Communication from the Board of the Board of the Faculty of Oriental Studies

Master of Studies in Islamic Art and Archaeology

Brief note about nature of change: Change to course structure

With effect from 1 October 2014

Examination Regulations, 2013

p. 645, delete 19-47 and substitute:

‘3. The examination will consist of the following four units:

Unit 1.
Candidates shall submit either
1A: two essays of between 5,000 and 7,000 words in length, which may be any two of the following:
a. what might become part of a thesis for the M.Litt or D.Phil;
b. an essay on the theoretical issues raised by the subject which the candidate is proposing for the thesis;
c. an essay on a topic relevant to the subject;
d. a discussion of the historical and literary background or of the source material which is relevant to the proposed subject.

or
1B: a dissertation of between 12,000 and 15,000 words in length (excluding bibliography), which should be equivalent to a substantial draft chapter or chapters of a proposed thesis for the M.Litt or the D.Phil. (For submission, see under 5 below.)

Unit 2
Candidates shall submit either
2A: a portfolio containing reports on the practical work completed during the course, according to the schedule given in the Course Handbook. (For submission, see under 5 below.)
2B: a report or reports on practical work completed on an object or objects that will form the
Units 3 and 4.
Candidates shall take two three-hour examination papers, which may be any combination of language or non-language papers. When an elective paper is shared with another degree, the regulations for the paper follow that of the home degree.

4. Candidates must submit titles for their submitted work (Unit 1A or 1B and Unit 2B or 2B of the examination, above) and subjects for the two elective papers (Units 3 and 4 of the examination, above) by Friday of seventh week of Michaelmas Term. These will be reported for approval by the Board of the Faculty of Oriental Studies at its second meeting in the Michaelmas Term preceding the examination.

5. Lists of any set texts prescribed for the two elective papers (Units 3 and 4 of the examination, above) must be submitted to the Faculty Office by Friday of seventh week of Michaelmas Term and will be reported to the Faculty Board’s second meeting of Hilary Term.

6. All work submitted to the Chair of Examiners must be in typewritten form (except for figures, illustrations, and images). Two printed copies and one electronic copy (e.g. on a CD or a USB flash drive) of all the submitted work (Unit 1 and Unit 2 of the examination, above) must be submitted, securely sealed and addressed to the Chair of Examiners, MSt in Islamic Art and Archaeology, Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford, not later than 12 noon on Friday of fourth week of Trinity Term. The work must bear the candidate’s examination number (but not the candidate’s name, which must be concealed). Candidates must include a signed declaration sealed in an envelope addressed to the Chairman of Examiners that the work is the candidate’s own.

7. Every candidate will be examined by oral examination unless he or she shall have been individually excused by the examiners.

Explanatory Notes
The MSt in Islamic Art and Archaeology is being restructured to provide a year’s pre-doctoral instruction for high-quality candidates who intend to go on to the DPhil, but who lack the necessary background in IAA. The revised degree has been designed to be flexible enough to meet the needs of aspiring DPhil candidates. The main features of the change are as follows:

1. Instead of the requirement to write a dissertation, students will have the option to choose between a dissertation and two extended essays.

2. The options for the practical work component of the degree are being extended by offering a choice between the Portfolio (which consists of modules shared with the MPhil) and a report (or reports) based upon research on an object/objects related to the candidate’s chosen field of expertise (drawing on the extensive collections of the Ashmolean Museum).

3. The two written exams in the current degree which are intended to examine the candidate over a broad range of subjects included in the general survey course, teaching for which is shared with the MPhil, will be replaced by two written exams which follow the format of those in the MST in Oriental Studies. These elective exams offer a much wider choice of subject matter, which may include languages, texts, methodology, history of art, architecture or archaeology, or history. These
elective exams may be shared with another graduate degree.

The proposed changes to the MSt will mean in effect that there are two distinct modes of entry to Islamic Art and Archaeology for graduate students: 1. A broad-ranging survey course of two years, in which instruction is provided in an Oriental language (MPhil), which may serve either as a stand-alone introduction to the field or a preparation for doctoral studies 2. A focused and flexible one-year course of pre-doctoral instruction which will allow candidates to focus on their designated field of study and undertake practical work (MSt).