



Union Theological College

MTh Biblical Studies

Awarding Body	Presbyterian Theological Faculty Ireland (PTFI)
Teaching Body	Union Theological College, 108 Botanic Avenue, Belfast BT7 1JT
Type of Collab. Arrangement	N/A
Award Title	MTh Biblical Studies
Final Award	MTh Biblical Studies
Exit Award(s)	PG Certificate in Biblical Studies (60 CATS) PG Diploma in Biblical Studies (120 CATS)
Department	Department of Biblical Studies
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	Full-time study - one calendar year Part-time study – all taught modules must be completed within three years of enrolment. The dissertation is to be written in no more than a 12-month period. The earliest submission date for the dissertation is 24 months after enrolment and the latest submission date is four years after enrolment.
Mode of Study	Full-time/Part-time
Mode of Delivery	In-person/blended
Date Approved and Name of Authorised Body	26 March 2025
Applies to Students Commencing Study in (month/year)	September 2026 (full-time and part-time entry) January 2027 (part-time entry only)



Defined terms

"ANE": Ancient Near East, Ancient Near Eastern, as appropriate;

"Biblical Studies": The academic subject area of biblical studies broadly conceived to include study of the languages and literature of the OT, NT, and ANE, and other related texts and corpora;

"NT": New Testament;

"OT": Old Testament.

Summary of the Programme

The MTh is a specialised, advanced study Master's degree in the area of Biblical Studies. The degree permits pathways of specialisation in OT, NT, and ANE studies. It is intended to bring students to the point where they can consider embarking upon doctoral research. It can also function as a self-contained and satisfying course of study in its own right.

Aims of the Programme

Main Educational Aims

1. To enable students to build upon prior theological, biblical or related studies through a programme focused on the advanced study of Biblical Studies.
2. To provide opportunity for students to reflect upon and integrate their prior study with new learning which is informed by research-led and research-focused scholarship.
3. To provide a 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 original research through sustained reflection on and engagement with a topic in Biblical Studies.
5. To develop an appreciation of the task of conducting sustained research in the area of Biblical Studies.

Criteria for Admission

Programme Entrance Requirements

Typically, admission requires a 2.1 honours degree or above or equivalent qualification acceptable to PTFI, where the main subject area or one of the joint subjects in an honours degree comprised one of: Theology/Divinity, Biblical studies, ANE studies/Assyriology. If the above subject was one of the joint subjects in an honours degree, the modules in the qualifying area must be of 2.1 level or above, OR a 2.1 honours degree or equivalent qualification acceptable to PTFI in a related subject.

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 6.5 in each category.
- Pearson Test of English, Academic: PTE(A) total 69 (at least 62 in each of the 'communicative skills' sections).
- Cambridge Proficiency (CPE) or Cambridge Advanced (CAE): total 185 (at least 176 in each module).
- TOEFL iBT: 100 overall with a minimum of 24 in writing and 23 in each of the other 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.

There is a strong philological focus to the degree. It is required that students have completed a minimum of a one-year complete introduction to the language relevant to their specialisation. Students must have completed a comprehensive introduction to one of the following languages: Classical Hebrew, New Testament (or Classical) Greek, Akkadian, or Sumerian. This is usually established by means of a language placement test as part of the interview. As part of the application and interview, students are expected to have some idea about the particular area of the sub-field in which they would like to work for their dissertation.

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 MTh programme a successful student should have demonstrated:

1. An advanced and systematic understanding of a selection of the relevant primary text corpus.
2. An advanced understanding of how to interpret these primary texts in light of linguistic, historical, and exegetical considerations.
3. A thorough understanding of the methodological and hermeneutical models and assumptions used in Biblical Studies.
4. An advanced understanding of the limits, problems, and possibilities of philological analysis of ancient texts.



5. The knowledge and understanding required to engage and interact at a high level with the material/subjects studied, seen in the ability to reflect critically on their own particular standpoint/pre-suppositions and to understand the methodological and hermeneutical issues involved.

Skills

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

1. For a given task, demonstrate a practical deployment of a variety of appropriate and established methodologies/techniques of research and enquiry to create and interpret knowledge within the discipline and develop appropriate critiques.
2. Critically and reflectively engage with advanced scholarship in the relevant discipline, assessing views and theories with charity, fairness and sensitivity and, where appropriate, proposing alternatives.
3. A high level of presentational and communication skills in the construction and articulation of cogent, well-informed, critically engaged, and sustainable arguments within the discipline.
4. The ability to deal systematically and creatively with complex issues and to make sound judgements, on the basis of varied and problematic sources.
5. Competency in postgraduate research skills by evidencing self-direction, initiative, independence, and originality in planning and producing a substantial dissertation.

Programme Structure and Module Requirements

A student will take a total of 180 CATS of modules as outlined below.

90 CATS taught modules + longer dissertation (90 CATS)¹

OR

120 CATS taught modules + shorter dissertation (60 CATS)

At least one module must be taken from the list of language/text modules.

Full-time:

Two modules semester 1

One module semester 2

Dissertation (90 CATS)

Part-time:

Three modules across four semesters + Dissertation (90 CATS)

OR

Four modules across four semesters + Dissertation (60 CATS)

Subject to scheduling and the availability of offered modules during the period of a student's enrolment, students have freedom to choose their modules from different areas of specialism. At least one module

¹ Full-time students must do the longer dissertation.



must be taken from the list of language/text modules during the programme. However, students who are preparing for doctoral research and wishing to specialise in a particular sub-field should choose from modules within the appropriate specialism: O, NT, or ANE studies. All students must complete a minimum of one module from the NT or OT list of modules. The modules listed below are coded accordingly.

A student must have reached an advanced level of competence in the appropriate language(s) before embarking on the dissertation. Students who intend to write their dissertation in the area of OT must have completed *Hebrew Reading and Exegesis* (or equivalent). Students who intend to write their dissertation in the area of NT must have completed *Greek Reading and Exegesis* (or equivalent). Students who intend to write their dissertation in the area of ANE studies must have completed *Introduction to Akkadian*, *Akkadian texts*, and *Introduction to Sumerian* (or equivalent).² For some research topics, students should be aware that reading knowledge of French and German may be required. A reading knowledge means the ability to read without the aid of dictionary.

The following list of modules is labelled according to specialism: OT, NT, and ANE. All modules are 30 CATS.

- (i) Exodus: texts and topics [OT]
- (ii) Wisdom literature [OT]
- (iii) The world of the patriarchs [OT/ANE]
- (iv) General Epistles [NT]
- (v) Synoptic gospels and Acts [NT]
- (vi) Matthew's Gospel [NT]

Language or text-reading modules:

- (vii) Hebrew Reading and Exegesis [OT]
- (viii) Advanced Hebrew [x2 semesters] [OT/ANE]
- (ix) Greek Reading and Exegesis [NT]
- (x) Introduction to Akkadian [x2 semesters] [ANE]
- (xi) Introduction to Sumerian [x2 semesters] [ANE]
- (xii) Sumerian texts [ANE]
- (xiii) Mesopotamian texts of the second millennium [ANE]

Modules scheduled to be offered during the academic year 2026-27 are as follows (all modules marked * are provisional):

OT

Exodus Texts and Topics

Wisdom Literature*

Hebrew Reading and Exegesis

Advanced Biblical Hebrew

The Patriarchs and their World*

² Students who wish to write their dissertation in the area of ANE studies but who have not already studied Akkadian/Sumerian before beginning the MTh will need two academic years of language study before beginning their dissertation.



NT

New Testament Manuscripts and Textual Criticism*
Greek Reading & Exegesis*

ANE studies

Introduction to Akkadian

Mesopotamian Texts of the Second Millennium (prerequisite: 'Introduction to Akkadian' or 'Introduction to Sumerian' (or equivalent))

Vocational Opportunities

Employability and transferable skills

- The courses develop a number of enhanced skills that are highly sought after by employers, including the ability to: think analytically and express oneself clearly in writing; find information, organise and deploy it; work well independently, with a strong sense of self-direction, but also with the ability to work constructively in co-operation with others; effectively structure and communicate ideas in a variety of written and oral formats; plan and organise the use of time effectively, and be able to work under pressure to deadlines; make appropriate use of language skills.
- The course is also designed to prepare students for doctoral research in the fields of OT, NT, or ANE studies.
- 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 2025-30. 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:

- Instruction in the nature of the module assessment.
- Guided independent reading that is designed to provide breadth and depth in their understanding of the relevant discipline.
- Engaging with tutors/peers in order to discuss and consolidate knowledge.
- Completing exercises which enable sustained engagement with relevant primary and secondary texts.
- The formative nature of all written assessment tasks.



- Individual written (and at times oral) feedback on written submissions.
- Dissertation supervision to help students to develop and assess their progress.

Skills

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

- The full range of skills is deliberately modelled through tutor teaching and input, detailed tutor feedback on assessed work, and dissertation supervision.
- Guided independent reading on primary and secondary texts is designed so that students engage with authors who model these skills.
- The assessments tasks on the primary and secondary texts enable the students to demonstrate these skills
- Written submissions (formative) in advance of seminars which provide *breadth* to the learning experience.
- Substantive research essays in each module which provide *depth* to the learning experience.
- The required dialogue with peers/tutors is designed to enhance a student's ability to communicate views and discuss controversial issues in a sensitive and effective manner.
- One-to-one dissertation supervision from those with subject-specific expertise in the relevant discipline.

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. The main learning strategy is that a student should practise the relevant skills under close supervision, receive feedback, and have the chance to see the same skills practised by acknowledged experts in a manner which can be emulated.

The methods used to achieve this aim include:

- Language and/or text-reading classes, for which students are expected to prepare
- Seminars with peers and tutor (for some of which students prepare a substantial piece of written work for open discussion)

Knowledge and Understanding

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

- Written submissions in advance of seminars as part of a student's formative assessment
- Research essays that particularly assess the depth of understanding.



- A capstone dissertation provides students with an opportunity to display most, if not all, the programme level learning outcomes for knowledge and understanding.

Skills

Student skill are assessed by a combination of these assessment elements:

- Written submissions in advance of seminars as part of a student's formative assessment.
- Research essays that particularly assess the depth of understanding.
- A capstone dissertation provides students with an opportunity to display most, if not all, the programme level learning outcomes for knowledge and understanding.

Student Support and Guidance

Each student is allocated a Personal Tutor who can assist with academic advice and support with personal issues. The College also has a Disability Officer for those who have a disability, specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia or long-term medical condition which may impact their studies.

Quality Management Arrangements

This programme is subject to ongoing monitoring and enhancement through the College's normal processes of module, programme, and periodic review. These exercises include engagement with external expertise, current students, and alumni.