

MANCHESTER  
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The University of Manchester

# FLEXIBLE HONOURS

## Frequently Asked Questions

A new way to study  
subject combinations across  
a host of arts, languages  
and cultures disciplines.



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## **What does Flexible Honours mean? And what can I study?**

Our undergraduate courses are flexible, which means that you can study a combination of subjects across the fields of arts, languages and cultures in a range of different ways.

Traditionally, you'll apply to study for either a Single Honours degree (one subject) or a Joint Honours degree (two subjects).

If you apply to study for a Single Honours degree, you may have the opportunity to take 40 credits (that's typically two 20 credit course units), which is equivalent to one third of your course credits for the year, in another arts, languages or cultures subject (subject to academic approval, availability and timetabling constraints). This additional subject will be known as a Minor subject and your original Single Honours degree subject will become your Major subject to help distinguish between the weighting of your different areas of study.

Taking a Minor will allow you to explore another subject area, but it will still allow you to complete your original Single Honours degree.

Find out more about our available Minor subjects by visiting our [Flexible Honours website](#)

At the end of your first year you'll have the opportunity to reflect on your study experience so far. You can choose to continue with your current Minor subject at years two and three and you can even have the subject featured in your degree title should you wish. Alternatively, if you feel that your Minor subject isn't right for you, you can simply drop it and revert back to your original Single Honours subject. If you decide to drop your Minor subject, you can still make use of your 40 free choice credits at Levels 2 and 3. Your Academic Advisor will provide guidance and assistance in determining the right option to meet your specific needs, career ambitions and interests.

Other available flexible study options include:

### **Joint Honours**

A Joint Honours degree allows you to study two subjects at the same time for your degree. In your first year, your study will be divided evenly between your two subject choices but you can choose to vary the weighting between your subjects in your second and final years.

### **Free Choice Credits**

As a Single Honours student - with the guidance of your Academic Advisor - you can use up to 40 credits to create your own selection of additional course units in each year of study, enabling you to adapt your degree to fit your specific interests. For example, if you are a Single Honours History student interested in Islam, you could choose to study related units from Middle Eastern Studies, Religions or Theology to complement your Single Honours subject. Please visit our [free choice website](#) for available free choice units

Free choice course credits are also available through [The University College for Interdisciplinary Learning](#) and the [University Language Centre](#).

## **What can I gain from Flexible Honours study?**

Flexible Honours gives you the opportunity to study previously unavailable subject combinations from across a host of arts, languages and cultures subjects.

As a Flexible Honours student you'll have the chance to build on existing interests or to study an area entirely new to you. You can choose a Minor subject that you've already studied at A-Level, or take the plunge with a subject that intrigues you but which you haven't studied before.

Flexible Honours offers you a chance to take an agile approach to your learning and employability, helping you to shape your studies to meet your needs as you develop ideas about your future career. It allows you to exploit the broad range of subjects on offer in the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures, which is one of the largest and most diverse in the UK. Our Flexible Honours scheme is specifically intended to facilitate a multidisciplinary approach to undergraduate study by enabling Single Honours students to pursue a specific intellectual passion or interest alongside their first-choice degree subject.

Crucially, Flexible Honours offers you the opportunity to explore additional subjects in your first year before deciding whether they are right for you. If you find that your chosen Minor doesn't suit you, you can choose not to study it in your second and third years without this having any impact on your final degree.

Equally, if you find that you do enjoy your Minor subject, you can choose to carry on studying it throughout your second and third years, and even have the subject featured in your degree title.

### **How might this benefit my career?**

Today's jobs market demands a different kind of graduate: ones who are not only proficient in their core subject but also sufficiently skilled and adaptable to meet the demands of an ever-changing employment landscape. Technology, global connectivity and a focus on collaboration mean that in years to come you could be working in a role which hasn't even been defined yet. Multidisciplinary, flexibility and preparedness for lifelong learning are therefore valuable assets which could prove fruitful in your future career. Many employers seek to recruit graduates who have skills that cross multiple fields of expertise to demonstrate their adaptability and resourcefulness.

### **How will my course unit choices affect my degree certificate?**

If, at the end of your first year, you decide to continue studying your Minor subject throughout the remaining years of your degree, you can then choose to feature your Minor subject in your degree title. In this instance your degree title will read 'BA/BSc (Major subject) with (Minor subject)'. Alternatively, you can also continue to study your Minor subject without adding it to your degree title, in which case your degree title will read 'BA/BSc (Major subject)'. In the latter case, your Minor subject and the corresponding units that you have studied will feature on your degree transcript.

A degree transcript (or academic transcript), is an official summary of your academic performance. It lists all the units or subjects that you studied in each year, the marks or grades you achieved for each course unit and the credit rating and level of each unit, confirmed by the appropriate Examination Board. Prospective employers or educational institutions may request a copy of your transcript upon application.

If you take a Joint Honours course your degree title will read exactly the same as the course for which you applied. For example: BA History and Spanish.

Any **free choice units** you take will not feature in your degree title, however, they will feature on your degree transcript.

### **What are the entry requirements for Flexible Honours?**

The entry requirements for Flexible Honours are the same as those for your Single Honours degree. For specific entry requirements for your course, use the search tool on the University website. We have special pre-requisites (or preconditions for study) for a small number of Minor subject areas and/or course units. If you have any questions regarding pre-requisites please email us.

### **How do I apply?**

Apply for your Single Honours degree via UCAS as normal. We will send you information about Flexible Honours subjects available to you during the summer before you register at the University. Your Major subject of study must be the Single Honours subject you applied to via UCAS. You can confirm your Minor subject from early September and we will provide details of how to do this in the subject information.

Other available flexible study options:

Joint Honours: Apply for your Joint Honours degree via UCAS as normal.

Free Choice Credits: Apply for your Single Honours degree via UCAS as normal. With guidance from your Academic Advisor, you will be able to select your free choice credits at the start of each academic year.

### **Do I need to mention my Flexible Honours subject choice in my UCAS application?**

No. When completing your application through UCAS, you only need to focus on the Single Honours subject that you are applying for. You should, however, mention your Flexible Honours subject choice in any correspondence with our admissions team. To find the relevant admissions team contact for your Single Honours course, use the search tool on the University website. The contact will appear in the course listing.

### **Will I be interviewed for my chosen Flexible Honours subject?**

Some of our subjects hold interviews for their Single Honours courses, but most do not. Please mention at the interview if you are interested in taking a particular Minor, or if you have any questions about Flexible Honours. We do not hold separate interviews for Minors study.

### **How many places are available for each Flexible Honours subject?**

This depends on the size of the subject area and the number of applicants. We have special pre-requisites (or preconditions for study) for a small number of subject areas and/or course units. If you have any questions regarding pre-requisites please email us.

### **How will I decide on a Flexible Honours subject combination that's right for me?**

We will send you information about Flexible Honours subjects available to you during the summer before you register at the University. You can find out more about Flexible Honours and our available Minor subjects here:

[www.manchester.ac.uk/flexiblehonours](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/flexiblehonours)

Once you register at the University there will be additional support and information available to help you make an informed decision, according to your own personal ambitions and interests. You can seek advice from your dedicated Academic Advisor and our Flexible Honours Director as well as receiving guidance and insight from Flexible Honours information sessions.

Your Academic Advisor will provide guidance on academic choice throughout the year. At the end of your first year - when you have had time to reflect on your study so far - you will be free to review your chosen subject combination to ensure that it still meets your needs. Our Flexible Honours Director will be on hand to help you make informed choices as you progress.

### **Can I choose a Minor subject if I haven't studied it before?**

Yes. The majority of our Minor subjects can be studied with no prior specialist knowledge or qualifications. However, some Minor subjects do have specific entry requirements (for example, Music) and these are clearly noted in the Flexible Honours information which we will send to you in the summer before you register at the University. Please note that if you wish to combine two languages as part of a Major-Minor degree programme, at least one language must be one that you have already studied at A-level and which meets the required grade.

### **How do I find out which units are available for my chosen Minor subject?**

We will send you more information about Flexible Honours during the summer before you register at the University, including available course units for all Minor subjects. You will select your course units after you have registered here at the University.

### **Can I study Flexible Honours subjects from across the University?**

Yes. Although the majority of our Flexible Honours subjects are from within the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures, students can take a Minor from a different Faculty. Our Minor in the History of Science, Technology and Medicine is delivered by the Faculty of Biology, Medicine & Health, and is open to Flexible Honours students.

Our range of Joint Honours courses is equally broad and offers the potential to study arts, languages and cultures subjects with disciplines both within and outside the School, for example Business Management, Politics, Mathematics and Life Sciences.

The [University College for Interdisciplinary Learning](#) also offers students the opportunity to use their free choice credits to explore various units across the breadth of research and knowledge found at the University.

### **What if the subject combination that I'm looking for isn't currently available?**

Please note that not all subjects will be available as Minors and not all subject combinations will be possible due to demand and availability.

### **Why is my chosen subject not available as a Minor subject?**

Some of our subjects are not yet available as Minors due to the number of places available on each course.

### **Why is my chosen subject only available as a Minor subject?**

Some of our Flexible Honours subjects are not available as standalone Single Honours programmes so you are not able to apply to them through UCAS. We have, however, made them available to you as Minor subjects, which means that you are able to study them as part of our Flexible Honours programme.

### **If I choose to take a Minor, will I still develop a thorough understanding of my original Single Honours (Major) subject?**

Yes. Our Major subjects are specially designed to ensure that you are fully qualified to progress in your chosen field of study. Naturally, however, you will not have the opportunity to study a Minor subject to the same extent as a Major subject.

### **Can I still take 20 free choice credits from across the Faculty / University College / University Language Centre, even if I take a Minor subject?**

No. If, as a Single Honours student, you decide to take a Minor in another subject, you cannot take [free choice course units](#) in addition too. If, on the other hand, you choose not to pursue Flexible Honours study, you can take some free choice credits from across the Faculty / University College / University Language Centre at various points in your degree programme. The course units available to you will be clearly stated during the annual course unit selection process.

### **If I don't pursue a Minor subject in my first year, can I opt into one after my first year of study?**

This is not possible as you must take the relevant units for a Minor at Level 1 in order to pursue it at Level 2.

### **Can I still study for a traditional Single Honours degree?**

Absolutely. All of our degree courses have multidisciplinary and choice at their core, so if you would prefer to study for a Single Honours degree on its own then you can do so. You can still use your [free choice credits](#) to take units from other subject areas, without changing to a Major-Minor pathway. In addition, it's possible to study a Minor subject throughout your degree, but choose not to have it featured in your degree title, so that you graduate with the title of your original Single Honours degree. In this case, any Minor subject course units studied would only feature in your degree transcript, not in your degree title.

### **Can I study abroad?**

Yes, there are opportunities to apply to study abroad on all of our degree courses through the University-wide [Study Abroad programme](#).

For our modern language programmes, a period of residence abroad is an integral part of the course. Students taking a Single Honours or Joint Honours language degree normally spend the third year of their course abroad. This period of residence includes study, work as a British Council English Language Assistant, a work placement or another form of approved employment.

Students taking a Minor in a modern language will normally be required to spend eight weeks abroad (during the summer between the second and third years of their course)\*. As a student of a language Minor you may be eligible for a bursary to support your eight week period of residence abroad. This includes up to £1000 for those taking Minor subjects in Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Japanese\* and up to £600 for those taking all other language Minor subjects. You can find out more about available bursaries via our Residence Abroad Office.

**\*Please note that due to the increased costs of studying in China and Japan, Chinese and Japanese Minor students do not have to complete this period of residence abroad. However, the bursary may be used towards the cost of an 8 week study abroad programme.**

Please [contact us](#) for further information about residence abroad.

### **Will there still be an opportunity to undertake work experience / placements relevant to my chosen subjects?**

In the majority of the modern language subject areas you can choose to study or be in employment during your period of residence abroad. As a School, we also work closely with our award-winning [Careers Service](#), which promotes work experience and placement opportunities for all our students throughout the year.

### **Will I still feel like I belong to a subject, even if I'm studying it as a Minor?**

Yes. All of our subject areas have lots of opportunities for their students to get together for social activities and research-based events and many have well-established student societies. Furthermore, each subject area has a dedicated team of academic and support staff who are happy to advise on anything from course unit selection to how to make the most of both your Major and your Minor subjects. Many subjects also run a peer-mentoring programme that sees second and third year students offer advice to newly-arrived students about settling into life at Manchester.

### **Where will I be based?**

All programmes and subject areas have a common room and support office where you can meet other students studying the subject alongside academic and support staff. If you study a Major and a Minor subject you will have access to both departments and their resources. If you choose to study a Flexible Honours combination your Academic Advisor will normally be from your Major subject. We try to ensure that you have the same member of staff throughout your studies, though this may not always be possible.

### **How will my dissertation work?**

Most Single and Joint Honours subject areas offer you the opportunity to study a dissertation or equivalent project in your final year of study. Normally Joint Honours students cannot take dissertations or equivalents in both subjects. Likewise, Minor students cannot undertake a dissertation in their Minor subject, though they may be able to choose a dissertation topic that allows them to explore links between their two subjects.

### **How much contact time will I have in each subject?**

All of our subjects have a similar breakdown in terms of teaching hours and assessments. You will normally have three hours per week of teaching for each 20 credit unit, with an additional hour being assigned to teaching activities outside the classroom (e.g. one-to-one discussions with your course unit director).

Students normally study 60 credits per semester. As a Flexible Honours student, this would involve a minimum of eight hours contact time (or in-class time) per week for your Major subject and four hours for your Minor subject. Joint Honours students can expect a minimum of six hours contact time per week in each subject. Bear in mind that there are additional contact hours which are not attached to particular course units (e.g. meetings with your Academic Advisor and subject-wide events), so your total amount of contact hours will be significantly higher.

Our contact hours compare very favourably to those of other universities. You can see more detailed breakdowns for each subject [here](#).

### **Will studying two subjects mean more work?**

No. Studying a Minor doesn't necessarily mean more work. The overall workload of your degree units will be balanced accordingly.

### **How will I be taught?**

There are varied approaches to teaching at The University of Manchester, with a range of different modes in operation, including lectures, seminars, small group tutorials and virtual web-based seminars. We encourage students to undertake independent study at every level. Assessment procedures in different courses vary, but our basic objective is to achieve a good balance between formal examinations, continuous assessment and project work.

### **Can I change to a different Minor at the end of my first year?**

No. However, if you decide towards the end of your first year that your Minor subject isn't for you, you can drop it and revert to Single Honours only study, while still making use of your 40 credits of free choice units at Levels 2 and 3 to study courses that interest you.

### **Can I change the balance between my two subjects?**

At the end of your first year, when you have had time to reflect on your study so far, you will have the option to review your chosen combination to ensure that it still meets your needs. If you have found that you'd like to study a greater proportion of your Minor subject alongside your Major subject it may be possible for you to transfer to an existing Joint Honours programme featuring your chosen subjects. All transfers are subject to availability and will only be permitted where a corresponding Joint Honours course already exists. Your Academic Advisor will discuss your options with you in full should you wish to pursue this route.

**Please note that all Flexible Honours subject combinations are subject to academic approval, availability and timetabling constraints.**

If you have any further questions about Flexible Honours please email us at [flexhons@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:flexhons@manchester.ac.uk)