University of Sheffield

Programme Specification

This specification provides a summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

The content of our courses is reviewed annually to make sure it's up-to-date and relevant. Individual modules are occasionally updated or withdrawn. This is in response to discoveries through our world-leading research; funding changes; professional accreditation requirements; student or employer feedback; outcomes of reviews; and variations in staff or student numbers. In the event of any change we will inform students and take reasonable steps to minimise disruption.

Programme Details

1. Programme title	Cognitive Science and Philosophy of AI		
2. Award type	Master of Arts		
3. Programme details	**FHEQ Level:** 7	**Mode of Study:** Full time Part time	**Duration:** 1 year 2 years
4. Faculty	Faculty of Arts and Humanities		
5. School	**Owning:** School of History, Philosophy and Digital Humanities		
6. Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	None		
7. HECoS code *Select between one and three codes from the HECoS vocabulary.*	**Code:** 100337 **Percentage:** 100	**Code:** **Percentage:**	**Code:** **Percentage:**
Programme code (internal use)	HPHT043 (Full time) HPHT044 (Part time)		

9. Programme aims

The programme aims to:	
A1	To provide students with an understanding of central issues in Cognitive Science, Philosophy, and their relationship with Artificial Intelligence.
A2	To equip students with an appreciation of how these issues are related to empirical findings concerning the development and functioning of human cognition and the development of emerging technologies in AI.
A3	To introduce students to an environment of interdisciplinary research and communication.
A4	To produce students who are well prepared to pursue their own research projects at PhD level.
A5	To support students in identifying appropriate research questions and in choosing the appropriate tools, methods, theories, and sources of evidence to properly address those questions within the confines of concrete assignments. This aim is coupled with supporting students in learning how to choose amongst competing methods and theories when those tools are in conflict with one another.
A6	To give students the ability and confidence to present their work to a professional audience.
A7	To give students an appreciation of the opportunities open to researchers in Cognitive Science, philosophy, and AI and to support them in applying for and taking advantage of those opportunities.

10. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding (K) On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:	
K1	A critical understanding of central theoretical issues in cognitive science, philosophy, and artificial intelligence.
K2	Familiarity with major empirical findings and methodologies in cognitive science, philosophy, and AI along with an appreciation of their theoretical and practical significance.
K3	Specialised substantive knowledge of specific areas in cognitive science and the relationship between cognitive science, philosophy, and AI.
K4	A detailed understanding of the research methods and techniques appropriate to their chosen areas of specialisation.
K5	A capacity to identify appropriate research questions and the available (and often competing) methods and theories available for addressing those questions.
Skills and other attributes (S) *When considering the skills and attributes developed in this programme, please refer to the Sheffield Graduate attributes (SGAs). SGAs can be found here* On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:	
S1	Engage and interact with others, by presenting aspects of their work orally, responding appropriately to feedback and questions.

S2	Learn to navigate complex issues in which multiple lines of evidence, multiple methodologies, and multiple theoretical frameworks are all potentially relevant to solving, understanding, or making progress on theoretical / empirical / practical questions.
S3	Write incisively and informatively on relevant topics, both for their own research, and for funding applications.
S4	Construct intelligent experimental designs, integrating theoretical questions with appropriate experimental methods.
S5	(where appropriate according to specialisation) work effectively and ethically with participants in trials and experiments, collecting, summarising and analysing the data acquired.

11. Learning and teaching methods *(this should include a summary of methods used throughout the programme, including any unique features and should be written with a student focus as this information will display to current students and applicants i.e. prospectus)*

1. **Seminars and Workshops**

Seminars and workshops will be a major form of teaching and learning on the MA in Cognitive Science, Philosophy and AI, providing a venue for exposition and discussion of theoretical and experimental issues and a medium for further reflection in combination with independent study. Seminars may be either tutor-led or student-led. Some will have a standard reading-group format, centred around prior study of recommended texts and recent publications. In modules devoted to empirical investigations the focus of seminars will be on methodological issues, experimental design, and the analysis of data. AI-centred modules may focus on theoretical, empirical, or practical aspects of the development and use of AI. (K1-K5, S1, S2).

2. **Lectures**

Some modules will use lectures as a teaching method, particularly where background material needs to be summarised (as preparation for seminars or independent study) or where a lecturer wishes to give her own perspective on theoretical issues or present the results of her own research. (K1-K5, S1, S2).

3. **Individual Supervision**

Each student on the MA in Cognitive Science, Philosophy, and AI will be assigned an academic tutor and will be assigned supervisors for their coursework essays as well as their MA dissertation project. The academic tutor will meet with the student throughout the MA programme and provide advice on how to tailor the MA to their intended specialisations and career goals. The student will be supervised by an expert member of staff for each of their coursework essays as well as their MA dissertation. The student and supervisor will arrange one-to-one consultations to discuss topics, drafts of work, and plans for PhD Proposals (where appropriate). (K1-K5, S1, S2, S3, S4).

4. **Independent Study**

Independent study is vital on this MA (as on other programmes), for very good reasons. It enables students (i) to prepare for discussion in lectures and seminars, (ii) to put in the necessary background reading for written assignments, (iii) to broaden and deepen knowledge gained through lectures and seminars, and (iv) to rehearse and assemble materials for presentations. Most importantly, independent study also promotes student autonomy and personal capacity for taking initiative and developing one's own research ideas. This is equally valuable for preparation for PhD research as well as for other career paths. (K1-K5, S2, S3, S4).

5. **Practical Training**

In some units in the programme, according to specialisation, the students will receive practical training

through collaborative work with lead researchers on ongoing projects. This may include practical training in experimental design, data analysis, and implementation of AI systems. (K1-K5, S2, S4, S5).

12. Assessment and feedback methods *(this should include the range of types of methods used and should be written with a student focus as this information will display to current students and applicants i.e. prospectus)*

1. **Essays & Exams**

For most individual modules in the programme the main form of assessment will be a research paper or written assignment, surveying relevant literature and reviewing and discussing major issues and recent research. As the character of written work in the contributing disciplines differs according to the nature of the research involved, the requirements for written work are specified for specific modules selected. Those in philosophy, for example, typically require a 4-6,000 word paper or two 2-3,000 word papers (for a 30 credit module), while many modules in other disciplines will require an examination. (K1-K5, S2-S5).

2. **Oral Presentation**

Some modules will require students to give class presentations on topics they have studied and prepared in advance. Presentations of this sort will form a standard way of organising seminar programmes in several of the modules within the MA in Cognitive Science, Philosophy, and AI. Presentations may be given by individuals or by groups of students, depending upon the topics and numbers involved. Students will also be advised on how to develop media to accompany their presentations (as appropriate for the assignment and venue). This could include powerpoint presentations, videos, posters, and websites. (K1-K5, S1, S2).

3. **Dissertation**

The largest single element in the assessment for the MA in Cognitive Science, Philosophy, and AI is a dissertation, consisting of a substantial and extended piece of research, completed over the summer months. Each student is allocated an individual supervisor to guide them through this exercise. The dissertation is intended to provide students with an opportunity, by synthesising the knowledge and skills acquired over the previous year, to develop their own independent research projects within a supportive structure. The structure and content of the MA dissertation can vary depending on the intended specialisation of the student (leaning more towards theoretical work in some cases, practical work in others, and experimental in others) This allows students to choose a topic of interest, and which best fits their career goals, from any area of cognitive science, philosophy, and AI. (K1-K5, S2, S3; and where appropriate also S4, S5).

Version Number:	**Purpose / Change:**	**Cohort affected: (academic year and level)**	**Date change approved:**
1			January 2008
2	Major Amendment inc a Title Change	26/27 - Year 1	October 2025

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