

# *Maryvale Institute*

## **BA (Hons) in Philosophy and the Catholic Tradition**

*validated by the Open University*

*Programme Enquiry Information*

2020

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## **1. A General Introduction to the Maryvale Institute**

Maryvale Institute is an international, distance-learning college offering programmes at all levels in Catholic Studies, from Basic Skills to PhDs. It began as a Diocesan Catechetical Centre in 1980 for the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham but it has been a place of study for the Catholic community since the seventeenth century, as home to the first Catholic seminary and to several religious orders: The Oratorians, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the Sisters of Mercy. It was previously known as Oscott House and was renamed 'Maryvale' by John Henry Newman in 1846.

The Archdiocese of Birmingham and Maryvale Institute merged on 31 July 2019 and became one charity effective from 1 August 2019.

The main aim of the Institute is to educate and train men and women in Catholic Theology, Philosophy, Scripture, Religious Education, Catechesis, Liturgy, Spirituality and other related disciplines in order to equip them intellectually, personally and spiritually for their personal and professional lives.

Maryvale offers a range of qualifications at degree and postgraduate level, all in part-time, distance-learning mode.

## **2(i). Philosophy Introduction**

This five-year, part-time programme responds to a growing need experienced within the Church for a rediscovery of the great riches of the Catholic philosophical tradition. The Catholic faith has always stressed the importance of using our God given reason to reflect upon our faith and to show to non-believers how the Catholic faith is reasonable; how it makes sense of life. Since the Holy Father's great encyclical letter on faith and reason, faith and philosophy, *Fides et Ratio*, there has been a growing awareness that study of philosophy is essential as part of the new evangelization. This is because philosophy helps us to make a reasoned case for the faith with non-believers in terms of the reason which is natural to us as human beings. Thus we can better make a case for the faith without presupposing that faith on the part of the men and women with whom we dialogue. As the Holy Father also stresses, the study of philosophy in the Catholic tradition is also vitally important for the correct approach to Catholic Theology.

## **2(ii). Background and Development of Programme**

In the Catholic intellectual tradition philosophy has always played a key role and has been studied in conjunction with theology, and with other academic disciplines. For those studying Catholic theology for priestly ordination or for any other reason philosophy is required. Since Pope John Paul II's important encyclical on faith and reason, theology and philosophy, *Fides et Ratio* there has been a renewal of attention to and interest in the relationship between philosophy and theology. This comes at a time when there is an increased interest in philosophy generally. This is certainly witnessed in the documented increases in the uptake of philosophy programmes in 6th forms and universities in the U.K. and in universities in the U.S.

The programme responds to these needs through a curriculum which aims to enable students to engage with the central areas of philosophy and with key philosophical trends and individual thinkers, while at the same time appreciating the interconnections between the philosophical works studied and theological research and perspectives.

The programme would appeal to those wishing to study philosophy within the Catholic tradition in some depth. At the outset of our programme development meetings we noted that in the United Kingdom as a whole, according to a Quality Assurance Agency survey of philosophy faculties current at that time, while the vast majority study Kant and Wittgenstein for the main set texts, no programmes were identified which focused upon philosophy in relation to the Catholic intellectual tradition.

Perceiving the need to respond to these new developments both in the world of learning in general and in the Catholic Church in particular Maryvale Institute began exploring the possibility and feasibility of a degree in Philosophy and the Catholic Tradition in 2002-3. Such a degree was seen by the Institute as a natural development of programmes already provided in Theology and associated areas. Philosophy modules had already been incorporated into these other degree programmes.

The development of the BA (Hons) in Philosophy and the Catholic Tradition has benefited from a wide range of expert advice from staff at Maynooth, Maynooth NUI, Queens University Belfast, Gregorian University Rome, Pontifical Lateran University Rome, members of Maryvale's Academic Standard's Committee and, finally, from staff at the Open University.

From the beginning of the planning of the degree we sought to design a programme which, we hoped, would bring together and integrate elements of both the current U.K. approach to philosophy in Higher Education with those of the Catholic Pontifical and seminary tradition. The methodology, then, is naturally that which has developed at the Institute from our relationship with the Open University and from the beginning we worked with QAA benchmarks. At the Institute we were encouraged in our thinking concerning the feasibility of the integration of the approaches by the extremely positive report we received in our Open University Institutional Review of November 2007. One aspect of the Institute's pedagogical method singled out for praise in that Review was precisely our bringing together the pedagogy of distance-learning and the Catholic ecclesial dimension.

In the design of the curriculum and in staffing the integration of these elements is evident. Thus, the curriculum has been designed with both the requirements of a U.K. philosophy degree in mind, albeit one which has a strong emphasis on philosophy of religion and theologically relevant philosophical topics, and, on the other hand, the needs of students who may be studying philosophy prior to theology according to the plan of studies in the Roman system.

### **2(iii). Programme title and rationale**

The title for the programme is BA (Hons) in Philosophy and the Catholic Tradition. It was clear at the outset to programme development committee members discussing the issue of the programme title that the distinctive nature of the programme, as focusing upon philosophy in relation to Catholic theology and culture, should be enshrined in the programme title. The programme title must express for students, staff and for the intended prospective clients of the programme its distinctive qualities as a part-time, distance learning degree in philosophy for or related to Catholic theology and cultural life.

The special focus of the BA (Hons) in Philosophy and the Catholic Tradition then, is upon key Catholic philosophers and their relation to the whole philosophical tradition (to which a number of them have been conspicuous contributors), and upon the rational basis, as this may be argued and debated in the world of philosophy, for Catholic faith and the cogency of theology. Precisely to engage with the requirements of such specialised foci students, through the programme, are assisted in developing those philosophical skills of analysis and critical discussion which are central to the existence of philosophy, and they will engage with key areas of the world of philosophy and with the history of the whole philosophical tradition.

### **3. Programme Structure – Part time - Distance Learning**

The structure of the program has been developed so there are achievable stages along the way during the part-time five-year study program. Essentially a student works towards credits earning these achievable stages, thus a Higher Education Certificate and/or Higher Education Diploma in Philosophy and the Catholic Tradition. The triggers for these are indicated within the Curriculum (next page) as the Eligible Exit Award criteria.

The structure works at level achievements therefore, levels four, five and six and these are achieved over five years of study. Once the completed levels are reached the student is then eligible for the final award BA (Hons) Philosophy and The Catholic Tradition.

#### **Level Four**

Year 1 to 2 of the program of studies enables the fundamentals of a philosophical education.

#### **Level Five**

Year's 3 and (part) of Year 4 of studies gives a deeper appreciation of philosophy in the Catholic tradition.

#### **Level Six**

Year's 4 and (all) Year 5 of studies gives a deeper appreciation of philosophy in the Catholic tradition.

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

In general, the Higher Education Certificate years give core knowledge of the basic questions of philosophy and introduce students to key subjects such as ethics, which is connected with the epistemological and metaphysical questions studied in year one.

The Diploma Certificate years give background and depth and looks at philosophical issues in areas such as Cosmology, Eastern Philosophy, Current Issues in Philosophy, Phenomenology, Philosophy of History and the Philosophy of Art.

The final degree year enables students to go deeper into the connections between philosophy and theology and produce a synthetic longer piece of work

#### **Part - Distance Learning**

Essentially the degree programme is distance learning however, we provide an integral set of three residentials per academic year that underpin the educational learning in addition to the module's programme book/s. All students are expected to attend the residential provision and these take place in January, April and July of each year.

During your part-time studies, you are expected to undertake core-reading of the programme materials and submit assessments electronically and feedback is also returned this way. You will receive tutorial support during the residential and via email, telephone or Skype should you require this.

#### **Running Cycle**

The year on year cycle of the programme in how you are supported distance learning overview is indicated in the Appendix 1 section of this document.

## 4. The Curriculum

### BA Hons in Philosophy and the Catholic Tradition (Level and ECTS)\*

| Level | Credits                | Yr 1   | BA Hons in Philosophy and the Catholic Tradition  | ECTS             |
|-------|------------------------|--|---|------------------|
| Four  | 20                     | 1.   | Introduction to Philosophy  | 10               |
| Four  | 20                     | 1.   | History of Philosophy* Linked to Reading Texts: Augustine's Confessions   | 10               |
| Four  | 20                     | 1.   | Philosophy of the Human person and Ethics   | 10               |
|       |                        | <b>Yr 2</b>  |   | <b>ECTS</b>      |
| Four  | 20                     | 2.   | Epistemology * Linked to Reading Texts: Augustine's Confessions   | 10               |
| Four  | 20                     | 2.   | Metaphysics   | 10               |
| Four  | 20                     | 2.   | Logic   | 10               |
|       | <i>Credits<br/>120</i> | <i>Eligible Exit Award possible: Cert HE Philosophy and the Catholic Tradition</i> |   |                  |
|       |                        | <b>Yr 3</b>  |   | <b>ECTS</b>      |
| Five  | 20                     | 3.   | Philosophy of Science   | 10               |
| Five  | 20                     | 3.   | Issues in current Philosophy* Linked to Reading Texts: Augustine's Confessions  | 10               |
| Five  | 20                     | 3.   | Social and political Philosophy   | 10               |
| Five  | 20                     | 3.   | Philosophy of Culture and Evangelization  | 10               |
|       |                        | <b>Yr 4</b>  |   | <b>ECTS</b>      |
| Five  | 20                     | 4.   | Philosophy of God and Cosmology* to Reading Texts: Augustine's Confessions  | 10               |
| Five  | 20                     | 4.   | Philosophy of History and Arts  | 10               |
|       | <i>Credits<br/>240</i> | <i>Eligible Exit Award possible: Dip HE Philosophy and the Catholic Tradition</i>  |   |                  |
| Six   | 20                     | 4.   | The Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas   | 10               |
| Six   | 20                     | 4.   | Philosophy of Religion* Linked to Reading Texts: Augustine's Confessions  | 10               |
|       |                        | <b>Yr 5</b>  |   | <b>ECTS</b>      |
| Six   | 20                     | 5.   | Philosophy and Contemporary Catholic theology   | 10               |
| Six   | 20                     | 5.   | Reading Texts: Augustine's Confessions  | 10               |
| Six   | 20<br>per<br>module    | 5.   | Choice of Elective(s):<br>Thomas More and Renaissance Philosophy<br>Husserl and Phenomenology<br>The Philosophy of Meister Eckhart<br>Aquinas and Newman in Modernity | 10<br>per module |
| Six   | 20                     | 5.   | Extended Essay (10,000 words)   | 10               |
|       | <i>Credits<br/>360</i> | <i>Eligible: Bachelor of Arts: (Hons) Philosophy and the Catholic Tradition</i>    |   |                  |

\*The OU confirmed after consultation during the re-validation process that a new format structure for the Philosophy degree and the above programme of studies begins in January 2020.

## 5. Student Support

The programme enables students to study at home using programme materials; books and handouts, specially written for the program of study. These materials are made available electronically also making the programme accessible in many ways but also to those with family and parish commitments, as well as those in full-time or part-time employment which enables a pace of study integrated with daily life.

This distance-learning approach for the program has been based on Open University practice and adapted to the Maryvale situation. Students who study this way require self-motivation to see themselves through their study however, residential, tutorials, peer support can also help with this as the support and encouragement of others is also vital for success. The mix of students is regarded as an important strength of each programme and, beginning with the Introductory Weekend, the programme aims to provide an opportunity for identifying common understandings and approaches.

In particular, Maryvale provides the following in order to support students on this programme:  
**Module Coursebooks**

A coursebook is provided for each module. The coursebooks are prepared by specialist staff, and these teaching texts provide the basis for all the study and assignment work. The coursebook introduces you to the main areas of the subject and stimulates thinking and reflection by posing questions and exercises. The coursebook also indicates further reading and assists you in linking that particular subject with the other areas of study. With each coursebook there is an assignment question.

### ***Residential weekends and reading weeks***

There are two residential weekends a year and one residential week. The residential are inclusive of your Academic fees but exclusive of intercalation periods. The residential are provided to support students learning into their programme of study and are enhance by tutorial and peer support.

This great experience undertaken at Maryvale Institute is an enormous support to students on self-study programs at the Higher Education level, enabling students to know and support each other, to come together in a joint venture and challenge, to have a spiritual background to their work through structured times of prayer throughout the weekend, to benefit from discussion periods with people in similar situations to themselves, to enrich the coursebook material with supporting lectures, workshops, tutorials and the resources of the Maryvale library and IT services.

Because of their importance in terms of student support and learning, attendance at all residential is required, except in the case of those studying abroad, who are required to attend the first weekend and the reading week each year.

The purpose of the introductory residential session is to familiarise students with the Maryvale Institute and its staff, to clarify the nature, organisation and administration of the programme, and to allow students to meet each other. This opening weekend is mainly concerned with ensuring that students understand how the learning system is intended to work, and what facilities are provided or are otherwise available. Students are also provided with a Handbook which clearly lays out all the necessary information.

The residential sessions have the complementary purpose of helping students develop a sense of the inter-relatedness of the modules and of the coherence of the whole programme, as well as stimulating their own self-awareness and personal development.

The reading weeks are designed so that you have an experience of working directly on the great texts of philosophers down the centuries. This is to avoid an over-reliance on secondary

literature, which can separate students from the primary sources. Encountering the primary texts in this way brings home to students that philosophy is a conversation, a dialogue over time between human persons who share the same fundamental concerns. Texts are studied, discussed and debated in a group setting. This helps students to develop their inborn capacities for truth seeking and truth finding. It also helps them appreciate the communal character of the search for truth as is seen in the beginnings of philosophy in the Socratic dialogue.

Residentials are confirmed year on year and an email reminder is sent approximately four weeks prior to taking place in order for confirmation of attendance can be noted. If you have a health need that requires medical prescription/s it is advisable to bring these with you but we do ask however, **for you to have medical insurance\*** if you are not part of the European Union and your stay may be void if you do not have this.

*\*Healthcare in the UK is not free to overseas visitors and students attending residentials are expected to ensure that they have adequate health insurance cover before visiting. The Institute cannot accept responsibility for students' personal health, all students are expected to take reasonable precautions to safeguard their own health and wellbeing.*

### ***The Programme Director***

The Programme Director co-ordinates your journey of learning and also acts as your Personal Tutor. The modules vary for the duration of your studies through each level so the Programme Director role is pinnacle in their support academically and pastorally. The Programme Director can be contacted through various methods; telephone, email, skype etc

In this capacity, the Programme Directors role is to guide students through the programme and to monitor their progress with their studies and the effect of the programme on them. The Programme is evaluated during each residential. Students are encouraged to contact the Programme Director with any questions or problems concerning the programme.

### ***Academic Tutor***

Assessments are submitted via our online electronic marking system. The role of the Academic Tutor is to give effective feedback inclusive of weaknesses and strengths along with prompts for further development and resources if required. The Programme Director acts as the moderator of students' work overseeing the work submitted the Academic Tutors feedback and if a grade/mark should be increased or decreased if necessary. The method of marking assignments, by detailed annotation, is specifically designed to be of maximum help to the student at a distance, and is undertaken by Tutors who are all experienced in philosophy and distance-learning methodology.

### ***Technical and Library support***

A librarian provides an important source of support. Maryvale's purpose-built library was opened in 1990 and now holds a total of some 14,000 books and journals. The main subjects covered by the library are: Philosophy of religion, Biblical studies, Catholic and other Christian theology, Moral theology, Spirituality, Sacraments and liturgy, the Catholic Church, Comparative religion, Religious Education and Catechetics.

The librarian is very much involved in programme development, the books, journals, on-line access to resources and continually review changes daily to update stock in order to support teaching and learning. There is a number of computers located within the library and quiet study areas to support different needs of learners. The Library at Maryvale plays a particularly important part in the support of part-time distance-learning students and is always available for students to use. It is best to telephone in advance and check with the Librarian if the Library is open when you want to come.

## 6. Programme Management

The **Programme Director and Staff of the Programme** are responsible for the day to day management and administration of the programme. **The Programme Director** provides a reference point for all those involved with the programme, and seeks to ensure coherence and progression for students. **The Programme Administrators are** (*Undergraduate Academic Administrator*) Ms. Angela Arkley, and (*Programme Administration Assistant*) Mrs. Viktoria Meszaros. The major committees overseeing the management and running of the Institute are the General Council (governing body) and the Academic Board (providing policy on programme) which reports to the Council. A number of other committees, supporting the programme, report to the Academic Board with regard to specific areas of management, as follows:

The **Programme Committee** in which staff and students work together to advise on programme resources and development, on the monitoring and evaluation of programme delivery and to assist with the compilation of the annual report to the Academic Board.

The **Academic Standards Committee** that, checks regularly that the regulations, procedures and general management of the programme maintain the necessary standards.

The **Assessment and Examinations Board** that, is responsible for the conduct of programme assessment and examinations and for reviewing the general progress of the programme concerning the assessment process.

The **Academic Board** that, has ultimate decision-making powers concerning all Academic Affairs of the Institute.

## 7. Admission to the Programme

In general, entry to this degree programme is 'open', in the sense that no specific previous qualifications are needed, but evidence will be sought of ability for degree level work and the application will need to be supported by appropriate references. The Programme is delivered in English and evidence of competence in the language may be required of those for whom English is not their first language.

- An **application form** must be completed (along with an accessibility form, if required, to be submitted to the Accessibility Co-ordinator)
- A **400-word explanation** of the reasons for your decision to apply for the programme
- You are also required, to **submit two references** which must be sent by the referee directly to Maryvale (this will be treated with the strictest of confidence)
- The **application fee** payment. There is the option to pay your application fee online via our fees section please visit, [www.maryvale.ac.uk](http://www.maryvale.ac.uk) for further details or by contacting our Finance Department directly by telephoning the institute.

The application will then be considered by the Programme Director **you may be asked for an interview, or we may phone you in order to clarify any details in your application.** You will then be informed whether you are accepted for the program within six weeks of receiving your completed application.

Assuming that your application is successful you will be sent an 'acceptance pack', including further information about Maryvale Institute and the program. This pack includes details of how to apply for a Maryvale Student ID card, you will be asked to sign a statement agreeing to abide by the regulations and support the ethos of Maryvale Institute, and you must enclosed an Stamped Address envelope otherwise you may collect it as your first residential.

Once the programme **fees** have been received for the first year, which **must be paid before** the start of the program (*the first day of the residential in January*), and your signed statement, you are then formally enrolled as a student of the Institute.

If for any reason your application for a place on the programme is not successful, the Institute reserves the right, because of the elements of confidentiality involved in the admissions process and the collection of references, not to give the reasons for this decision. If at any stage you are dissatisfied with the admissions process we would advise you to follow the complaints procedure of the Institute: a copy of this can be found on the Institute's website, or you can order a copy from the Institute's library. We will endeavour to ensure that your questions are dealt with promptly and professionally.

## 8. Fees

### (a) Cost per annum

The cost per annum for the BA (Hons) Philosophy and The Catholic Tradition Programme is £2900\*, this applies to both UK and EU students and £3770\* for non-EU students. The programme fees are non-refundable 14 days from the date of your acceptance letter. **\*Fees may rise annually precise figures will be published each year but as a guide increases will be in line with inflation.** The fee includes tuition, registration, office administration, board and lodging during residential(s)\*\* the resources for the Institute Library and other facilities provided. \*\*If for a good reason, which is agreed with the Director of the Programme, a student is unable in any instance to attend one of the residential schools, a reduction of fees will not be possible.

An application for the programme, which begins in January each year, should be returned with a £50 application fee in pounds sterling or euro equivalent (cheques made payable to *Maryvale Institute*) to: The Programmes Administrative Assistant, Maryvale Institute, Maryvale House, Old Oscott Hill, Birmingham, B44 9AG.

While the Institute endeavors to keep the programme fees at a reasonable level, it cannot guarantee that fees will remain the same throughout the duration of the program. The Institute reserves the right to amend its programme fees at any time to reflect inflation and any other financial changes which may impact on the efficient and economic running of the Institute.

### (b) Grants

Fees charged do not represent the actual cost of running the degree programme. No government grants are available to Maryvale Institute unlike, for instance, the Open University. Maryvale is funded by its programme fees, any projects undertaken and by a grant from the Archdiocese of Birmingham and from any projects or programme it offers. The Institute will support applications of students to any source of grants.

Students would be well advised to investigate the possibility of obtaining grants from other educational sources. In addition, local dioceses, deaneries and parishes may well be prepared to fund part of a student's fees, especially if the degree programme is seen as training for a more effective catechetical and pastoral work in the church. The Institute will also support applications of students who propose to make such arrangements with their local church which may give help with fees to students in return for vocational service either rendered in the present, or promised in the future.

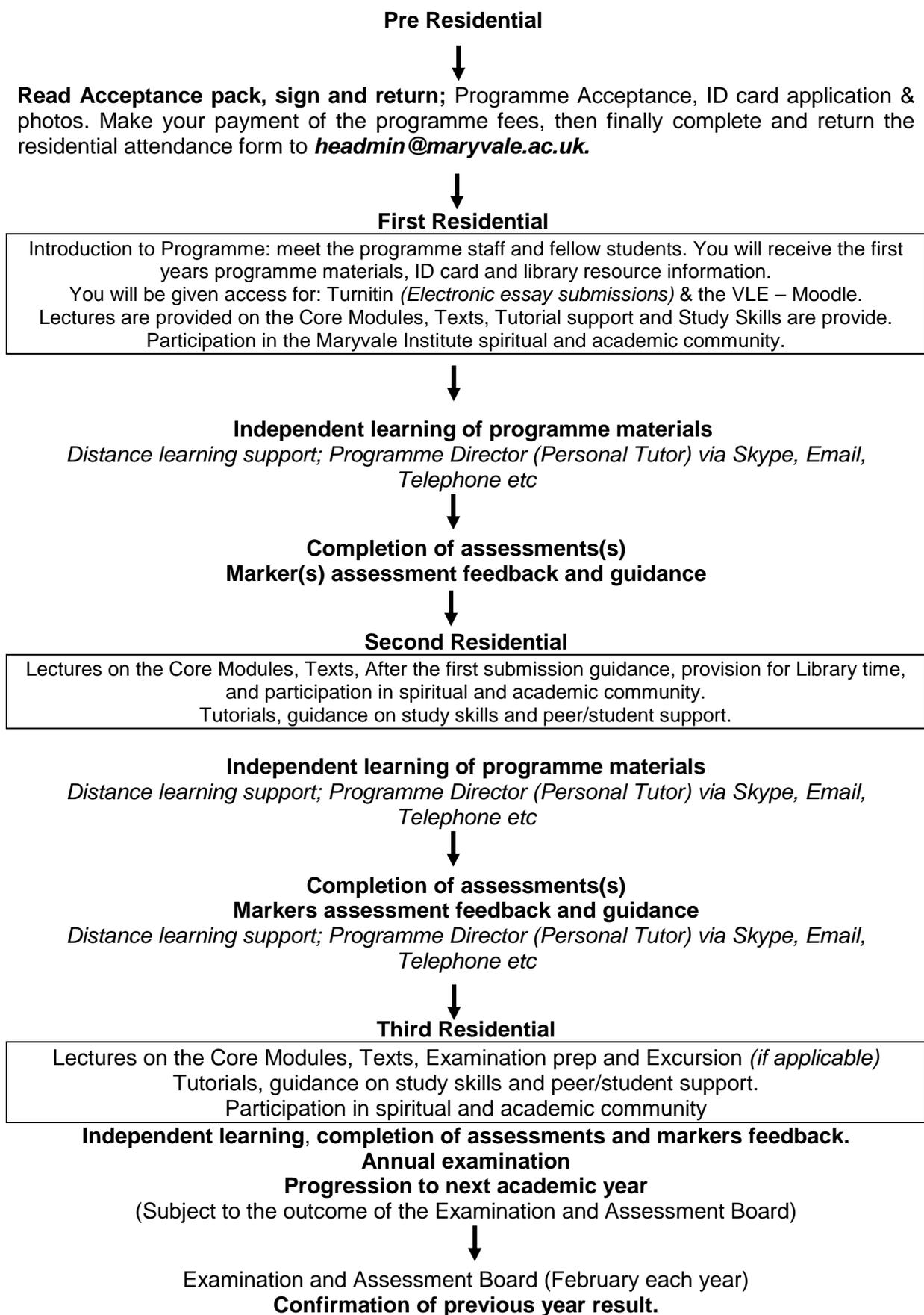
## **9. Right to Cancel**

You have the right to cancel your enrolment on a programme within 14 days of the date of your acceptance letter. The cancellation must be made in writing (via post or email) within this cancellation period. In the event of cancellation within the time period, if you have paid your programme fees these will be returned to you, in the form of a cheque, on the return of any goods or materials provided.

**Please note, we do not offer refunds once the programme has commenced.**

## Appendix 1, Annual Programme cycle for students

The following chart summarises the learning cycle process:



## Appendix 2, Typical Residential Timetable

### FRIDAY

|         |                       |
|---------|-----------------------|
| 7.00 pm | Evening Meal          |
| 8.00 pm | Lecture/Seminar       |
| 9.15 pm | Compline/Night prayer |

### SATURDAY

|          |                            |
|----------|----------------------------|
| 7.30 am  | Mass                       |
| 8.15 am  | Lauds/Morning Prayer       |
| 8.30 am  | Breakfast                  |
| 9.30 am  | Lecture                    |
| 10.45 am | Coffee                     |
| 11.15 am | Lecture                    |
| 12.00 pm | Angelus and short break    |
| 12.30pm  | Tutorials                  |
| 1.00 pm  | Lunch                      |
| 2.00 pm  | Tutorials and Library time |
| 4.00 pm  | Tea                        |
| 4.30 pm  | Seminar /Lecture           |
| 6.10 pm  | Evening Prayer             |
| 6.30 pm  | Vespers/Evening Meal       |
| 7.30 pm  | Lecture                    |
| 9.00 pm  | Compline/Night prayer      |

### SUNDAY

|          |                             |
|----------|-----------------------------|
| 7.30 am  | Mass                        |
| 8.30 am  | Breakfast                   |
| 9.30 am  | Lecture                     |
| 10.45 am | Coffee                      |
| 11.15 am | Lecture                     |
| 12.30 pm | Conclusions and Evaluations |
| 1.00 pm  | Lunch                       |
|          | Depart                      |

For the July week residential the timetable starts like Friday (weekend residential) at 7.00pm. Then the Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday follow the Saturday schedule (weekend residential) and Friday as the Sunday (weekend residential).