

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



Newcastle
University

1 Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2 Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3 Final Award	BA Hons
4 Programme Title	Philosophy Philosophy (with Year Abroad) Philosophy (with Placement Year) Philosophy (with Year Abroad) (inversion)
5 UCAS/Programme Code	V500 1429U 1434U
6 Programme Accreditation	N/A
7 QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	Philosophy
8 FHEQ Level	Level 6
9 Date written/revised	July 2021

10 Programme Aims

1. To introduce philosophical theory and the history of ideas as both an academic discipline, in line with the QAA Subject Benchmarking guidelines, and also a powerful mode of reflective critique and cultural engagement.
2. To establish philosophical thought and thinking as an evolving and ever-present cultural force and practice, as a parallel and complementary agent (to the social sciences and to the arts) in the process of developing the relation between the human being and its environment.
3. To introduce knowledge paradigms which interpenetrate disciplinary boundaries via concepts such as autonomy, self, rationality, truth, opinion, scientific methodology, space, time, nature, reality, beauty, modernity, and digitisation.
4. To interrogate the notion of knowledge as a system of thought grounded in culture and the human condition, and apply it to contemporary learning and social reality, one in which religious, philosophical, scientific, political, and aesthetic traditions originating in a variety of spatial and temporal domains coexist and interpenetrate each other.
5. To develop, through the acquisition and production of philosophical knowledge, a portfolio of personal competences demanded by the nature and needs of the knowledge economy as well as the emergence of specific employment roles.
6. To meet the requirements of a programme at Level 6 of the FHEQ.

For Students Undertaking a Placement Year:

7. Provide students with the experience of seeking and securing a position with an employer.
8. Facilitate independent self-management and proactive interaction in a non-university setting.
9. Provide a period of practical work experience that will benefit current academic study and longer term career plans.

10. Enable students to ethically apply their knowledge and skills in the work place, reflect upon their development and effectively evidence and articulate their learning in relevant future settings.

The Study Abroad Year enables students to:

11. Benefit from the experience of living in another country for an extended period but studying in English .

12. Reflect on and develop graduate attributes particularly adaptability, resilience, global awareness and intercultural competency.

11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should:

- A1 Have knowledge of (1) central texts and ideas of specific, canonical philosophers; (2) of some central theories and arguments in the field of Metaphysics and Epistemology; (3) of some central theories and arguments in the fields of Moral, Political, or Social Philosophy
- A2 Be aware of the relationship between these key philosophical systems of thought and history, culture, technology and society.
- A3 Have an awareness of major issues currently at the frontiers of philosophical debate and research.
- A4 Have an ability to cross traditional subject boundaries, recognising philosophical doctrines in other disciplines and debates, and be able to apply philosophical skills and techniques to issues arising outside the academy

For Students Undertaking a Placement Year:

- A5 Apply personal and professional development strategies to prioritise, plan, and manage their own skills development and learning.
- A6 Research, select and apply relevant knowledge aimed at enhancing their own skills and effectiveness in specific duties at their placement.
- A7 Demonstrate an understanding of a work environment, how it functions and their contribution to it,
- A8 Relate their work based learning to other areas of personal development, including academic performance.

Learning and Teaching Methods

The primary method for introducing knowledge systems and philosophical systems of thought is through lecture courses taught in each Stage of the programme. The modules will explore philosophical thought both in its historical context (the history of ideas), and its problematical aspect (A1, A2). In each stage, compulsory modules will ensure the provision of both ethics and metaphysics as the twin pillars of philosophical thinking and optional modules will concentrate on contemporary and historical debates (A3). The relation between knowledge systems and culture is further explored within lecture courses and by the provision of the personalized object-centred modules, which enable the student to relate philosophical thinking to a broad range of issues (A4).

Assessment Strategy

Students will establish their appreciation of learning practices in the context of knowledge processing through writing essays and contributing to seminar discussions and through the extended projects in Stages 2 and 3. The projects will include peer-assessed presentations and diverse media productions.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

Cognitive skills

- B1 Analyse, interpret and communicate (both verbally and orally) complex ideas and texts.
- B2 Think critically and independently, distinguish fine differences between views and find common ground, generate new ideas, solutions and ways of thinking.
- B3 Engage in interdisciplinary work, organize material, pursue independent research and identify, absorb and sift complex information.

Learning and Teaching Methods

Lectures use canonical texts from the philosophical tradition alongside contemporary articles which are discussed in seminars. (B1) The aim of the seminars is to demonstrate understanding and evidenced broader reading than the lectures and be able to articulate these arguments (B2). The personalized object-centred discussion groups bring philosophical thinking to bear on actual issues through small group discussion. (B3)

Assessment Strategy

Continuous assessment in the form of written essays will assess B1-2 in all modules. The personalised project modules in Stages 1, 2 and 3 also require the production of presentations, webpages, reports which are formatively and peer assessed. (B1-B3). The project dissertation itself is a long piece of argument at the intersection of actual issues and philosophical thinking and requires the student to pursue ideas beyond disciplinary boundaries. (B3)

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- C1 Develop a portfolio of evaluative, orientation and communication skills relevant for operating knowledge networks and related institutional structures, particularly concerning the process of learning, its delivery and integration with other processes.
- C2 Place learning practices in the context of knowledge processing and communication peculiar to the information society

Learning and Teaching Methods

Students are taught a range of relevant evaluative, orientation and communication skills (C1) in a progressive way through the programme. Traditional disciplines in HE have to adapt to the knowledge economy which demands competences to orchestrate diverse knowledge and to communicate it in varied contexts. The aim of the programme in Philosophical Studies is to impart such competences to the students who graduate with a degree benchmarked against a traditional discipline but, additionally, are able to understand, communicate and apply knowledge from a range of sources and in a range of media and discourses, placing them in an advantageous position in the contemporary employment context (C2). Students are taught to evaluate philosophical ideas across all three Stages and students are taught learning practices in the context of knowledge processing particularly in the compulsory extended projects.

Assessment Strategy

Continuous assessment is in the form of essays, portfolios of work and dissertations. All work is evaluated through continuous assessment that is the most appropriate format for the discursive approach required in the module. The use of written, timed examinations is discouraged because philosophical thought is not usually required in pressurized situations nor hinges upon the requirement of a good memory.

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- D1 Employ analytical skills, knowledge management and textual interpretation.
- D2 Employ the ability to communicate effectively in writing and orally in a way appropriate to the audience.
- D3 Develop IT skills.

For Students Undertaking a Placement Year:

- D4 Reflect on and manage own learning and development within the workplace.
- D5 Use existing and new knowledge to enhance personal performance in a workplace environment, evaluate the impact and communicate this process.
- D6 Use graduate skills in a professional manner in a workplace environment, evaluate the impact and communicate the personal development that has taken place.

Learning and Teaching Methods

D1 are skills essential to a philosophical education and are developed throughout the course. The project module allows students to present their ideas in a variety of ways and using diverse technology and media as well as in diverse registers. Written communications skills will be learnt through the completion of essays and project reports. Oral communications skills are learnt through practice in the group environment. (D2) Students will learn IT skills through 'hands on' experience, including image manipulation and presentation skills. (D3)

Assessment Strategy

The evaluation of continuous assessment throughout the programme inherently contains an assessment of written communication skills.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

The programme is divided into three Stages. Each Stage requires the study of modules with a total credit value of 120. Each credit requires a total student effort of 10 hours that may include lectures, coursework, seminars, private study and revision.

The degree programme itself is benchmarked against the QAA Subject benchmark statements in Philosophy (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/SBS-philosophy-15.pdf>). This identification of the degree is important for students both to ground themselves in a discipline and to communicate to potential employers. The degree consists of three equal parts: core-specialist modules, cross-faculty, university wide optional components and an object-centred project.

The compulsory modules, which constitute a third of the curriculum, constitute the core areas of metaphysics, ethics, epistemology, the history of ideas and critical reasoning required for the identification of the degree as philosophy. One third of the curriculum is constituted by optional modules, which can be taken in philosophy, in other departments and careers development

modules. There is a progression from pre-honours to honours and a loose chronological development of ideas from Ancient philosophy to late modernity, concentrating on the main thinkers and theories of the European philosophical tradition broadly conceived.

The final third of the degree is occupied by the object-centred project. Students devote 20 credits in the first year and 40 credits in each of stages 2 and 3.

Students on 1429U will spend a year abroad in between Stage 2 and 3. Students on 1434U will spend one year undertaking a work placement between Stage 2 and 3.

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

Particular features of the programme are:

1. The personalized project modules in Stages 1, 2 and 3 which offer an exceptional opportunity for self-development. The personalized object-centred project module is the heartbeat of the degree and has been commended for exemplary practice by at least three different external examiners. The student projects are object-based and context-driven and student-led. They involve the competencies of critical inquiry, self-development, personal learning and tyro-research skills in a context of discipline affirmation and making one's learning relevant to the world at large. The student is encouraged to actively develop a personal portfolio of skills leading to the integration of philosophical thought and methodology to an employment niche.
2. The idea of philosophy as engagement with the actual world. The degree offers a real investigation into the appropriateness of philosophy as a discourse outside the academy.
3. It is identified as a European or Continental Philosophy Programme but offers opportunity to study in all philosophical traditions.
4. It is a broadly based interdisciplinary programme and its flexibility offers ample opportunity to explore aspects of interest to particular students and construct a personal programme of study.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

[V500, 1492U, 1434U, Programme Regulations 23-24](#)

13 Support for Student Learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

Accreditation reports

N/A

Additional mechanisms

N/A

15 Regulation of assessment

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

https://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qsh_progspec_generic_info.pdf

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/>

The University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.