Changes in Examination Regulations to the University Gazette – Social Sciences Division

Social Sciences Board

Approved by TAC 24th February 2012 and by EdC

Title of programme
MSc in Education

Brief note about nature of change: Changes to the number of papers to be taken by students on all strands of the programme, in line with the Child Development pathway, with at least two papers being core, and two of the papers being dedicated to research methods. The changes also enable the MSc Educational Research Methods degree to become a fifth pathway within the MSc Education.

Effective date
From 1 October 2012

Location of change
In Examination Regulations 2012

Detail of change
1. P.701, l.19, before ‘Educational Research Methodology’ insert ‘[For students entering the programme on or before 1 October 2011: ’.
2. P.702, l.42, after ‘course.’ insert ‘]’.
3. Delete from P.702, l.44 to P.705, l.11 and substitute :

‘1. Candidates must follow for three terms a course of instruction in Education, specialising in one of the following pathways: Comparative and International Education, Higher Education, Learning and Technology, Child Development and Education, or Research Methodology. The examination shall consist of six papers and a dissertation.
2. Part 1 of the course consists of six papers. All candidates are required to take two
papers in the Foundations of Educational Research, papers (a) and (b). In addition, candidates are required to take the following papers in accordance with the relevant pathway specialism:

(i) for the pathway Comparative and International Education core papers (c) and (d), together with two Option papers.
(ii) for the pathway Higher Education core papers (e), and (f), together with two Option papers.
(iii) for the pathway Learning and Technology core papers (g) and (h), together with two Option papers.
(iv) Candidates for the pathway Child Development and Education core papers (i),(j) (k) and (l).
(v) for the pathway Research Methods core papers (m) and (n), together with two Option papers and a two-week internship.

Candidates will be informed of the available Option papers, and of the assessment requirements for these papers, by Friday of 0th week of Michaelmas Term in the year in which the examination is taken. Exceptionally, candidates may offer one paper from a relevant masters degree in another department in the University, in place of one Option paper, subject to permission from the relevant pathway convenor and the Education Graduate Studies Committee. Applications to take such a paper must normally be made by Friday of the first week of Michaelmas Term.

3. Two copies of all assignments must be delivered to the Chairman of the Examiners, M.Sc. in Education, c/o Examination Schools. High Street, Oxford, by the times and dates specified at the start of the course. Each submission must be accompanied by a declaration indicating that it is the candidate's own work.

4. For Part 2 of the course, candidates will be required to submit a dissertation of 15,000–20,000 words (including footnotes/endnotes but excluding appendices and references or bibliography), the title to be selected in consultation with the supervisor, on a topic relevant to the subject of the pathway being followed. The subject and title selected by the candidate must be approved by the Departmental Board not later than the first day of the fifth week in Hilary Term in the year in which the written examination is taken.

5. Every candidate will be required to satisfy the examiners in the following:

(i) Satisfactory attendance at the appropriate classroom–based courses;
(ii) Satisfactory performance in both Part 1 and Part 2.

6. Three word-processed or printed copies of the dissertation must be delivered to the Chairman of the Examiners, M.Sc. Education, c/o Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford, not later than noon on the second Friday in August in the year in which the written examination is taken. One copy should be hard bound and two soft bound. The two soft bound copies should be anonymous except for the candidate number. The hard bound copy of the dissertation of each candidate who passes the examination shall be retained by the department for deposit in the departmental library. Each submission must be accompanied by a declaration indicating that it is the candidate's own work.

7. Candidates may also be required to attend an oral examination. The oral examination may be on the candidate’s written papers, dissertation, or both. Candidates shall be deemed to have passed the examination if they have satisfied the examiners in both Part 1 and Part 2. If Part 1 is failed, the candidate may retake the whole examination of Part 1 one further time on the next occasion when this is examined. If Part 2 is failed the candidate may resubmit the dissertation one further time on the next occasion when this is examined. The examiners may award a distinction for excellence in the whole examination.

Schedule
Core Papers

(a) Foundations of Educational Research I
(b) Foundations of Educational Research II
(c) Comparative and International Education I
(d) Comparative and International Education II
(e) Higher Education I
(f) Higher Education II
(g) Learning and Technology I
(h) Learning and Technology II
(i) Child Development I
(j) Child Development II
(k) Interventions and policies to promote children’s development I
(l) Interventions and policies to promote children’s development II
(m) Quantitative Research
(n) Qualitative Research

Option Papers

Option papers will normally be offered in the following areas, or on related topics, but there is no guarantee any option will be offered in any one year.

Theories of Educational and Social Change
Education and the Economy
Policy, Politics and Education
Theories of Learning
Research Strategies

Paper (f) will be assessed by unseen examination. All other papers will be assessed by one or more coursework assignments totalling no more than 3,000 words (inclusive of footnotes but excluding bibliography and appendices).

Explanatory Notes

The revised 2012-2013 Exam Regulations for this MSc require students to take six separately assessed one-term papers (following a model already pioneered by the Child Development pathway). In each of the four existing pathways, at least two (and sometimes four) of the six papers are required ‘core’ papers. Two of the six papers are research methods. Final decisions about the content of the pathways and options open to students will be left to convenors.

These changes also enable the MSc ERM degree to become a fifth pathway within the MSc Education, retitled as MSc Education (Research Methods). These ‘RM’ students could combine the methodological requirements of the ESRC-recognised pathway with one or more assessed (or unassessed) option papers. The ‘core’ pathway papers for MSc Education (RM) would become Quantitative and Qualitative Research. As the examinations for the MSc ERM course were already supervised by the MSc Education Exam Board, there will be no visible change to examination procedures or the amounts of examining involved.

This reform consolidates the role of the MSc Education degree as a strong foundation for
research, opens up some of the research methods teaching, and provides 'RM' students with the chance to take substantive options. The change allows greater specialisation and flexibility with timetabling, whilst minimising disruption to existing schedules. There are no significant teaching resource implications because these new Option courses replace some of the existing core courses delivered on the pathways. Instead, the new proposals allow for more flexibility with staffing allocations and allow for sabbatical leave etc.

Each paper in Part 1 would be independently assessed by one piece of course work (with the exception of one paper in the Higher Education pathway, to be assessed by unseen exam). Part 2 of the degree would continue to be an independent dissertation, to be submitted by mid-August.