HUMANITIES DIVISIONAL BOARD
Graduate Studies Committee

Changes in special regulations governing the BPhil in Philosophy: communication from the Board of the Faculty of Philosophy

Subject to the approval of the Humanities Divisional Board, which is now sought, and Education Committee, the following changes in special regulations are proposed:

Humanities Divisional Board

Bachelor of Philosophy (BPhil) in Philosophy

Brief note about the nature of the change
Introduction of regulations allowing for a transfer of MSt in Philosophy of Physics candidates, who have successfully passed the MSt in Philosophy of Physics examination, to the second year of the BPhil in Philosophy.

With effect from 1 October 2013

1. In Examination Regulations, 2012, p. 503, after line 26, introduce new sections, as follows:

“9. Candidates for the MSt in Philosophy of Physics may apply to transfer to the second year of the BPhil in Philosophy. A formal application must be made by Friday of Week 4 of the Trinity Term preceding the Michaelmas Term in which they wish to transfer to the BPhil. Admission of those whose application is approved by the Philosophy Faculty’s Graduate Studies Committee shall always be conditional on a level of performance in the examination for the MSt in Philosophy of Physics, as specified in the Student Handbook.

10. Candidates for the MSt in Philosophy of Physics who have successfully transferred to the second year of the BPhil in Philosophy shall be deemed to have completed the first year of the BPhil in Philosophy and the four essays submitted for their MSt examination shall be deemed to replace the first four essays required of candidates for the BPhil in the first year of studies on the BPhil in Philosophy. Such candidates will be required to submit the assessments for the second year of the BPhil in Philosophy, in line with the BPhil assessments schedule specified under paragraphs 5. and 6. above.

11. Candidates for the MSt in Philosophy of Physics who have successfully transferred to the second year of the BPhil in Philosophy, may apply for the award of MSt in Philosophy of Physics only if they fail or withdraw from the second year of the BPhil in Philosophy.
2. *Ibid*, p. 654, after line 5, introduce new section, as follows:

‘11. In the case of candidates whose formal application to transfer to the second year of the BPhil in Philosophy has been conditionally approved by the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty, the Board of Examiners for the MSt in Philosophy of Physics shall assess whether the candidate’s overall performance meets the level of performance specified in the Student Handbook as a condition for entrance to the BPhil in Philosophy. If so, the candidate shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the examination for the MSt in Philosophy of Physics, and their MSt essays shall be deemed to have been submitted for the BPhil in Philosophy.’

Explanatory Note

(i) This is a request to introduce regulations allowing for a transfer of MSt in Philosophy of Physics candidates who have successfully passed the MSt in Philosophy of Physics examination, to the second year of the BPhil in Philosophy. This transfer opportunity was discussed and agreed by the Philosophy Graduate Studies Committee during the academic year 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, as the new BPhil structure, unlike the old-style BPhil, would lend itself to such transfers, giving the MSt in Philosophy of Physics students, who are usually Physics graduates new to the study of Philosophy, the opportunity of deeper instruction in Philosophy before (applying for) progression to the DPhil in Philosophy.

(ii) The change will be applicable from the October 2013 onwards allowing current MSt in Philosophy of Physics students (who started in October 2012) to benefit from the change.

(iii) Only excellent MSt in Philosophy of Physics students (normally those who achieve a distinction or near-distinction) will be allowed to make the transfer to the second year of the BPhil, with a view to further progress to the (second year of the) DPhil in Philosophy. (Instead of progressing straight to the DPhil in Philosophy as a PRS student, they will first spend another year on the BPhil in Philosophy, which will count as one year towards their DPhil in Philosophy.) The special PRS requirements for MSt in Philosophy of Physics graduates (writing a 20,000-word thesis, attending two graduate classes, and passing a 5,000-word essay) are more or less as staff-intensive as the second year of the BPhil in Philosophy. Hence, the resource implications should be negligible.