



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMME EGYPTOLOGY





View of the departmental library corridor with bust of Ramses II (replica)

Egyptology as a scientific discipline

Egyptology investigates ancient Egyptian civilisation, from its pre-history (5th millennium BC) to the Arabic conquest of Egypt (641 AD) and focuses on the area of the lower Nile valley as well as neighbouring regions. In terms of content, Egyptology examines various source types and areas of interest. Philological research encompasses, among other things, the study of ancient Egyptian language levels as well as deciphering papyri and inscriptions whereas archaeological questions focus e.g. on ancient Egyptian architecture or the structures of necropoleis. In art-historical studies, on the other hand, the emphasis is on two- and three-dimensional depictions of everyday Egyptian life and the realm of the gods while historical approaches investigate political, economic and societal phenomena. The combination of philology, archaeology and history plays a significant role in Egyptology as these areas of interest are always interrelated and as the individual types of sources generally are relevant for various topics. A further feature of Egyptology is the fact that the ancient Egyptian culture constantly developed for several millennia. As a result, texts and artefacts from the various epochs can provide mutual explanations for one another, which is why it is vital to have an overview of the entire relevant time period.

Egyptology as a subject at university

The abundance of sources makes Egyptology a particularly research-intensive subject. The Master's degree in Egyptology, which takes into account both philological and archaeological sources, is therefore a very challenging programme. Learning the Coptic and where applicable the Demotic script and language, as well as consolidating the basic skills and knowledge acquired in the Bachelor's programme within the philological, historico-cultural and methodological areas of the subject and within the individual areas of specialisation places high demands on the students. Perseverance and a high degree of motivation are therefore significant requirements for students who wish to enrol in a Master's programme in Egyptology. At the same time, however, MA students will be able to make their first forays into scientifically uncharted territory and conduct own research in the context of work placements (e.g. in Egyptian collections or on excavations), field trips, lectures or while completing their Master's thesis.



View of the extensive departmental library

Studying Egyptology in Heidelberg

Egyptology in Heidelberg benefits from various locational advantages. In addition to the Egyptian Collection of the University of Heidelberg, these also consist in the specialised information service of the University Library that purchases all relevant Egyptology books and makes them available for research on site in the—as a result—very well-equipped library. A further locational advantage is the close institutional cooperation of the ancient studies subjects within the “Centre for studies of the ancient world” (Zentrum für Altertumswissenschaften, ZAW). Aside from the Institute for Egyptology, it also includes the Department of Ancient History and Epigraphy, the Institute for Classical Archaeology and Byzantine Archaeology, the Institute for Papyrology as well as the Institute for Prehistory, Protohistory and Near Eastern Archaeology. Furthermore, students have the possibility to work as student assistants and gain first Egyptological work experiences in one of the research projects associated with the institute. Last but not least, the “Forum of Friends of the Institute for Egyptology at Heidelberg University” (Forum der Freunde des Ägyptologischen Instituts der Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg e.V.) merits particular mention for providing an exciting accompanying and informative programme with a variety of guest lectures.

Admission requirements

a. General

Admission requirements for the Master’s programme in Egyptology include a general higher education entrance qualification or equivalent and an above-average Bachelor’s degree in Egyptology or in a degree programme with the same or similar content. The Egyptology component must have amounted to at least 50% or 70 ECTS.

The lectures and courses in Egyptology are held in German, and very good German language skills are also a general admission requirement at Heidelberg University: The German language test for the admission to universities (DSH) must have been passed at min. level DHS-2, provided applicants cannot submit proof of equivalent language proficiency.

German and international applicants with a German university entrance qualification can enrol without participating in the preceding admission procedure if they fulfil all admission requirements. International applicants with a foreign university entrance qualification must submit an application for admission to the degree programme to Heidelberg University no later than 15 June for the winter semester or no later than 15 November for the summer semester.



Coptic ostrakon in the
Egyptian Collection at
Heidelberg University

b. Major

In addition, applicants for Egyptology as their major must submit proof of knowledge of one ancient language (Latin, Greek, Hebrew or Arabic) as well as of two modern foreign languages (English B1 and French B1) at the start of programme. Furthermore, applicants require knowledge of Late Egyptian and Hieratic. If proof of language knowledge (Late Egyptian and/or Hieratic) cannot be submitted at the start of programme, students have the option of independently acquiring this knowledge, proof of which must be submitted at the latest upon admission to the Master's thesis.

c. Minor

Applicants for Egyptology as a minor subject in the Master's degree programme require no previous subject-specific or language knowledge (aside from German).

The Master's degree programme Egyptology: different options

The Master's programme Egyptology can be started in the summer as well as the winter semester. It can be studied as a part-time or full-time programme. In the full-time programme, the standard period of study is 4 semesters. In the part-time programme, the standard period of study is prolonged according to Heidelberg University's part-time degree programme rules and regulations.

Egyptology can be studied as a major or minor subject:

a. Egyptology as a major

The Master's degree programme Egyptology can be studied as a major subject with 100 credits combined with a minor subject with 20 credits. The Master's programme generally ends in the 4th semester with the completion of the written Master's thesis (30 credits) and the oral Master's examination (5 credits). The written Master's thesis must also be presented and scientifically discussed in the accompanying colloquium.

b. Egyptology as a minor

The Master's degree programme Egyptology can be studied as a minor subject with 20 credits combined with a major subject with 100 credits. There is no final examination in the minor subject. The academic programme in the minor is completed once all 20 credits have been achieved.



Ushabti in the Egyptian
Collection at Heidelberg
University

Recommended combination of subjects

In principle, Egyptology as a major or minor subject can be combined with any subject for which corresponding Master's examination regulations exist. The recommended combination of subjects is:

- a. subjects dealing with topics in which Egyptian findings figure prominently, e.g. Prehistory and Protohistory, Byzantine Archaeology and Art, Classical Archaeology, Ancient History, Classical Philology;
- b. "neighbouring" subjects like Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Near Eastern Archaeology, Semitic Studies, Islamic Studies, Jewish Studies etc.;
- c. disciplines with similar methodological and theoretical approaches/concerns (except some which have been referred to above), e.g. Religious Studies, History of Art, Anthropology, Transcultural Studies; and
- d. disciplines in natural sciences or mathematical-computer science subjects that are becoming increasingly important for the study and application of modern fields and methods of research as well as for storing, organisation and publication of research data, and in combination with the humanities (digital humanities), such as Computational Linguistics and Geography (including Geoinformatics).

Content and structure of the Master's degree programme Egyptology

a. Major

The Master's degree programme Egyptology (major subject) as a consolidating scientific educational trajectory builds on the content of the Bachelor's programme. In the first three semesters, it consolidates and broadens the linguistic and subject-specific skills acquired in the Bachelor's programme and required for a global understanding of the main areas of the subject—specifically Ancient Egyptian script, language and cultural history—through advanced, specialised and specialising modules. Students will acquire in-depth and specialised knowledge in the areas of Egyptian archaeology, art history, religion and literature. In addition, they will increase their linguistic knowledge in the areas of hieroglyphic and hieratic script as well as Middle and Late Egyptian language levels and will learn the grammatical structures of the Coptic language. Students can also choose Demotic as an elective language level or specialise in historico-cultural competencies with specialised and interdisciplinary main seminars where challenging and specific issues are discussed. This elective as well as further



Egyptologists working on Egyptian papyri

electives in the Master's programme enable students to make first decisions about their research profiles and specialisations and allowing the future graduates to prove respective specialised knowledge and skills. The fourth semester is dedicated to completing the written Master's thesis, presenting it in the accompanying colloquium and participating in the oral Master's examination. For a more detailed overview of the individual modules, please consult the respective study guides and the module handbook.

b. Minor

Students of Egyptology as a minor subject can individually choose modules totalling 20 credits from the range of modules offered in the Bachelor's and Master's programmes according to their prior knowledge and interests. This enables the students to design their minor in Egyptology as advantageously as possible in order to complement their respective major subject, i.e. to use their minor to facilitate a specialisation as required by their individual career goals.

Objectives and degree

The degree programme is the second component of a three-tier academic education. The objective of the Master's programme is to qualify students for a research-associated profession in the areas of Ancient Egyptian philology, archaeology and cultural studies in the context of Egyptological research institutions and projects. Graduates of the Master's programme will be able to critically deal with scientific texts, extract, analyse, interpret, assess, connect and differentiate relevant information from different sources and form individual opinions of challenging and prevailing topics. Thanks to their consolidated and advanced linguistic skills, they will be able to independently translate different script and language levels, discuss them in terms of content and grammar and situate them within their historico-cultural context.

The subsequent Master's thesis qualifies graduates to conduct independent Egyptological research. They will have the skills to independently, and in accordance with current scientific standards, work on a challenging topic related to Egyptology and its respective intellectually challenging research questions. With the oral examination, they will demonstrate their knowledge of the subject as a whole as well as its philological and cultural-historical components.



Copying an inscription
during an excavation

... and after graduation?

Due to the predominantly scientific focus of the tasks and careers in Egyptology, many graduates will go on to gain a doctorate. Requirement for a doctoral programme is an above-average Master's degree in Egyptology or in a degree programme with the same or similar content. The doctoral programme is generally completed in 3 to 6 years and culminates in the submission of a doctoral dissertation.

Graduates who do not wish to obtain a doctorate have the option to work in other fields such as publishing houses, libraries, archives, travel companies, press, radio and television, Goethe institutes, foundations, museums etc. As the number of graduates normally exceeds the number of available jobs in the field, students should always have a backup plan in mind.

Professional occupations

Thanks to their second qualifying degree, the Master of Arts in Egyptology, graduates have fundamental skills such as the ability to think critically and interconnectedly, independent learning competencies, autonomous knowledge acquisition, independent extraction and critical assessment of information, writing scientific texts, objective argumentation skills, presentation skills etc., which enable them to work within or outside of the constraints of the subject.

After completing a Master's or doctoral programme, the main fields of professional activity are in teaching and research at the university level or in research projects with third-party funding. Furthermore, there are academic assistant positions at universities as well as scholarships in various funding programmes. Due to the subject's research focus, another main professional area for graduates are the positions at the German Archaeological Institute, Cairo Department as well as in museums and collections.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Images

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