

History

A graduate in History typically will have the ability to:

- demonstrate command of a substantial body of historical knowledge
- understand how people have existed, acted and thought in the context of the past
- read and use texts and other source materials critically and empathetically
- appreciate the complexity and diversity of situations, events and past mentalities
- recognise there are ways of testing statements and that there are rules of evidence which require integrity and maturity
- reflect critically on the nature and theoretical underpinnings of the discipline
- marshal an argument, be self-disciplined and independent intellectually
- express themselves orally and in writing with coherence, clarity and fluency
- gather, organise and deploy evidence, data and information
- analyse and solve problems
- use effectively ICT, information retrieval and presentation skills
- exercise self-discipline, self-direction and initiative
- work with others and have respect for others' reasoned views
- work collaboratively and participate effectively in group discussions
- show empathy and imaginative insight.

History is the aggregate and the continuum of events occurring in succession, leading from the past to the present and even into the future. It is the discipline that records and interprets past events involving human beings and their attempts to organise life materially and conceptually, individually and collectively. History comprises many varieties, each with its distinctive focus and theoretical orientation (for instance, economic, social, political, cultural, environmental history, the history of women, and gender).

The object of studying History is to widen students' experience and develop qualities of perception and judgement. The study of History provides a sense of the past, an awareness of the development of differing values, systems and societies and the inculcation of critical yet tolerant personal attitudes. History involves the cultural shock of encountering and sensing the past's otherness and of learning to understand unfamiliar structures, cultures and belief systems. These forms of understanding also shed important light on the influence that the past has on the present. History's reciprocal relationship with other disciplines can have an important influence on the experience of the student of the subject.

Many historians use the concepts, theories and methodologies of the social sciences, most obviously but by no means exclusively within courses in economic and social history. Where history is taught within the context of the social sciences, students need to devote considerable time to acquiring knowledge of one or more social sciences. In general, students of all types of history – cultural and political as well as economic and social – should have an awareness of relevant and appropriate concepts and theories.

Reading, discussion and writing, and engagement, exploration and discovery are essential. Students need to understand the problems inherent in the historical record, be able to cope with a range of viewpoints, to have an appreciation of the range of problems involved in the interpretation of complex, ambiguous, conflicting and often incomplete material, and a feeling for the limitations of knowledge and the dangers of simplistic explanations.

History graduates are extremely employable as they develop those characteristics many employers seek, and a History degree provides openings to a wide range of careers in business, the church, civil service, diplomatic services, teaching, public relations, politics, literature and arts, law, information technology and so forth. Many historians attain the top jobs in their chosen careers.

To check the growing range of resources produced by the Subject Centre to support employability and the use of this profile (including the Skills and Attributes map), go to www.hca.heacademy.ac.uk.

This profile, produced in 2006, is based on the QAA benchmark to be found at www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/honours/default.asp.