



Union
Theological
College

Programme Specification

MA in Theology

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| Awarding Body | Presbyterian Theological Faculty Ireland (PTFI) |
| Teaching Body | BibleMesh |
| Type of Collab. Arrangement | Validation Arrangement governed by a Memorandum of Agreement |
| Award Title | Master of Arts in Theology |
| Final Award | Master of Arts in Theology |
| Exit Award(s) | PG Cert Theology (60 CATS) PG Dip Theology (120 CATS) |
| Department | Department of Theology |
| Language of Study | English |
| FHEQ Level | Level 7 |
| JACS Code | V610 |
| QAA Subject Benchmark | QAA Benchmark Theology and Religious Studies (2022) |
| Normal Completion Time & Max Duration of Study | Part-time study – up to four years Full-time – up to two years |
| Mode of Study | Part-time and Full-time |
| Mode of Delivery | Online |
| Date Approved and Name of Authorised Body | 02 July 2020, PTFI |
| Applies to Students Commencing Study in (month/year) | September 2024, January 2025 |



Summary of the Programme

The MA in Theology is a fully online postgraduate programme which provides students with the opportunity to study theology by concentrating on some of the main topics in systematic theology. Delivered through our partners at BibleMesh this course enables students to see the role of Scripture in developing theological understanding and the manner in which ideas have developed amidst controversy.

Aims of the Programme

Main Educational Aims

1. To enable students to focus in appropriate depth on a variety of different topics within the subdisciplines of Christian Theology.
2. To provide opportunities for students to reflect upon and integrate prior study and other relevant experience with a wide range of new learning which is informed by research-led scholarship.
3. To provide a digital space in which students may engage in informed and respectful dialogue, recognising the strengths and weaknesses of other points of view.
4. To provide the knowledge and skills necessary to produce a research dissertation through sustained reflection on and engagement with a theological or ethical topic.
5. To develop an appreciation of the value of Christian doctrine for the life of the Church.

Criteria for Admission

Programme Entrance Requirements

Typically, at least a 2.2 degree, or equivalent qualification. Further, as the Degree Characteristics Statement notes programmes 'in this category often attract entrants with a bachelor's degree with honours or equivalent, or experience that may or may not be directly relevant to the particular profession.'¹

For overseas students, a 2.1 honours degree is normally equivalent to a Cumulative Grade Point Average of 3.3 or higher from an accredited institution.

Union Theological College requires all applicants whose first language is not English to have one of the following qualifications as evidence of their English language ability:

- An undergraduate or master's degree that was taught and assessed in English in a majority English-speaking country as defined by UK Visas and Immigration.
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic module (not General Training): overall score of 7.0 with at least 6.0 in each category.
- Pearson Test of English, Academic: PTE(A) total 67 (at least 56 in each of the 'communicative skills' sections).
- Cambridge Proficiency (CPE) or Cambridge Advanced (CAE): total 185 (at least 169 in each module).

¹ See The [QAA Characteristics Statement: Master's Degree \(2015\)](#), 5.



- TOEFL iBT: 100 overall with a minimum of 20 in each of the skills.
- Degrees taught and assessed in English must be no more than three years old at the beginning of the MTh programme. Language tests must be no more than two years old at the beginning of the degree programme.

Credit Accumulation & Transfer, and Accreditation of Prior Learning

The College's RPL Policy allows prospective students who do not meet the criteria for admission to demonstrate relevant prior experiential and certificated learning through the production of a portfolio of learning.

Programme Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to achieve and demonstrate the following learning and educational outcomes.

Knowledge and Understanding

By completion of this MA programme, a successful student should have demonstrated:

- an advanced and systematic understanding of a range of the major issues in the nature, task, and application of Christian theology with reference to the following:
 - the exegetical basis for Christian doctrine;
 - the confessional expression and historical reception of Christian theology;
 - the writings of theologians who have made significant theological contributions towards the formulation of these topics (both historical and contemporary); and
 - the different theological methodologies used in their study and constructive articulation; and
 - the relevance of these doctrines to contemporary theological issues.

Skills

By completion of this MA programme, a successful student should have demonstrated:

- a high level of critical awareness, currency in theological research, and the potential for original thinking in the subject;
- the range of techniques of postgraduate research and enquiry necessary to access, organise, create and interpret knowledge within the discipline (not necessarily new knowledge);
- the ability to read and interpret relevant primary and secondary in a way which is: careful and sophisticated; discerns and draws out theological assumptions; and assesses their consequences and contribution to Christian doctrine and its constructive articulation;
- the ability to analyse complex issues involving Christian doctrine and construct well framed and apt responses which: integrate Biblical exegesis; sensitively apply sophisticated ideas;
- a high level of presentational and communication skills in the construction and articulation of cogent, well-informed, critically-engaged, and sustained arguments within the discipline;



- the capacity to reflect upon and articulate one's own theological tradition as well as engage in informed and respectful dialogue with other points of view, particularly about controversial theological issues, recognising the strengths and weaknesses of other theological traditions and the methodological and philosophical issues involved; and
- competency in postgraduate research skills by evidencing self-direction, initiative, independence, and originality in planning and producing a dissertation

Programme Structure and Module Requirements

A student will take a total of 180 CATS of modules in one of two options: an option in Dogmatic Theology or an option in Theological Method. Each option affords students the opportunity to specialize in a particular topic through the programme module offerings, and a chosen topic in relation to each of these for the student's dissertation.

Proposed programme-level outcomes can all be demonstrated by students completing the following three compulsory modules and the dissertation, plus any other 3 modules (2 modules if the extended dissertation is completed):

- PTF219 Doctrine of God
- PTF220 Christology
- PTF221 The Holy Spirit

Students will be offered the opportunity to complete an option in Theological Method upon completion of the three new proposed modules in addition to the three compulsory modules.

This designation is not a recognized degree award and is not to be included on the student's diploma, but will be referenced on the student's BibleMesh Institute transcript and can be referenced by the programme coordinator informally in reference letters written on behalf of the student, or in other informal ways.

Students who complete the compulsory modules but not all three of the Theological Method option modules, will be considered to have taken the option in Dogmatic Theology.

Option Map

Dogmatic Theology

- 3 Compulsory Modules
 - PTF219 – Doctrine of God
 - PTF220 – Christology
 - PTF221 – The Holy Spirit
- Any 3 additional MA Theology taught modules (or 5 taught modules if taking expanded dissertation)
- PTF225 Dissertation

Theological Method

- 3 Compulsory Modules
 - PTF219 – Doctrine of God
 - PTF220 – Christology



- PTF221 – The Holy Spirit
- 3 Theological Method modules
 - From Scripture to Theology
 - Scripture and Theological Development to AD 451
 - Doctrine of Scripture

| | | Autumn 2024 | Spring 2025 | Summer 2025 | Autumn 2025 | Spring 2026 | Summer 2026 | Autumn 2026 | Spring 2027 | Summer 2027 |
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| Doctrine of God (PTF219) | 25 | | SP2025 | | | SP2026 | | AU2026 | SP2027 | |
| Christology (PTF220) | 25 | | | SU2025 | | | SU2026 | | SP2027 | SU2027 |
| The Holy Spirit (PTF221) | 25 | AU2024 | | | AU2025 | | | AU2026 | | |
| Salvation (PTF222) | 25 | | SP2025 | | AU2025 | SP2026 | | AU2026 | | |
| Eschatology (PTF224) | 25 | AU2024 | | SU2025 | | SP2026 | | | SP2027 | |
| Ethics (PTF223) | 25 | | SP2025 | | AU2025 | | SU2027 | | | SU2027 |
| From Scripture to Theology (PTF226) | 25 | | SP2025 | | | SP2026 | | | SP2027 | |
| Scripture and Theo Development (PTF227) | 25 | | | SU2025 | | | SU2026 | | | SU2027 |
| Doctrine of Scripture (PTF228) | 25 | | | | AU2025 | | | AU2026 | | |
| Dissertation (PTF225) | 30 | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |



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| Extended Dissertation (PTF229) | 55 | | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
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- PTF225 Dissertation

Vocational Opportunities

Employability

- The course offers a pathway into theological study for those from a wide range of backgrounds
- The course is particularly tailored to provide further training and ongoing development for Christian leaders
- The course is also designed to prepare students for Christian ministry
- Enhanced skills of analytical thinking and the ability to express oneself clearly in writing are all highly sought after by a diverse range of employers
- The nature of the course enhances a spectrum of digital capabilities.

Programme Awards

This programme conforms to the Union Theological College PGT Regulations.

Programme Teaching and Learning Strategies

The programme teaching and learning strategy aligns with the College's teaching and learning strategy 2020-25. It has been designed to enable students to fulfil the learning outcomes outlined above.

Knowledge and Understanding

In co-ordination with their tutor, students will gain knowledge and understanding through:

- reading, online lectures, seminars, peer interaction and personal supervision that is designed to provide breadth and depth in their understanding of Christian theology and its constructive articulation.
- Lectures and guided readings highlight areas of ongoing debate and model the knowledge and skills described in the learning outcomes.

Skills

In coordination with their tutor, students develop skills through the following:

- Student-centred learning situations involving seminar texts (primary or secondary) develop the ability to present, summarise, evaluate and debate the results of the critical analysis of texts and contexts among peers. Students receive feedback (both formal and informal) designed to improve the following skills: critical analysis; hermeneutics; and the charitable presentation and assessment of other assumptions, approaches and interpretations.



- Access to the dedicated immersive digital environment will further develop and enhance digital competencies.
- Feedback is provided on all written work in order to develop sophisticated writing skills, the ability to present sustained and persuasive arguments, and the charitable assessment of the views and positions of others.
- Feedback is provided on all written work in order to develop critical thinking skills, to hone skills in assessing primary and secondary sources, and to develop the ability to advance sophisticated arguments.
- The MA programme encourages students to become independent learners by way of a combination of bespoke research activities which map onto a student's individual plan, and more general training research methods germane to the discipline.
- Training in research methods is incorporated into the taught modules.
- Cerego sets help students gain fluency and mastery of threshold knowledge within theological ethics and quizzes are provided to aid in self-assessment
- The 3,000-word essays include directed indicative reading both within and outside a student's own tradition.
- The breadth of the learning experience is enriched through personal research for the completion of written assignments.
- The depth of the learning experience is enhanced by supervision from those with subject-specific expertise.
- Active digital dialogue with peers in the cohort is designed to enhance one's ability to communicate views and discuss controversial issues in a sensitive and effective manner.

Programme Assessment Strategy

The College's Assessment Policy includes principles which are fully aligned with the UK Quality Code. Assessment methods on the programme enable the student to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes outlined above. A wide variety of methods are used to enable the student to have every opportunity to demonstrate their competence. Assessment methods include the following:

Knowledge and Understanding

Student knowledge and understanding are assessed by a combination of these assessment elements:

- Cerego sets allow students to demonstrate the value and utility of incremental learning and assessed the degree of mastery of specialist threshold knowledge within the discipline.
- Online seminars and forums provide excellent immersive digital engagement and formative feedback as students interact with subject experts and peers in the analysis of subjects, themes and ideas.
- The 1,500 words essays are designed to assess analytical, discursive, interpretative and critical skills in theology and theological method and to test the ability of students to engage with, analyse, contextualise, interpret and criticise relevant material.



- Essays and other written assignments allow students to demonstrate:
 - the ability to engage with stipulated reading;
 - the initiative to engage in a wider exploration of the subject; and
 - many of the other intended learning outcomes of the programme.
- The dissertation/research project enables the student to demonstrate:
 - the results of independent research on a specialised topic;
 - an ability for critical evaluation of scholarly views;
 - an appropriate measure of insight and originality;
 - appropriate presentational, bibliographical, and discipline-specific skills; and many of the other intended learning outcomes of the programme

Student Support and Guidance

Each student is allocated a Personal Tutor who can assist with academic advice and support with personal issues.

Quality Management Arrangements

This programme is quality assured through the following processes:

- Five yearly cycle of revalidation
- Ongoing monitoring through the Programme Review process
- Programme Boards
- Engagement with programme student representatives
- Engagement with approved external examiners
- Module Reviews carried out after each module is delivered.