

**DEPT. OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
BOMBAY**



MASTER OF ARTS BY RESEARCH (MA.RES.)

2025-2026

0. INTRODUCTION

There is a real need in Indian higher education for programmes that focus on what are broadly called ‘research’ skills that are important not only in academia, but also in the workplace. These include learning to integrate diverse sources of information, learning to read, think and write critically, and learning to apply conceptual, analytical and methodological frameworks.

The H&SS department at IIT Bombay introduced the **MA by Research (MA.Res)** in the academic year 2022-2023 with precisely this emphasis. The faculty members in the department represent diverse areas of expertise and have considerable experience in teaching with an emphasis on research skills while accommodating disciplinary crossovers with ease. This is especially important since many of the concerns of the Humanities and Social Sciences require a multi-disciplinary approach. Our students have been successful both in working at the interfaces of different areas and in transcending traditional disciplinary boundaries.

The programme combines both course work to build student competence in specific areas and research modules for independent work, and its internal organisation allows substantial scope for research training as well as actual research. The programme is framed to be different from course-intensive post-graduate programmes and offers relative flexibility in terms of student backgrounds and prior training. The programme will also allow students who are considering a research career to try their hand at independent work. Students are expected to carry out a successful programme of research within the duration of the programme and graduate in two years.

1. PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

As with many academic programmes in the Institute, the **Master of Arts by Research** can help prepare those students who wish to pursue a PhD for the challenges of a doctoral programme. However, research skills are not restricted to academia. Most employment opportunities require skills for integrating large amounts of varied information, and for analysing and presenting it effectively, without specific independent intellectual contribution to a field. A broader cultural exposure and literacy in various fields can also better prepare the student for the workplace. For example, fields like journalism or content production require such training and experience with Performance Studies or Media could lead to jobs in cultural institutions, media houses, festivals, archives, galleries, and jobs as curators. There has been an exponential growth in the demand for Master’s level students with research skills in India and elsewhere. Think-tanks, research institutions, private sector research firms, R&D arms of various companies, international research agencies, media houses and local NGOs all require a skilled workforce that can bring more ‘academic’ skills to the workplace.

2. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE: SALIENT FEATURES

- a) The entire batch of entering students will register for **compulsory common courses** in the first semester.
- b) At the time of registration for the **second semester**, students will select **one** of the three specializations, which in turn will determine some of the course requirements.
- c) Eligible students will have the option to complete the degree with a **thesis**. This choice must be exercised at the same time as the subject track selection in the 2nd semester. Research projects shall be the *default* option for the programme.
- d) Students pursuing a **thesis** option, will have the entire second year essentially for the thesis. Students doing research projects will have further coursework (24 credits) to complete together with their Research Projects.
- e) All courses are **open across all tracks** to allow for wider course selection, and to support disciplinary crossovers.

- f) LLP and Soc tracks have specific course requirements in the 2nd semester as well. HS allows for the most student-driven course selection.
- g) The research component begins in the very 1st semester with **four methods courses**, followed by **a seminar style 4-credit course** in the 2nd semester for proposal writing, ethics clearances as needed, peer and faculty reviews. The actual independent research work (Project/s or Thesis) will span the 3rd and 4th semesters, ideally beginning in the summer after the 2nd semester.

3. ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

3.1 Title and specialisation tracks

The programme titled Master of Arts by Research (MA.Res) will be in one of *three* tracks:

- i) Human Sciences (HS)
- ii) Linguistics, Literature and Performance (LLP)
- iii) Sociology (Soc)

Within the three tracks above, a further choice is available to students given their previous educational backgrounds:

- i) To complete a thesis
- ii) To do research projects

(Note: The option to write a *thesis* as part of the research component of the programme will *only* be available to students with a prior Master's degree as specified for each track.) The final degree certificates will indicate the student's selection and completion of one of these three tracks:

- i) MA.Res. (in Human Sciences)
- ii) MA.Res. (in Linguistics, Literature and Performance)
- iii) MA.Res. (in Sociology)

3.2 Eligibility Criteria

a) Candidates must have one of the following:

- (i) A 3-year Bachelor's Degree (such as a BA, BSc, BCom or others – 10+2+3)
- (ii) A 4-year Bachelor's degree (such as BA, BS, BTech – 10+2+4)
- (iii) An earlier post-graduate degree (such as an MA, MSc: 10+2+3+2).

b) Candidates must meet the minimum percentage criterion in their qualifying degree as per the institute norms (GN/EWS/OBC-NC 60% and SC/ST/PwD 55%; or a minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA)/Cumulative Performance Index (CPI) of 6.0 on the scale of 0-10; or an equivalent to 6.0 or other corresponding proportional requirements when the scales are other than 0-10).

c) Candidates must have a valid GATE score/qualification in the GATE-XH paper. MoE norms will be applicable to the GATE score obtained by the candidates.

Note: Candidates with qualification in other GATE papers are NOT eligible to apply.

3.3 Selection Process

- a) Candidates shortlisted on the basis of GATE-XH cut-off (to be declared at a later date) will be invited for Personal Interview organized by the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS).
- b) The final selection will be based on the composite score obtained in GATE-XH and the Personal Interview.
- c) Information about the GATE cut-off score for Personal Interviews and other selection details will be updated on the department website.

3.4 No. of seats and fellowships

- a) The MA.Res programme has 20 seats distributed as per GOI norms. Seats are reserved for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)/Other Backward Class Non-Creamy Layer (OBC-NCL)/Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Person with Benchmark Disability (PwD).
- b) The TA-ships will be made available as applicable to GATE qualified entrants in the following pattern:
 - i) Students with a 3-year Bachelor's degree at entry may receive a TA-ship only in the *second* year of the programme
 - ii) Students with either a 4-year Bachelor's degree at entry, or a prior Master's degree may receive a TA-ship in *both* years.

3.5 Duration of the Programme

This is a two-year programme and the student must normally complete the programme in two years from the date of joining. The maximum period for which the registration of the student shall be alive is four years from the date of joining. The programme cannot be completed in less than two years.

4. OVERALL CREDIT DISTRIBUTION

WITHOUT THESIS

	SEM I	SEM II	SEM III	SEM IV
CREDITS →	32 credits	28 credits	24 credits (*see note iii)	24 credits (*see note iii)
COURSES →	Theory courses: (24 credits) + 4 Methods courses (2x4) (<i>see note i</i>)	4 Courses (6x4) + 1 Seminar (1x4)	2 Courses (6x2) + Research Project-1 (12 credits)	2 Courses (6x2) + Research Project 2 (12 credits)

WITH THESIS

	SEM I	SEM II	SEM III	SEM IV
CREDITS →	32 credits	28 credits	0 credits (*see note iii)	0 credits (*see note iii)
COURSES →	Theory courses (24 credits) + 4 Methods courses (2x4) (<i>see note i</i>)	4 Courses (6x4) + 1 Seminar (1x4)	Thesis (Stage 1)	Thesis (Stage 2)

Notes:

- i. The four methods courses serve as introductions to practical research skills.
- ii. In all three tracks, students are **required** to take two courses in each of the 3rd and 4th semesters, for a programme total of **108 credits** to be earned across 4 semesters. These courses may be Department/Institute/Track electives or a Supervised Learning course or others as applicable (see appended course lists; the lists are suggestive, not exhaustive)

with the approval of the Supervisor/Faculty Advisor. In addition, students will undertake and complete the Research Projects 1 and 2 for a total of 24 credits.

- iii. In all three tracks, students with a master's degree in specific subjects (see table below) may **elect** to complete the programme by thesis. The course credit requirement will remain at **60 credits** and the second year will be available for research and writing the thesis.

Human Sciences	LLP	Soc
Master's degrees (such as an MA, MS etc.) in the subjects/areas specified below		
Archaeology; History <u>AND</u> those as applicable for LLP and Soc tracks	Applied Linguistics; Arts and Aesthetics; Cognitive Science; Comparative Literature; English Literature; Film Studies; Performing Arts; Performance Studies; Linguistics; Translation Studies.	Anthropology; Sociology

5. SEMESTER WISE COURSE DISTRIBUTION

FIRST YEAR, 1st semester common courses

Semester I (32 credits)	Fundamentals of Language Science	3-0-0-3
	Studying Literature	3-0-0-3
	Studying Media	3-0-0-3
	Studying Performance	3-0-0-3
	From the ground up: Basics of History and Archaeology	3-0-0-3
	Historicising Society, State and Culture	3-0-0-3
	Social Theory - I	3-0-0-6
	Research Methods: Critical Reading	0-0-2-2
	Research Methods: Expository Writing and Analysis	0-0-2-2
	Research Methods: Qualitative Methods	0-0-2-2
	Research Methods: Sources and Methods and the Past	0-0-2-2

FIRST YEAR, 2nd semester courses HUMAN

SCIENCES

Semester II (28 credits) 24 credits + Seminar 4 credits	Students may choose any four courses among those available in the LLP or Soc tracks or others including: • HS4108 Gender, Caste and Class in Colonial Indian History • HS4110 Experimental Archaeology: An Introduction	
	Seminar (Project/Thesis Proposal)	4 credits

LINGUISTICS, LITERATURE AND PERFORMANCE

Semester II (28 credits) 24 credits + Seminar 4 credits	Linguistic Theory and Analysis Literary Periodisation Performance Historiography & Documentation Genre & Literature Literary Theory (Any four from the above as well as the HS/SOC tracks given areas of research interest;)	
	Seminar (Project/Thesis Proposal)	4 credits

SOCIOLOGY

Semester II (28 credits) 24 credits + Seminar 4 credits	Compulsory: Social Theory – II (Core) Indian Society (Core) <u>And any two electives from those offered. Examples:</u> Tribal Studies: Concepts and Perspectives Sociology of Development Sociology of Gender Quantitative Methods in Soc. Sciences Development in South Asia: Issues and Debates	
	Seminar (Project/Thesis Proposal)	4 credits

SECOND YEAR

Semesters III & IV 24 credits	2 Electives in each Semester	As per course ¹
	Research Project 1 and 2	12 x2

OR

Semesters III & IV	Thesis	None
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**The course structure is subject to change*

6. INDICATIVE COURSE LISTS FOR SEMESTERS III AND IV

Students NOT in the thesis track are required to complete 12 credits of coursework and 12 credits for Research Projects per semester in the second year. These courses may be selected from among Supervised Learning or Departmental/Institute/Track Electives or other courses. An ***indicative list*** is provided below. Students may choose from **other courses** as relevant with the guidance of the Supervisor/Faculty Advisor.

HUMAN SCIENCES/LINGUISTICS, LITERATURE AND PERFORMANCE

COURSE OPTIONS IN SEMESTER III	COURSE OPTIONS IN SEMESTER IV
HS660: Author, Authorship and Authority CS626-CS449: Speech and Natural Language Processing HS 401: Introduction to Paninian Grammar HS 423: Trends in Twentieth Century Drama HS 451: Cognition and Emotion HS453 Music Appreciation HS466: Introduction to Linguistics HS 463: Introduction to Art and Aesthetics HS 816: Fieldwork Techniques HS 835: Performance Theory and Praxis HS 837: Aesthetics and Criticism DE 231: Design, Society, Culture and Environment	Shakespeare's Plays and their Afterlives CS626/CS460: Natural Language Processing HS 410: South-Asian Fiction in English HS 436: Indian Culture and Tradition HS458: Indian writing in English HS 476: Culture and Media HS 498: Life Span Development - Infancy to Old Age HS 620: Linguistics and Natural Language Processing HS 642: Notation and Musical Analysis HS810: Survey of Modern and Post-modern Literature HS 832: Theories of the Novel HS 860: Archive and the Arts

¹ Most courses will fall under the usual 6 credit pattern 3-0-0-6 and, therefore, 2 courses will meet the credit requirements. If the student chooses to do courses with fewer credits, they must take up other courses to complete the credit requirement of 12 credits/semester in each semester.

DE 627: Indian thought and tradition	DE 208: Design, Storytelling and Narratives DE
DE 703: Arts design and society 2* DE	310: Interaction Design
731: On Ways of Seeing	DE 702: Arts design and society 1
BB 647: Introduction to Evolutionary	DE 670: Field Study and Design DE
Biology	706: Story and Narrative
ET 612: Statistical Methods for Educational	DE 686: Handmade Character Design
Research	ET 620 : Educational Neuroscience

HUMAN SCIENCES/SOCIOLOGY

COURSE OPTIONS IN SEMESTER III	COURSE OPTIONS IN SEMESTER IV
HS 489 State, Polity and Society HS	Sociology of Development
603 Sociology of Development HS	Quantitative Methods in Social Sciences Sociology
643 Sociology of Infrastructure	of Gender
PS 605 Social Science Perspective in	Tribal Studies
Public Policy	HS449 - Capitalism: theories, histories, varieties.
PS 619 Health Policy: An Introduction PS	HS 491 Contemporary Urban India; Sociological
630 Technology and the Future of	Perspective
Workers	HS 626 Framing Caste
	HS 629 Ecology and Society
	HS 637 Anthropology and Disaster
	HS 640 Civil Society: Its Foundations and Future

7. DEFINING RESEARCH PROJECTS

Research training in all three subject tracks is understood to include research skills imparted right from the start as well as independent work of *substantial* scope with a Faculty Supervisor. The projects may include (and are not restricted to) the following:

- Traditional research papers - theoretical or experimental
- Fieldwork, community-based, theoretical or interventionist
- Creative projects (performance, translations, digitisation)
- Language or other documentation or development of archival materials
- Curatorial projects, performances
- Tool development (evaluatory, app-based, pedagogical etc.)
- Internships/work-based products (if applicable)

8. RULES AND REGULATIONS

All other rules and regulations will apply as per the normal requirements of IIT Bombay Academics for this programme. Please check the related document online.