved. You will be informed of the assessment criteria in advance of each Assessment. You should note that there may be some group work, which will involve collaboration and joint assessment.

Masters (MSc) SCQF Level 11 (please see the separate FAQ for the one-year MSc)

Total 60 SM credits 1 module 600 hours

The only assessed submission is:

- A Dissertation (12,000 – 16,000 words), which will be suitable for publication in a relevant academic journal, plus documentation as appendices;
- In addition, a Learning Log, to be submitted at the end of the course (see Appendix 6).

There are also some “milestones” - a Brief Research Proposal, Research Plan, Personal Professional Development Plan and a Literature Review.

Is there a deadline for applying?

Applications should be submitted by mid-September (except for the full time MSc and the modular PGCert & PG Diploma). Modular PGCert applications should be submitted by early September for the October start date; early December for the January start date and early March for the April start date. Modular PG Diploma applications should be submitted by early September for the October

start date; mid-February for the March start date. Full time MSc applications should be submitted by early August.

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 the usual submission dates may be considered if there are still available places on the course.) As we send out a copy of the recommended genealogy software, a referencing guide and our step-by-step guides to the software roughly a month before the course begins, early application is also advised to receive these in good time.

How do I make an application?

To apply for a course you need to complete the standard University online application form and submit contact details for two referees, along with supporting documentation. You will need to submit a personal statement outlining your genealogical experience and why you want to take the course, and documentation on any degrees you may have. Apply online using the appropriate link from the course applications webpage:

www.strath.ac.uk/courses/postgraduatetaught/genealogicalpalaeographicheraldicstudies/ .

Your application will be reviewed by the course team, and you might then be contacted to arrange for an interview or for further information. This may be either by telephone, online or in person if that is appropriate.

The course team will consider all applications. You will be notified of any offer through the application system, and you must then accept this offer to progress your application. See here for additional information: www.strath.ac.uk/admissions/postgraduatetaught/.

Overseas applicants should be native English speakers, or have IELTS 6.5 overall with no individual component below 6.0. There is further guidance on this at www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/englishlanguage/requirements/

What will it cost, and what is included in the fee?

The course fees for 2018-19 are:

- PgCert - £3,100 for UK and EU applicants and £3,100 for overseas applicants.
- PgDip - £3,100 for UK and EU applicants and £3,100 for overseas applicants.
- MSc (part time/post-PG Dip) - £2,100 for UK and EU applicants and £2,100 for overseas applicants.

The full time MSc course fee for 2018-19 is:

- £8,350 for UK and EU applicants and £8,350 for overseas applicants

The PGCert modular course fee for 2017-18 is:

- £570 per module for UK and EU applicants and £720 for overseas applicants

The PGCert modular course fee for 2018-19 is:

- £570 per module for UK and EU applicants and £570 for overseas applicants

The PG Diploma modular course fee for 2017-18 is:

- £1,140 per module for UK and EU applicants and £1,440 for overseas applicants

The PG Diploma modular course fee for 2018-19 is:

- £1083 per module for UK and EU applicants and £1083 for overseas applicants

The fees cover all the costs of teaching, learning, supervision, course materials, access to university services including the library and administration of the course.

Travel and any other costs you may incur are not covered. You will be also expected to buy books and to subscribe to or pay for third-party commercial internet or database facilities.

Arrangements can be made with the University Finance Office to pay by instalments. See <http://www.strath.ac.uk/finance/student/tuitionfees/>.

Is there any form of financial support for the course?

There are limited options for funding for part-time study at this level – support is most likely to be available in the form of a tuition fee loan. Please consult <http://www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/scholarships/>. Also consult your local Education Authority or equivalent.

Our postgraduate courses are eligible for **Professional and Career Development Loans**. See: <https://www.gov.uk/career-development-loans> for more on these.

Scottish students

Students living in Scotland can find out more about full time and part time postgraduate funding from the Student Awards Agency Scotland at: <http://www.saas.gov.uk/index.htm>

English students

Students ordinarily resident in England can find out more about full time and part time postgraduate funding at: <https://www.gov.uk/funding-for-postgraduate-study>

Northern Irish students

Students ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland can find out more about full time and part time postgraduate funding at: <http://www.studentfinancenir.co.uk>

Welsh students

Students ordinarily resident in Wales can find out more about full time and part time postgraduate funding at: <http://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/>

For more information see the following links:

www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/postgraduatetaught/feesfunding/howcanifundmycourse/

www.strath.ac.uk/studentfinancialsupport/

Whom do I contact if I have any further queries?

Please contact our Programme Administrators, Jane MacKenzie and Jennifer Campbell:

Phone +44 (0)141 548 2392

E-mail: scosh@strath.ac.uk

Web: www.strath.ac.uk/genealogy/

Or:

www.strath.ac.uk/courses/postgraduatetaught/genealogicalpalaeographicheraldicstudies/

University of Strathclyde
Centre for Lifelong Learning
40 George Street
Glasgow G1 1QE
Scotland