

# MA Queer History

## Programme Specification

**Awarding Institution:**

University of London (Interim Exit Awards made by Goldsmiths' College)

**Teaching Institution:** Goldsmiths, University of London

**Name of Final Award and Programme Title:** MA Queer History

**Name of Interim Exit Award(s):**

Postgraduate Certificate in Queer History

Postgraduate Diploma in Queer History

**Duration of Programme:** 1 year full-time or 2 years part-time

**UCAS Code(s):** Not applicable

**HECoS Code(s):** (100302) History

**QAA Benchmark Group:** Not applicable

**FHEQ Level of Award:** Level 7

**Programme accredited by:** Not applicable

**Date Programme Specification last updated/approved:** September 2021

**Home Department:** History

**Department(s) which will also be involved in teaching part of the programme:**

Not applicable

## Programme overview

The MA Queer History is the first postgraduate programme in Queer History in the UK, and one of the only such offerings in the world to engage with histories of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people, identities and communities. It is innovative, creative, free-thinking, stimulating, diverse and challenging – everything that is distinctive about history at Goldsmiths.

Throughout this document, and the MA Queer History, the term 'queer' is used both to acknowledge its historical context and also as an inclusive term to indicate and include the complex experiences of sexuality and gender diversity across history. In the past, 'queer' has been used both as a term of derision and also of self-identification. Many others, scholars and self-identified 'queer' people alike, have reclaimed the term today to capture the complexity of gender and sexuality not otherwise addressed by LGBT. It is also with this in mind that the acronym LGBTQ is similarly used.

The Department of History's approach is thematic and interdisciplinary, and the MA Queer History reflects that. It explores the queer past across period, region and theme from the early modern period to the present. The MA Queer History aims to develop students' research skills, and their understanding of key debates and methods used by historians of the queer past. It will encourage students to interrogate past understandings of queer identity and experience; challenge students to question binaries between heterosexual and homosexual, male and female; and foster in students an engaged and questioning position on the past and the present. It pays close attention to questions of power and the law, and approaches questions intersectionally to understand how sexuality, gender, race, dis/ability, faith and other categories and positions of experience are, throughout history, interlinked in asymmetrical, often oppressive, ways. It considers too how these have been combined in forms of resistance to that oppression. In addition, it allows students to develop their own specific subject interests through a range of option courses, primary research and the dissertation.

## **Programme entry requirements**

- An undergraduate degree (2:1) in History or a related subject
- Personal suitability assessed by the MA convenor in cases referred to department by Admissions
- ELTS 6.5 with a 6.5 in writing

Students should normally have, or expect to gain, a first degree of at least upper second class standard in history or another appropriate subject, or be qualified by previous experience and be able to demonstrate the ability to work at Master's level. Applicants who are not graduates, or who have a degree in an unrelated field, or any other candidates may be subject to a qualifying examination in the form of essay work. Non-native speakers normally possess IELTS of 6.5, or equivalent.

## **Aims of the programme**

The MA Queer History explores current approaches to historical research and the interdisciplinarity required when historical enquiry focuses on the use of a broad variety of source material. It investigates LGBTQ experiences, identities and communities across region and period from the early modern to the present in order to understand how these intersect with gender, race, religion and faith, the state, medicine and other axes of power from the local to the global.

The programme aims to:

- examine and evaluate the historiography of, and current research within, Queer History
- develop students' ability to locate, use, and critically reflect upon, a variety of source material for historical enquiry in to the queer past
- develop students' ability to think systematically and creatively about developments in the field of queer history
- enhance students' critical and analytical skills
- enhance students' ability to develop and sustain original arguments
- encourage students' self-development into professionally organised and interactive individuals by practising skills of research, evaluation, and communication in written, oral, and visual domains
- facilitate a learning environment that offers students an appropriate foundation for further scholarly research in history, cultural studies, and other related disciplines in the humanities

## What you will be expected to achieve

Students who successfully complete the Postgraduate Certificate in History will be able to:

### Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	Demonstrate an understanding of the historical and critical debates in Queer History	Explorations and Debates in Queer History
A2	Recognise the interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary nature of Queer History	Explorations and Debates in Queer History
A3	Recognise the possibilities and limitations of using a broad variety of source material for historical analysis	Explorations and Debates in Queer History and esp. Research Skills
A4	Demonstrate a sound knowledge of current debates between Queer History and Queer Theory	Explorations and Debates in Queer History
A5	Recognise the historical specificity of sexual identities and queer experiences in the past	Explorations and Debates in Queer History

## Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	Interpret a broad variety of source material in the context of historical enquiry	Research Skills
B2	Develop and sustain original arguments that are informed by, but not wholly dependent on, authorities in the field of History	Explorations and Debates in Queer History
B3	Expand analytical, evaluative, critical and reflective capacities	Explorations and Debates in Queer History

## Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	Employ a critical and measured approach to historical source material and historiography	Explorations and Debates in Queer History and Research Skills

## Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	Interpret a variety of sources closely and critically	Research Skills
D2	Give oral presentations	All Modules
D3	Write creative and critical historical analysis	All Modules
D4	Assess evidence critically	All Modules
D5	Integrate multiple and diverse forms of evidence	Research Skills especially
D6	Formulate coherent and persuasive interpretations and arguments informed by standards of scholarly accuracy	All Modules

Students who successfully complete the Postgraduate Diploma in History, in addition to the learning outcomes above, will be able to:

## Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	An in-depth understanding of the possibilities and limitations of using a broad variety of source material for historical analysis across a variety of historical themes	Options and Research Skills especially

## Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	Develop and sustain original arguments that are informed by, but not wholly dependent on, authorities in the field of Queer History across a variety of historical themes, periods and regions	All Modules except Research Skills

## Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	AS ABOVE	AS ABOVE

## Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	Formulate coherent and persuasive interpretations and arguments informed by standards of scholarly accuracy across a variety of historical themes, periods and regions	Explorations and Debates in Queer History, and Options

Students who successfully complete the MA Queer History, will have demonstrated achievement of all of the above outcomes and, in addition, be able to:

## Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	A systematic understanding of knowledge, and critical awareness of current problems and /or new insights much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the discipline of Queer History	Explorations and Debates in Queer History especially
A2	A comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship	All Modules and Dissertation

## Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	Apply the methods and theories of an interdisciplinary approach to Queer History in their own research	Options and Dissertation
B2	Evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in Queer History	Explorations and Debates in Queer History especially and also Options
B3	Undertake research reflexively, reflecting on their own role as researchers	All Modules and Dissertation

## Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	Creatively undertake historical research by applying innovative approaches	Options and Dissertation
C2	Demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems	Options and Dissertation
C3	Demonstrate critical use and evaluation of primary source documents to support thesis	Options and Dissertation

## Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	Undertake independent and original archival research using primary source evidence	Options and especially Dissertation

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D2	Identify and address suitable topics for extended, reflective independent study	Options and Dissertation especially
D3	Ability to manage complexity and to communicate complex ideas to multiple audiences	All Modules and MA dissertation conference
D4	Organise and present a paper at an academic workshop	All Modules, especially the dissertation as the process of writing includes participating in organising, and presenting at, the Department's MA dissertation conference

## How you will learn

The programme aims to create an intellectually stimulating environment, which embraces intellectual diversity, and encourages and supports the independence, creativity, and confidence of students. Teaching is in seminars augmented by individual tutorial and expert guest contributors, offering students opportunities to engage with practitioners. In addition to collaborative learning and critical engagement with readings, students will also present readings to classmates. Students are encouraged to test all transferable skills in formative assessments, which are intended to allow students to familiarise themselves with the intellectual requirements of the programme and prepare them for the summative assessments.

In addition to seminars and coursework, students will also have the opportunity to participate in workshops, conferences, speaker series' and other events that make up Queer History at Goldsmiths, both locally and in collaboration with other bodies and events in London like the IHR History of Sexuality Seminar.

## COMPULSORY MODULES

1. Explorations & Debates in Queer History investigates the ways historians have conceptualised and contested historical practice in the modern and early modern periods. It considers the relationship between History and other disciplines, in particular Queer Theory and its utility for historians of the queer past, as well as historians' ways of using a range of sources for historical enquiry. Presentations and discussions in the seminars as well as the writing of essays provide students with the opportunity to investigate the key theoretical and conceptual questions in a variety of ways.
2. The Research Skills Module trains students in the use and interpretation of a wide range of source material: textual, oral, visual and material. The module includes non-

classroom-based workshops, e.g. for ICT skills, and visits to museums, galleries, and archives where students will be addressed by specialists in these fields. Student's understanding will be tested through a series of preparatory tasks for class discussion and assessed essays.

A formative student-run dissertation conference provides students with experience of conference organisation and presentation of conference papers. This provides them with the opportunity to formulate and receive engaged feedback on their research projects from each other and a variety of Departmental staff. Organising the conference teaches further skills of time management, planning and organisation, group work and collaboration, in addition to the individual skills associated with publicly presenting a piece of original academic work.

## **How you will be assessed**

All modes of assessment are designed to allow the examination of intellectually challenging work. The essay for Explorations & Debates in Queer History allows this by exploring and assessing historiographical concepts and applications of Queer Theory to historical questions as well as the use of Queer History to support, question, and augment Queer Theory. Students are encouraged to demonstrate a broad variety of research skills through the formatively and summatively assessed work on the Research Skills module. In the Option Modules students can test their theoretical and methodological knowledge and skills on selected case studies. The dissertation requires students to prove these skills in a piece of extended writing based on their independent research and the use of primary sources.

Summative assessment comprises a portfolio of coursework essays and the research dissertation. Explorations & Debates in History is assessed by two essays totalling 5,000 words. The two option modules are each assessed by a series of essays, which will develop formatively assessed tasks carried out in the module. The research dissertation will be 15,000 words long. The word limit of 15,000 words includes footnotes but excludes bibliography.

Formative assessment comprises a series of preparatory tasks for Research Skills, seminar presentations in other modules and participation in the dissertation workshop (ie, helping to organise it and presenting a paper).

All modes of assessment test students' skills, knowledge and understanding in different forms.

All assessed coursework is moderated internally and dissertations double marked. A sample is submitted to an external examiner who ensures parity of standards across the MA



programme. The marks are approved by the History Examination Board at which the external examiner is present to monitor proceedings and advise on borderline cases. No mark is final until the History Examination Board has met. The Examination Board determines the final award. The MA is awarded to candidates who successfully pass all of the different elements of assessment.

## Marking criteria

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
80-100%	Distinction (Outstanding/ Exceptional)	Exceptional work of potentially publishable quality, showing originality and based on extensive research and independent thought. Represents the achievement of the learning outcomes to an outstanding level.
70-79%	Distinction	Excellent work. In addition to the qualities expected at lower levels, shows independence of thought and judgement in relation to primary and secondary material and an ability to develop original ideas on a particular topic. Has a high level of analytical and critical skills. Able to put the topic in its regional context and to draw comparisons between places, periods and subjects. Imaginative and well- rounded work. Shows readiness to adopt new approaches and techniques. Represents the achievement of the learning outcomes to an excellent level.
60-69%	Merit	Good work, showing analytical and critical abilities, a wide knowledge of the topic under discussion, a sound grasp of the nature of the sources and of the subject's historiography. High standard of writing and presentation. Represents the achievements of the learning outcomes to a good level.
50-59%	Pass	Satisfactory work, showing an ability to analyse the main issues and support the analysis with adequate knowledge; able to write to the point; shows an awareness of the nature of the sources and historiography; some faults in English style, acceptable in examinations but not in essays and dissertations. Represents the achievement of the learning outcomes to a threshold level.
30-49%	Fail	Work based on inadequate knowledge and showing a failure to grasp the main issues and to tackle the problems under discussion; limited powers of analysis and argument. Represents an overall failure to achieve the learning outcomes

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
10-29%	Bad fail	Unsatisfactory and inadequate work that demonstrates a significant overall failure to engage with or achieve the appropriate learning outcomes
1-9%	Very bad fail	A submission that does not even attempt to address the specified learning outcomes
0%	Non submission or plagiarised	A categorical mark representing either the failure to submit an assessment or a mark assigned for a plagiarised assessment

## How the programme is structured

The programme consists of four modules: Explorations & Debates in Queer History (one term, 30 credits), the Research Skills Module (one term, 30 credits), Two Option Modules (to a value of 60 credits, one term each), and a research dissertation (60 credits).

Full-time students usually take Explorations & Debates in Queer History, the Research Skills module and one option module in the first term. In the second term they take one option module and begin work on their dissertation. In the third term they participate in the dissertation conference and then continue and complete their dissertation. Part-time students usually take Explorations & Debates in Queer History in the first term of year 1 and EITHER Research Skills or one option in the second term of year 1. In year 2, if they have not already taken Research Skills, they usually take the Research Skills module in the first term AND Option 2 in either the first or second term when they also begin work on the dissertation. In Year 2, if they have already taken Research Skills, they take two options, which may both be taken in the first or second term, or may be taken one in each term, when they also begin work on their dissertation. In term 3 of year 2 students participate in the dissertation workshop and then continue and complete the dissertation.

Explorations & Debates in Queer History consists of weekly seminars for all students and, additionally, separate tutorial time for students during staff feedback and consultation hours. The module explores a range of historical and interdisciplinary approaches, debates and questions with regard to Queer History through the analysis of key texts across History and other relevant disciplines engaged in Queer History.

The Research Skills Module aims to give students understanding and practical experience in the range and use of source material and appropriate research methods. Textual, visual, material and oral sources will be critically addressed through classroom discussion and field visits. A further, and important, objective of this module is to prepare students for the research to be undertaken in order to complete the dissertation. Research Skills consists of weekly seminars/field trips for all students.

The thematic Option Modules introduce students to current, in-depth research on a range of topics in Queer History from the early modern period to the present. The modules allow students to study the impact and application of the theoretical knowledge they acquire in the Explorations & Debates and Research Skills modules. Option Modules vary from year to year depending on staff research commitments, and consist of weekly seminars for all students and tutorial time for students during staff feedback and consultation hours. Students choose two Options, which will encompass a diverse regional, periodic, conceptual and methodological range.

Students may take one option from outside the queer history programme option offerings, and will be encouraged to discuss this possibility with the course leader. It is compulsory that one Option is taken from among the Queer History options offered each year by the Department of History.

This can include any other History MA module offered including Explorations and Debates in History, the compulsory module for the MA History. Queer History cannot be separated from other histories, and so it is a great benefit to students to have the opportunity to draw from the rich expertise of historical work being done at Goldsmiths reflected in MA options each year. A student may, for example, be interested in taking a module that will offer them greater depth of understanding in a particular geographic or temporal context. A student might also find particular value in a thematically organised module. In both cases students would be encouraged to use this opportunity to further engage with queer histories.

A list of options offered as part of the MA History are available each year and are offered subject to staff availability.

Alternatively one option may be chosen from those offered by the other University of London Colleges which participate in the intercollegiate scheme, or an appropriate module from another Goldsmiths Department. If students choose a 15 credits intercollegiate Option Module, the required 30 credits can be obtained by undertaking a 15 credits Independent Study Project.

Part-time students will normally be expected to have passed in the first year Exploration and Debates in History and EITHER Research Skills OR an option module to the value of 30 credits in the first year, before proceeding to the final year.

All students must have passed modules to the value of 90 credits before proceeding to the dissertation.

Students may choose to structure their studies differently, but this must be discussed and approved, in advance, by the programme convenor.

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Explorations and Debates in Queer History	HT71139B	30	7	Compulsory	1
Research Skills	HT71110G	30	7	Compulsory	1
Optional Modules to the value of 60 CATS from a list available annually from the Department. One Option may be chosen from another Goldsmiths Department or University of London College which participates in the intercollegiate scheme (If students choose a 15 credits intercollegiate Option Module, the required 30 credits can be obtained by undertaking a 15 credits Independent Study Project)	Various	60	7	Optional	1-2
Dissertation	HT71063C	60	7	Compulsory	2-3

## Academic support

Support for learning and wellbeing is provided in a number of ways by departments and College support services who work collaboratively to ensure students get the right help to reach their best potential both academically and personally.

All students are allocated a Personal Tutor (one in each department for joint programmes) who has overall responsibility for their individual progress and welfare. Personal Tutors meet with their student at least twice a year either face-to-face, as part of a group and/or electronically. The first meeting normally takes place within the first few weeks of the autumn term. Personal Tutors are also available to students throughout the year of study. These meetings aim to discuss progress on modules, discussion of the academic discipline and reports from previous years if available (for continuing students). This provides an opportunity for progress, attendance and assessment marks to be reviewed and an informed discussion to take place about how to strengthen individual learning and success.

All students are also allocated a Senior Tutor to enable them to speak to an experienced academic member of staff about any issues which are negatively impacting their academic study and which are beyond the normal scope of issues handled by Programme Convenors and Personal Tutors.

Students are provided with information about learning resources, the [Library](#) and information available on [Learn.gold \(VLE\)](#) so that they have access to department/programme handbooks, programme information and support related information and guidance.

Taught sessions and lectures provide overviews of themes, which students are encouraged to complement with intensive reading for presentation and discussion with peers at seminars. Assessments build on lectures and seminars so students are expected to attend all taught sessions to build knowledge and their own understanding of their chosen discipline.

All assessed work is accompanied by some form of feedback to ensure that students' work is on the right track. It may come in a variety of forms ranging from written comments on a marked essay to oral and written feedback on developing projects and practice as they attend workshops.

Students may be referred to specialist student services by department staff or they may access support services independently. Information about support services is provided on the [Goldsmiths website](#) and for new students through new starter information and induction/Welcome Week. Any support recommendations that are made are agreed with the student and communicated to the department so that adjustments to learning and teaching are able to be implemented at a department level and students can be reassured that arrangements are in place. Opportunities are provided for students to review their support arrangements should their circumstances change. The [Disability](#) and [Wellbeing](#) Services maintain caseloads of students and provide on-going support.

The [Careers Service](#) provides central support for skills enhancement, running [The Gold Award](#) scheme and other co-curricular activities that are accredited via the Higher Education Achievement Report ([HEAR](#)).

The [Academic Skills Centre](#) works with academic departments offering bespoke academic literacy sessions. It also provides a programme of academic skills workshops and one-to-one provision for students throughout the year.

## **Links with employers, placement opportunities and career prospects**

The MA Queer History develops a range of transferable skills which are highly valued in the jobs market. These include advanced research and analytical expertise; increased independence of thought; the ability to marshal, evaluate and communicate, in written and

oral form, complex information and ideas; project management; teamwork and workshop organisation.

Students who complete the MA programme are successful in all types of careers which are available to humanities students, ranging from the media to the law to the public sector. Graduate students from the Department have continued to careers in museums and galleries, archives, journalism, charities, university and arts administration, local government and teaching as well as doctoral research. Graduates of the MA Queer History would have the added skills and background valued by public and private organisations and employers seeking staff with expertise in gender and sexual minorities issues, diverse histories, and diversity more generally.

The emphasis on public history, and the collaboration with community and heritage partners that it entails, also creates opportunities for students to build connections and networks away from the College. In this way they both build up their own skillsets and confidence, but also make real connections with institutions and individuals that may act as references or even future employers.

## **The requirements of a Goldsmiths degree**

All taught postgraduate degrees have a minimum total value of 180 credits and involve one calendar year of full-time study. Some programmes may extend over more than one calendar year and, when this is the case, they have a higher total credit value. Programmes are composed of individual modules, each of which has its own credit value. Part-time students normally take modules to the value of 90 credits each year. If a programme has a part-time pathway, the structure will be set out in the section “How the programme is structured” above. Normally, all modules are at level 7 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

More detailed information about the structure and requirements of a Goldsmiths degree is provided in the [Goldsmiths Qualifications and Credit Framework](#).

## **Modules**

Modules are defined as:

- “Optional” – which can be chosen from a group of modules
- “Compulsory” – which must be taken as part of the degree

## **Progression**

Some programmes may require students to pass specific modules prior to completion of the dissertation/major project (or equivalent). Additionally, where a programme of study extends beyond one calendar year, students may be required to pass specific modules in their first year of study before progressing to the second year. Where this is the case, these requirements will be set out in this Programme Specification.

## **Award of the degree**

In order to graduate, students must successfully complete all modules specified for the programme, as set out within the section “How the programme is structured” above.

## **Classification**

Final degree classification is calculated on the basis of a student’s mean average mark (based on credit value) across all modules on the programme.

Masters degrees are awarded with the following classifications:

- Distinction – 70%+
- Merit – 60-69%
- Pass – 50-59%

More detail on the [calculation of the final classification](#) is on our website.

## **Interim exit awards**

Some programmes incorporate interim exit points of Postgraduate Certificate and/or Postgraduate Diploma, which may be awarded on the successful completion of modules to the minimum value of 60 credits or 120 credits respectively. The awards are made without classification.

When these awards are incorporated within the programme, the relevant learning outcomes and module requirements will be set out within the “What you will be expected to achieve” section above.

The above information is intended as a guide, with more detailed information available in the [Goldsmiths Academic Manual](#).

## **Programme-specific rules and facts**

### **General programme costs**

In addition to your tuition fees, you will be responsible for meeting standard costs associated with your study. Find out more information at [gold.ac.uk/programme-costs](http://gold.ac.uk/programme-costs).

### **Specific programme costs**

Not applicable.

## **How teaching quality will be monitored**

Goldsmiths employs a number of methods to ensure and enhance the quality of learning and teaching on its programmes.

Programmes and modules are formally approved against national standards and are monitored throughout the year, such as in departmental committees, a variety of student feedback mechanisms and through the completion of module evaluation questionnaires. Every programme has at least one External Examiner who reviews comments annually on the standards of awards and student achievement. External Examiner(s) attend Boards of Examiners meetings and submit an annual written report.

Modules, programmes and/or departments are also subject to annual and periodic review internally, as well as periodic external scrutiny.

Quality assurance processes aim to ensure Goldsmiths' academic provision remains current, that the procedures to maintain the standards of the awards are working effectively and the quality of the learning opportunities and information provided to students and applicants is appropriate.

Detailed information on all these procedures are published on the [Quality Office web pages](#).