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## QAA Benchmark Statement

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The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) publishes subject benchmark statements designed to make explicit the general academic characteristics and standards of degree programmes in the UK.

Amongst other things, the statements define what can be expected of a graduate in terms of the techniques and skills needed to develop understanding in the subject. This information is reproduced here to help you assess the subject-related and transferable skills you are expected to have developed during your studies. Skills specifications for Oxford degree programmes in particular are also included on this file for comparative purposes.

The skills listed here may suggest suitable career paths or occupational areas that you can explore further using the occupational information in the Exploring Options area.

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## LANGUAGES

### 4.0 Subject skills and generic skills

Graduates in LRS will have developed a wide range of skills which are of great value in a wide range of careers. A period of residence abroad is often crucial in developing and enhancing many of these.

The range of subject skills will vary according to the specific focus of the programme but will typically fall into four areas:

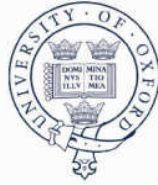
- Language skills (4.1 below);
- Language-related skills (4.2 below);
- Subject-related skills (4.3 below);
- Intercultural awareness (4.4 below).

The emphasis given to generic skills (4.5) will vary according to the specific focus of the programme but will typically fall into three areas:

- Predominantly cognitive skills (4.5.1 below);
- Predominantly practical skills (4.5.2 below);
- Interpersonal skills and other personal attributes (4.5.3 below).

### 4.1 Language skills

The acquisition of skills (primarily reading, writing, listening and speaking) in a foreign language is a central objective of language programmes. Programmes endeavour to



enable students to develop and use such skills, as appropriate to the target language and to the learning outcomes of the programme. Certain aspects of effective language use may be related primarily to the development of particular language skills, which themselves require specific knowledge. Thus, for example, advanced productive skills of writing and speaking in the target language both require a high level of knowledge of the grammatical, discursal and pragmatic conventions which govern language use and of the societal factors which make language use effective.

Students of LRS will normally reach a high level of understanding of the target language(s). They will exhibit appropriate levels of achievement (see section 6.0: **Standards**) in productive (speaking, writing) and receptive language skills (reading, listening), and mediation (translating and interpreting). They will be fluent and accurate target language users in a wide range of personal, academic and other domains. They are likely to be at ease with a wide range of topics and registers in formal and informal situations, and to be familiar with a wide range of source materials in the target language.

Language skills are likely to include a sub-set of related skills. These will vary from the relatively simple to the more complex, and could include such activities as email correspondence, talking on the telephone, video-conferencing, and the use of target language documents for carrying out research or writing reports.

Many graduates will have developed language skills which are applicable in a professional context.

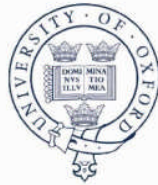
#### 4.2 Language-related skills

Students of LRS will have developed appropriate linguistic tools and metalanguage to describe and analyse the main features of the language(s) studied. They will thus be able to make effective use of language reference materials, such as grammars, standard and specialised dictionaries and corpora, to refine knowledge and understanding of register, nuances of meaning and language use.

Students of LRS will be effective and self-aware independent language learners. Their language-learning skills might extend from strategies for learning vocabulary to awareness of learning style and the identification of appropriate learning opportunities. These skills equip them to learn other languages with relative ease; they enhance their command and awareness of English and have been shown to increase their employability.

#### 4.3 Subject-related skills

Subject-related skills are developed through the study of both the language and related thematic areas. Depending on the programme, these may relate to the study of the countries or regions in which the target language is used, including aspects of their literatures, cultures, linguistic contexts, history, politics, geography, social or economic structures. In certain programmes, these will relate to discipline-specific contexts, such as the business, legal, creative, technological or scientific communities within those countries or regions.



Study of these will lead to the development of analytical, critical and specialist skills drawn from the relevant discipline areas. The opportunity to study discipline-specific content in the target language represents a unique contribution to the students' learning experience. Learners will be able to select and use primary and secondary source materials in the target language in respect of these areas.

The multidisciplinary nature of many programmes in languages will lead to a range of subject-related skills. *Subject benchmark statements* in relevant disciplines may be helpful in identifying these skills.

#### 4.4 Intercultural awareness and understanding

Through their studies and their contact with the target language and associated cultures and their related studies, all students of LRS will develop sensitivity to and awareness of the similarities and dissimilarities between other cultures and societies and their own. In particular, their competence in the target language means they will have an appreciation of the internal diversity and transcultural connectedness of cultures, and an attitude of curiosity and openness towards other cultures. The skills and attributes concerned include:

- A critical understanding of a culture and practices other than one's own;
- An appreciation of the uniqueness of the other culture(s);
- An ability to articulate to others the contribution that the culture has made at a regional and global level;
- An ability and willingness to engage with other cultures;
- An ability to appreciate and critically evaluate one's own culture.

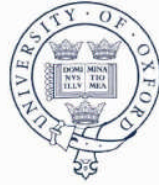
#### 4.5 Generic skills

The multidisciplinary and language-specific nature of programmes encourages the development of a wide range of key transferable skills including, where such residence is undertaken, those developed during residence in the target language country or region.

##### 4.5.1 Predominantly cognitive skills

These include the:

- Ability to use language creatively and precisely for a range of purposes and audiences;
- Ability to engage with and interpret layers of meaning within texts and other cultural products;
- Ability to contextualise from a variety of perspectives;
- Capacity for critical reflection and judgement in the light of evidence and argument;
- Ability to extract and synthesise key information from written and spoken sources;
- Ability to organise and present ideas within the framework of a structured and reasoned argument;
- Ability to engage in analytical and evaluative thinking.



#### 4.5.2 Predominantly practical skills

These include:

- The ability to use and present material in the target language and one's own language in written and oral forms in a clear and effective manner;
- The ability to work autonomously, manifested in self-direction, self-discipline, and time management;
- Accurate and effective note-taking and summarising skills;
- Library and bibliographic research skills;
- Techniques for using target language source materials;
- Analytical and problem-solving skills;
- The ability to write and think under pressure and meet deadlines;
- IT skills, such as word processing, email, databases, online environments and the use of the internet as a research and study tool.

#### 4.5.3 Interpersonal skills and personal attributes

These include:

- Communication, presentation, interaction;
- The ability to work creatively and flexibly with others as part of a team;
- Mediating skills, qualities of empathy;
- Self-reliance, initiative, adaptability and flexibility;
- Intercultural competence

If you wish to talk to a Careers Adviser about your skills and how they relate to careers, sign up to talk to the Duty Adviser or ask the Information Room staff for Careers Adviser availability.

Prospects Planner can help you explore what skills you have and how these might relate to careers. Pick up a Prospects Planner leaflet for further details.