

Programme Specification

BA Archaeology and Anthropology

For students entering Part 1 in September 2025

UCAS Code: VL46

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This document sets out key information about your Programme and forms part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

Awarding Institution	University of Reading
Teaching Institution	University of Reading
Length of Programme	3 years
Length of Programme with placement/year abroad	BA Archaeology and Anthropology with Study Year Abroad - 4 years (UCAS Code: VL48) BA Archaeology and Anthropology with Professional Placement - 4 years (UCAS Code: VL47)
Accreditation	N/A
QAA Subject Benchmarking Group	Archaeology; Anthropology

Programme information and content

This programme aims to provide you with a rich understanding of the diversity and common ground of human beings, focusing on behaviours and societies in both the past and the present. A central focus of the degree is understanding how anthropological perspectives afford insights into global issues, such as heritage politics, climatic change and climate justice, and the ongoing legacies of colonialism. You will be able to study both past and present perspectives on these issues, and engage with a wide range of material culture, biological and ethnographic evidence, theoretical perspectives, and real world problems. The degree will support you in developing your academic and transferable skills, in preparation for a range of career choices.

The programme explores the experiences of human beings, from the biological evolution of our earliest ancestors, to the cultures and societies of people from around the world today. You will have the opportunity to develop professional skills and experiences, through the Archaeology Field School and a range of practical and data-led modules, supported by our excellent artefact teaching collections. The programme's strengths lie in the combination of methodologies from the humanities and sciences and the application of theoretical concepts and analytical skills to material and social evidence. This enables an understanding of the human past in all its spatial and temporal dimensions, and provides opportunities to apply past perspectives to contemporary global challenges.

You will expand the range, depth and sophistication of your knowledge and skills within the structured progression of the programme through Parts 1, 2 and 3.

Part 1:	Part 1 introduces you to the methods, practices and theories of both archaeology and anthropology, alongside an overview of human social and biological development and central features of contemporary cultures and societies. You will develop the academic skills to help you transition into Higher Education through a series of Preparatory Learning Sessions delivered by Archaeology in Semester 1 and 2.
Part 2:	Part 2 enhances your understanding of both disciplines, explored through thematic and period/place-specific modules that integrate humanity's past and present. It encourages you to engage with primary archaeological and anthropological data (e.g. material and ethnographic evidence) and develop your practical skills (e.g. through participation in the Archaeology Field School and/or practical/data-led modules).
Placement/Study abroad year:	The four year variants of the programme (BA Archaeology & Anthropology with Study Year Abroad or Professional Placement) offer you an outstanding opportunity to develop your archaeological experiences and transferable skills, either through study in a different academic setting (Study Year Abroad) or through a Professional Placement. The programme also offers shorter placement and study abroad opportunities, through modules at Part 2 (study abroad and placement modules) and Part 3 (placement module).
Part 3:	Part 3 gives you the opportunity to increase your specialisation through the wide range of specialist subjects on offer, especially within your original research project (Dissertation) which can explore archaeological and/or anthropological questions.

Programme Learning Outcomes - BA Archaeology and Anthropology

During the course of the Programme, you will have the opportunity to develop a range of skills, knowledge and attributes (known as learning outcomes) For this programme, these are:

	Learning outcomes
1	Demonstrate understanding of the principles and methods by which archaeological and ethnographic data are acquired.
2	Demonstrate understanding of the concepts and theories used to analyse and interpret archaeological and ethnographic data.
3	Demonstrate knowledge of the archaeology and anthropology of a number of geographical regions and chronological periods, throughout human history across the globe.
4	Demonstrate an understanding of the nature and extent of human diversity and commonality, and account for this using a variety of analytical perspectives.

5	Indicate a critical awareness of how the disciplines of archaeology and anthropology have developed historically, and how they relate to each other and to other cognate subjects.
6	Describe and analyse the ways in which human beings shape and are shaped by social, cultural and environmental contexts.
7	Demonstrate awareness of the social, cultural and political context of archaeological and anthropological interpretation and practice.
8	Show an appreciation and understanding of the relationship between local social and cultural forms in relation to global processes and broader historical developments.
9	Demonstrate awareness of the impact of archaeological and anthropological practice, interpretation and representation on other communities, including historically marginalised groups, and the need to engage with such communities.
10	Understand the need for an inclusive and diverse discipline and accord respect to diverse others within and beyond archaeology and anthropology.
11	Appreciate, understand and engage in contemporary debates around inequality, sustainability, globalisation, cultural diversity, decolonisation and anti-racism.
12	Demonstrate a wide range of skills, relating to employability in the wider world of work; these include teamworking, problem solving, data analysis and synthesis, communication, independent working, digital literacy, and health and safety.

You will be expected to engage in learning activities to achieve these Programme learning outcomes. Assessment of your modules will reflect these learning outcomes and test how far you have met the requirements for your degree.

To pass the Programme, you will be required to meet the progression or accreditation and award criteria set out below.

In addition to the learning outcomes stated above if you are on a placement or study abroad programme you will have the opportunity to develop the following learning outcome:

Additional Learning outcomes	
Study Abroad	
By the end of the Study Abroad Programme, students will have adapted to international study contexts in order to achieve the required academic outcomes determined by the host institution.	
Placement	
By the end of the Placement Year Programme, students will have explored and developed their professional experience, skills and knowledge, contributing significantly towards their continuous learning and career prospects as graduates.	

Module information
Each part comprises 120 credits, allocated across a range of compulsory and optional modules as shown below. Compulsory modules are listed.

Part 1 Modules:

Module	Name	Credits	Level
AR1EMP	Early Empires: Mesopotamia, Egypt & Rome	20	4
AR1FOR	Forensic Anthropology and the Archaeology of Death	20	4
AR1MET	Archaeology today: methods and practice	20	4
AR1RAT	Revolutions and Transitions: The Human Journey from 6 Million Years Ago to the Present Day	20	4
AR1SOC	Contemporary world cultures: an introduction to social anthropology	20	4

Your remaining credits will be made up of optional modules in Archaeology, Museum Studies or from an approved list.

Part 2 Modules:

Module	Name	Credits	Level
AR2ETH	Methods and Approaches in Ethnographic Practice	20	5
AR2FSC	Archaeology Field School and Professional Practice	20	5
AR2SCF2	Changing the Face of the Earth: Past, Present and Future Sustainability	20	5
AR2TAH	Archaeology and heritage: past, present and future	20	5

You must also take a minimum of 20 credits worth of 'Period Options', focussing on the archaeology of specific time periods or regions. Your remaining credits will be made up of optional modules in Archaeology or Geography, including vocational, techniques- and science-based options, or cross-listed modules in other Departments.

Under exceptional circumstances, up to 20 credits may be chosen from modules available from an approved list.

Modules during a placement year or study year (if applicable):

Students undertaking a placement/study abroad year as part of a four year degree programme will take 120 credits in either Work Experience or Study Abroad. The placement or study abroad year should not normally be shorter than nine months full-time.

Part 2 (continued) modules:

If you take a year-long placement or study abroad, Part 3 as described below may be subject to variation.

Part 3 Modules:

Module	Name	Credits	Level
AR3D1	Dissertation	40	6

Your remaining credits will be made up of at least 40 credits of optional modules in Archaeology, plus modules from Geography or cross-listed modules in other Departments.

Under exceptional circumstances, up to 20 credits may be chosen from modules available from an approved list.

Placement opportunities

Placements:

You may be provided with the opportunity to undertake a credit-bearing placement as part of your Programme. This will form all or part of an optional module. You will be required to find and secure a placement opportunity, with the support of the University

Study Abroad:

You may be provided with the opportunity to undertake a Study Abroad placement during your Programme. This is subject to you meeting academic conditions detailed in the Programme Handbook, including obtaining the relevant permissions from your School, and the availability of a suitable Study Abroad placement. If you undertake a Study Abroad placement, further arrangements will be discussed and agreed with you.

Optional modules:

The optional modules available can vary from year to year. An indicative list of the range of optional modules for your programme can be found online in the Course Catalogue. Details of optional modules for each part, including any additional costs associated with the optional modules, will be made available to you prior to the beginning of the Part in which they are to be taken and you will be given an opportunity to express interest in the optional modules that you would like to take. Entry to optional modules will be at the discretion of the University and subject to availability and may be subject to pre-requisites, such as completion of another module. Although the University tries to ensure you are able to take the optional modules in which you have expressed interest this cannot be guaranteed.

Teaching and learning delivery:

Archaeology & Anthropology students are provided with a tremendously varied teaching and learning experience throughout the programme, reflecting the variable nature of the two closely-related academic and real-world disciplines and the diverse character of our student body.

Our students are provided with a long-term perspective on the diversity and richness of past human experience, combining a degree-level education in archaeological and ethnographic data with the development of numerous academic and personal transferable skills in preparation for a wide range of career choices.

Teaching covers a wide range of geographical areas (across the world) and periods (from 6 million years ago to the present). Students are taught in a variety of ways, from traditional lectures to small group seminars, from hands-on practical object handling activities to

scientific analysis in the lab, from museum visits to fieldwork and excavation. We combine face-to-face teaching with digital approaches (e.g. screencasting, learning capture and blended learning, and the use of video as well as textual materials).

Archaeology and anthropology are disciplines that cross between the humanities and sciences. Our teaching reflects this position, with some modules more focused on ‘historical’ or ‘cultural’ type narratives and others on analytical and scientific method. Throughout the programme, the broader interpretive relevance of archaeological and biological anthropological scientific techniques are drawn out, and scientific understanding is embedded within all of our modules. A key topic of discussion throughout the programme is the social, cultural, political and environmental context of archaeological and anthropological interpretation and practice – this learning ranges from vocational-focused considerations of local planning decisions to the necessity to engage with wider issues about decolonisation, repatriation and engagement with marginalised groups.

Elements of your programme will be delivered via digital technology.

The scheduled teaching and learning activity hours and amount of technology enhanced learning activity for your programme will depend upon your module combination. In addition, you will undertake some self-scheduled teaching and learning activities, designed by and/or involving staff, which give some flexibility for you to choose when to complete them. You will also be expected to undertake guided independent study. Information about module study hours including contact hours and the amount of independent study which a student is normally expected to undertake for a module is indicated in the relevant module description.

Accreditation details

N/A

Assessment

Archaeology and anthropology are very varied subjects that cover a wide range of academic areas, from philosophy and ethics to hard science, and from excavation in the field to public engagement in museums. As a result, the programme necessarily requires students to acquire a broad understanding of methodologies and a wide range of skills. The Department of Archaeology has long employed a wide range of assessments across all of its programmes in order to reflect this breadth of teaching and learning.

Our summative assessment methods can broadly be divided into six ‘types’:

1. Critical engagement with academic issues
2. Analysis of evidence
3. Practical/vocational work

4. Public facing documents/activities

5. Group/team working

6. Other

Our varied pedagogical approach to assessment not only enables us to measure the full breadth of students' learning across the degree, but also enables our neurodiverse body of students to shine in different ways, dependent on their particular skillset and learning styles.

Progression

Part 1

To achieve a threshold performance at Part 1, a student will normally be required to:

- (i) Obtain an overall average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 1;
- (ii) Obtain a mark of at least 40% in individual modules amounting to not less than 80 credits taken in Part 1; and
- (iii) Obtain marks of at least 30% in modules amounting to 120 credits.

In order to progress from Part 1 to Part 2, a student must achieve a threshold performance.

The achievement of a threshold performance at Part 1 qualifies a student for a Certificate of Higher Education if they leave the University before completing the subsequent Part.

Transferring from a Joint Honours to a Single Honours programme

Students are able to transfer from a Joint Honours to a Single Honours programme in one of their joint subject areas at the end of Part 1, subject to fulfilling the Part 1 University Threshold Standard, achieving marks of at least 40% in at least 40 credits of modules in the subject to which they wish to transfer, and fulfilling any programme-specific progression rules for the Part 1 Single Honours Programme to which they wish to transfer.

Students who transfer from a Joint Honours to a Single Honours programme may not have taken all of the Part 1 modules listed in the Single Honours Programme Specification. The modules which they have taken will be shown on their Diploma Supplement.

Part 2

To achieve a threshold performance at Part 2, a student shall normally be required to:

- (i) Obtain a weighted average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 2; and
- (ii) Obtain marks of at least 40% in individual modules amounting to at least 80 credits taken in Part 2; and
- (iii) Obtain marks of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to at least 120 credits, except that a mark below 30% may be condoned in no more than 20 credits of modules owned by the Department of Mathematics and Statistics.

In order to progress from Part 2 to Part 3, a student must achieve a threshold performance.

The achievement of a threshold performance at Part 2 qualifies a student for a Diploma of Higher Education if they leave the University before completing the subsequent Part.

Professional/placement year

Students are required to pass the professional placement year/study abroad year in order to progress on the programme which incorporates the professional placement year/study abroad year. Students who fail the professional placement year/study abroad year transfer to the non-placement year version of the programme.

Classification

Bachelors' degrees

The University's honours classification scheme is based on the following:

Mark Interpretation

70% - 100% First class

60% - 69% Upper Second class

50% - 59% Lower Second class

40% - 49% Third class

35% - 39% Below Honours Standard

0% - 34% Fail

The weighting of the Parts/Years in the calculation of the degree classification is:

Three year programmes:

Part 2: one-third

Part 3: two-thirds

Four year programmes, including study abroad or a placement year

Part 2: one-third

Study abroad: Year abroad or Placement not included in the classification

Part 3: two-thirds

The classification method is given in detail in: <https://www.reading.ac.uk/cqsd/policies-procedures/assessmenthandbook>.

Additional costs of the programme

You will be expected to be equipped with suitable outdoor clothing and footwear for any field trips and if you select the Archaeology field school. There are no compulsory textbooks. Depending on your module combination, you may be asked to contribute to the costs of non-compulsory fieldtrips and museum visits.

Costs are indicative and may vary according to optional modules chosen and are subject to inflation and other price fluctuations. Estimates were calculated in 2024.

For further information about your Programme please refer to the Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions, which are available at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/module/>. The Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions do not form part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

BA Archaeology and Anthropology for students entering Part 1 in session 2025/26
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