Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic

Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic (ASNC) provides a combination of subjects not available in any other university. This course concentrates on the history, languages and literature of the British Isles and neighbouring regions in the early medieval period.

Although it is possible to choose only historical options, or only language and literature ones, most students take papers which complement each other (e.g. Old Norse and Scandinavian history, Old English and Anglo-Saxon history, and so on). There is also an option dealing with palaeography and editing of manuscripts. After the first year, students can also take relevant papers from other courses such as Archaeology or additional language options. More information on the structure of the course can be found at the Department’s website, or on the University prospectus pages.

The Ahenny Crosses, County Tipperary. These monuments are fine examples of the high crosses that were constructed in Ireland during the period under consideration. They are ornamented with elaborate, abstract motifs.

Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic at Peterhouse

ASNC students at Peterhouse benefit in a number of ways. A Director of Studies who is also a member of the ASNC Department is there to guide each student through their academic career, and to provide one-to-one advice. The library at Peterhouse is well-stocked with books on ASNC subjects, and the department itself is only a ten-minute walk away. Lastly, the close-knit community at Peterhouse will provide a home away from home for those studying in the University’s smallest department.
Course requirements

The subjects taught in ASNC are not found on most school curricula, so no previous knowledge is expected or required. Most undergraduates have come from studying English, History, Classics or Modern Languages at school. A language (ancient or modern) at A level or equivalent is highly desirable, as is an essay-based subject. In the case of applicants with no language A level, some other evidence of linguistic ability will be looked for.

The application process

All applicants for ASNC do not now sit a pre-interview test, but we do ask for two examples of recent written work. This will form part of our holistic assessment of candidates’ achievements, abilities and potential and are no more, and no less important than any of the other pieces of information considered during the admissions process.

Candidates should expect two interviews, one of which will be with an Admissions Tutor and the other with our Director of Studies in ASNC and another member of the ASNC Department. The latter interview will include some preparatory study of a text. The main aim is to ascertain candidates’ aptitude for the subject and their commitment to it. No specific preparation will be necessary, but candidates are recommended to have done some reading in the field: a suggested introductory reading list can be found on the Department of ASNC website.

Typical conditional offers

Our typical conditional offer for ASNC is A*AA at A level. IB offers are usually for a minimum of 40-42 points, to include 776 or 777 at Higher level in appropriate subjects. Offers are designed to be realistic, taking into account individual circumstances, and to reflect potential and likely levels of achievement. Most of those who receive offers will attain the grades required.