



DMCA TERMS & CONDITIONS

The aim of the academy is to provide a study, learning and practice environment for people interested in medieval HEMA, mainly using longsword but sometimes using other weapons such as one-handed sword, dagger, sword and buckler, and poleaxe.

The academy is designed as a study group. It operates with a flat structure to reflect this ethos, being as flat as possible in terms of hierarchy, making all members equally valued and capable of contributing to the activities. The academy therefore operates with only four “ranks”, which are partly defined by insurance level:

- Prospective students (duration: 4 lessons) who have not yet joined the academy as a full member.
- Full members, who range from novices in HEMA who do not yet have the basics to teach, through to experienced students who can help with providing feedback and guidance to other students.
- Assistant instructors who are members with more experience who can support the instructors in running a class. They are insured for this but not for running a class alone.
- Instructors are experienced practitioners who take the lead in running classes. They are insured by BMABA to be in control of the full group and therefore their instructions must be followed, especially regarding safety.

The role of instructors involves preparing teaching material, demonstrating it to students and providing feedback and guidance. All students are encouraged to provide feedback to each other, as this is an essential part of learning. At times, the instructors may even decide to step into the shoes of fencing masters: instead of teaching dogmatically, we will allow ourselves to experiment from the basics and discover what techniques make sense martially in situations not covered by original manuscripts. This is after all the way medieval masters originally discovered their wonderfully efficient and graceful techniques in the first place.

Safety is very important to us. Exercising control and modulating intensity to match the level of equipment both fencers are wearing, as well as the intensity both fencers are comfortable with, is crucial for both learning techniques and avoiding accidents. For sparring and freeplay, we expect participants to be considerate and aware of their own and their partner's safety and to only attempt exercises that are within their skill to execute safely. We also expect that you do not attend class under the influence of any substances, legal or illegal.

Members who have their own (HEMA-safe) training weapons should be aware of the laws around transporting training weapons and must take them to training in a safe and legal way. They must never be brandished or openly worn outside of training but must be packed away securely in a bag or case when not in the training hall.

The academy is simply run by enthusiasts for the benefits of other enthusiasts and is set up as a not for profit organisation.

The academy's practice should appeal to people interested in medieval combat in its wider sense, for example to people who are reenactors (medieval period), LARPer, stage combat enthusiasts, sport fencers, etc. The academy will provide teaching whatever your level of competency, from total HEMA beginners to established practitioners.



Like any other martial art, the classes cover basic and advanced techniques that require numerous hours of practice to master. Nobody is going to become a competent practical swordfighter with only ten hours of practice. Nobody is going to learn the theoretical ins and outs of the martial art with ten hours of attendance.

If you have a Facebook account, it is recommended that you join the group for the latest info, to ask questions to students and to view some pictures and videos of training:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/MedievalCombatAcademy/>

We also have a whatsapp group for announcements only - please ask if you have not been added to this and would like to be.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the cost?

The cost of the session is £10 per person per class, or £30/£50 a month depending on whether you come to 1 or 2 sessions a week..

The first session is free, then students are requested to fill in the membership form and pay for sessions after that.

Do I need to own some equipment?

No, not at first. We have some spare swords and protective equipment, but as you progress this won't be enough to take part in free play/sparring.

Students who become full members are encouraged to buy their own equipment, the priority being items that are difficult or impossible to borrow (for example: jackets, groin protection). See the section on "Equipment" for more details of requirements for different parts of practice. There will always be something you can take part in with only minimal borrowed equipment.

Be careful not to buy just any sword. A lot of cheap so-called "swords" are actually nothing more than fantasy wall hangers and not safe for HEMA. Check our website for a list of reputable suppliers of HEMA swords, or ask experienced members of the club. Unusual weapons, or items from unknown manufacturers must be approved by an instructor before they can be used in class.

What shall I wear and bring?

As this involves some intense physical activity, sports gear is preferable. Bring something to drink as you can get dehydrated.

Where/When do you train? Do you train at other times?

We train regularly: Saturday mornings and Tuesday evenings in Durham. Check the location, dates, timing and location on FB or our website:

<http://www.durhammedievalcombatacademy.org/Training&Contact.html>

We are only covered by insurance to train when an instructor is present.

Beginners should get in touch before coming to make sure someone will be available to teach the basics.

What weapon do you study?

We mainly study longsword. We use steel and synthetic weapons. We sometimes do sessions on other medieval weapons and combat systems, but this is up to the instructors.

What is the level of physical activity in a class?

During training, the level of physical activity is low to moderate. Members who are experienced are allowed to engage in free competitive fights and the level of activity becomes very high.



What is the age limit?

We accept students from 14 years old onwards, and may accept younger students subject to a trial lesson and at the discretion of the lead instructor. If you are under 16, a parent or guardian must accompany you during classes (they do not have to take part in the training). Please consider that students must be physically capable of wielding a sword in a controlled way, and mature enough to behave responsibly.

Do I need insurance?

The instructors are insured for their activity but students are not. Coming to train with us implies that you accept the risks associated with a martial art - although we have a thorough risk assessment and make what mitigations we can, there are inherent risks that are unavoidable. If you do not understand the risks, please get in touch. Even if injuries are very rare, this martial art is not devoid of them. Personal insurance can be obtained.

EQUIPMENT

For anything other than solo drills or theoretical instruction, we require participants to wear protective equipment to mitigate the risk of injuries. The exact equipment depends on the level of activity.

Light protective equipment. For structured exercises such as simple and complex paired drills, we require light protective equipment. This consists of, at minimum, a fencing mask, light protective gloves, and a gorget. We have a large number of these items available to borrow.

- **Fencing masks** protect the face, the top and the sides of the head and give modest protection to the throat.
- **A gorget** or throat protector is worn under the mask and other protective equipment and provides an additional layer of solid protection in case thrusts slide up under the mask.
- **Light gloves** are fabric gloves with padding that typically cover and protect the wrist, the outside of the hand, the fingers and the thumb.

Medium protective equipment. For unstructured or higher speed paired exercises we require participants to wear further protective equipment. When using synthetic weapons, this consists of (at a minimum):

- A fencing mask, gorget, and light gloves as above
- **A padded jacket** designed for use in HEMA, preferably by a reputable manufacturer such as SPES or Red Dragon. The club has two jackets available for borrowing.
- We additionally encourage:
 - Upper leg protection
 - Hard joint protection (elbow and knee protectors)
 - Groin protection

Heavy protective equipment. For unstructured or higher speed paired exercises using metal weapons, or full sparring with any weapons, we require the following at a minimum:

- A gorget and padded jacket as above
- **A fencing mask with mask overlay** for top and back of head protection
- **Hard joint protection** (elbow and knee protectors)
- **Upper leg protection**
- **Groin protection** (required for men/others who need similar protection, but recommended for everyone)
- **Heavy gloves**, with a hard shell or equivalent protection that covers the whole hand and fingers – for example, SPES Heavy gauntlets or Sparring Gloves
- **Shin protection**
- We additionally encourage:
 - Additional hard underarm protection, to be worn over the jacket. (Some models of jacket have this built in).
 - Hard (plastron) chest protector, to be worn under the jacket