

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

SSD/2/2/4

Social Sciences Divisional Board

Approved by the Divisional Board on 08/06/18 and Education Committee on 09/07/18

Title of Programme

Regulations for Degrees of Master of Philosophy in Law and Master of Philosophy in Socio-Legal Research

Brief note about nature of change: Introduction of revised regulations for the MPhil in Law and regulations for the new MPhil in Socio-Legal Research

Location of change

In *Examination Regulations 2017*, after ‘General Regulations Governing Research Degrees’

Effective date

For students starting from MT 2017

For first examination in 2017-18

Detail of change

Insert text as follows after “**General Regulations Governing Research Degrees**” section:

‘1. The MPhil in Law and the MPhil in Socio-Legal Research shall be under the supervision of the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Law.

2. Any person who has been admitted as a candidate for the MPhil in Law or the MPhil in Socio-Legal Research under the provisions of this section, and has satisfied the examiners in the examination prescribed in this section, may supplicate for the MPhil in Law or the MPhil in Socio-Legal Research as the case may be.

3. Candidates who are not graduates of the University may wear the same gown as that worn by candidates studying for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

4. Candidates must keep statutory residence for three terms and may hold status for a

maximum of six terms.

5. Candidates wishing to enter for the MPhil in Law or the MPhil in Socio-Legal Research as provided for under these regulations in the academic year 2017-18 are only permitted to do so if they were originally admitted for the MSt Legal Research or MSt Socio-Legal Research AND commenced their studies on the relevant MSt programme in Michaelmas term 2017. Candidates admitted directly to the MPhil in Law in Michaelmas term 2017 may ONLY be examined for the MPhil in Law in accordance with the regulations for Degrees in Civil Law, Magister Juris, and Master of Philosophy in Law (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2017-18/dicl-mjamophilinlawx/>).

Suspension of status

6. If, for good cause, a student is temporarily unable to carry out their research, the Graduate Studies Committee may grant them a request for a temporary suspension of status, for not less than one and not more than three terms at any one time. Applications for suspension of status should be made to the Graduate Studies Administrator; and should be accompanied by statements of support from a student's supervisor and society. No student may be granted more than three terms' suspension of status in this way.

Termination of status

7. A student shall cease to hold the status of Student for the Master of Philosophy in Law/Socio-Legal Research through failure to meet the requirements laid down in these regulations including failure to meet the requirements within the maximum terms permitted for completion.

Reinstatement

8. A student who has withdrawn or who has been withdrawn may apply for reinstatement within two years of their status ceasing. Such applications shall be addressed by the former student to the Graduate Studies Committee, and shall be accompanied by written statements commenting on the application from the candidate's society and from the former supervisor. The Graduate Studies Committee shall reach a decision on such applications and shall determine the date from which any reinstatement granted under these provisions shall be effective. No reinstatement may be granted under these provisions if the student has already held MPhil status for six terms.

Students with Disabilities

9. Students with disabilities may apply for alternative arrangements in accordance with the provisions of section 6 of the General Regulations Governing Research Degrees. The list of degrees in clause 3 of section 6 shall include the MPhil in Law and the MPhil in Socio-Legal Research for this purpose.

Transfer to the MPhil in Law or MPhil in Socio-Legal Research

10. A candidate holding the status of Probationer Research Student or the status of a candidate for another postgraduate degree within the University may, with the approval of the Graduate Studies Committee, be admitted as a candidate for the MPhil in Law or MPhil in Socio-Legal Research. Time spent as a candidate holding the previous status shall count as time spent working for the relevant qualification.

Research methodology

11. Candidates must follow a suitable course of instruction in Research Methodology appropriate to the qualification and must satisfy the examiners that they have completed to the required standard such tests or exercises as may be prescribed by the Graduate Studies Committee. Where the Graduate Studies Committee judges that it has sufficient evidence of a candidate's proficiency in Research Methodology, it may in exceptional circumstances dispense a candidate from this requirement.

Supervision

12. MPhil students shall be placed by the Graduate Studies Committee under the supervision of a member of the University or other competent person selected by the board, and the board shall have power for sufficient reason to change the supervisor of any student or to arrange for joint supervision by more than one supervisor, if it deems it necessary.

13. It shall be the duty of a supervisor to advise a student as to the courses of instruction and classes, if any, which they should attend, and generally to direct and superintend the student's work.

14. The supervisor shall submit a report on the progress of the student to the board three times each year, and at any other time when the board so requests or the supervisor deems it expedient; and shall undertake such other duties as shall be from time to time set out in the relevant Policy and Guidance issued by the Education Committee. The supervisor shall communicate the contents of the report to the student on each occasion that a report is made, so that the student is aware of the supervisor's assessment of their work during the period in question.

Subject of research

15. Any student may, with the permission of the board, alter the subject of their research providing the new topic is deemed to be academically viable and the student is deemed capable of completing a thesis on the topic; and providing the Faculty has the necessary resources to provide supervision.

Examination requirements

16. Examination for the Degree shall be by thesis, and by oral examination. The thesis must not exceed 30,000 words and should not normally be less than 25,000 words in length

(the limit to include all notes but to exclude all tables and the bibliography, and the candidate should state the number of words in the thesis to the nearest hundred words). The thesis shall be wholly or substantially the result of work undertaken whilst registered for the degree of MPhil in Law or the MPhil in Socio-Legal Research, except that a candidate may make application for a dispensation from this requirement to the Education Committee. It may cover the same area of Law as a dissertation offered in the BCL or MJur or MSc in Law and Finance, but the text of the dissertation must not be incorporated into the thesis.

17. Theses shall be prepared in accordance with Section 7 clause 2 (i)-(iii) and (vii) of the General Regulations Governing Research Degrees with appropriate amendments.

Appointment of examiners

18. By noon on Friday of Week 1 of Trinity Term, candidates must submit to the Graduate Studies Administrator for Law an application for appointment of examiners, signed by the candidate, their supervisor, and college. The choice of examiners should be made in consultation with the supervisor and one of the examiners should normally be external to the University.

Submission requirements for the MPhil in Law

19. Candidates must submit two copies of the thesis to the Examination Schools by noon on 1st August (or by noon on the preceding Friday, if 1st August falls on a weekend). This must be accompanied by a statement as to what part, if any, of the thesis has already been accepted, or is being concurrently submitted, for any degree in this University or elsewhere; and a statement that the thesis is the candidate's own work, except where otherwise indicated.

Submission requirements for the MPhil in Socio-Legal Research

20. Candidates must submit two copies of the thesis to the Examination Schools by noon on the second Friday in September, together with a statement as to what part, if any, of the thesis has already been accepted, or is being concurrently submitted, for any degree in this University or elsewhere; and a statement that the thesis is the candidate's own work, except where otherwise indicated.

Examination of theses

21. The examiners shall consider the thesis excluding any part which has already been accepted, or is being concurrently submitted, for any degree in this University or elsewhere.

22. If a thesis exceeds the permitted length, the board concerned may decline to appoint examiners or to forward the thesis to examiners already appointed, and may return it to the candidate for revision. If the examiners find that a thesis which has been forwarded to them exceeds the permitted length, they should report the fact to the relevant board and await further instructions before proceeding with the examination.

23. The examiners must satisfy themselves that the thesis affords evidence of serious study by the candidate and of the ability to discuss a difficult problem critically; that the candidate possesses a good general knowledge of the field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls; that the thesis is presented in a lucid and scholarly manner, and that the candidate has made a worthwhile contribution to knowledge or understanding in the field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls to the extent that could reasonably be expected within the time normally spent as a candidate for the Degree.

Conduct of oral examinations

24. Candidates will be required to attend an oral examination which shall be conducted in accordance with Section 7 clause 3 of the General Regulations Governing Research Degrees except that clause 3. (v) shall not apply.

Outcome of the examination

25. The examiners shall write a report and make one of the following recommendations to the Graduate Studies Committee:

- (i) that the candidate be awarded the Degree;
- (ii) that the candidate be awarded the Degree with Distinction; or
- (iii) that the thesis be referred for revision, and the candidate given the opportunity to re-submit for the Degree within one further term.

26. Candidates who wish to re-submit for the Degree after referral must submit a further application for appointment of examiners and two copies of the revised thesis. The procedures for the first submission will apply, except that the deadline for both submission of the thesis and the application for appointment of examiners will be the final day of the candidate's fourth term.

27. The examiners shall conduct a second examination under the terms outlined in clauses 21-24 above, except that they may exempt a candidate from oral examination if they are satisfied that they can recommend to the board that the candidate has reached the standard required for the Degree without an oral examination.

28. On the occasion of the second examination, the examiners shall write a report and make one of the following recommendations to the Graduate Studies Committee.

- (i) that the candidate be awarded the Degree;
- (ii) that the candidate be deemed to have failed the requirements of the Degree.

29. Candidates are not required to submit a hard bound copy of a successful thesis to the Bodleian, but if they wish to do so, they must first undertake any minor corrections identified by the examiners, and submit a corrected copy of the thesis for approval by the internal

examiner before depositing the Bodleian copy.'

Explanatory Notes

Introduction of revised regulations for the MPhil in Law including a new submission date, and regulations for the new MPhil in Socio-Legal Research. These regulations are being introduced with effect from the academic year 2017-18 to permit students currently studying for the MSt Legal Research and MSt Socio-Legal Research to change programme to the relevant MPhil degree if they wish and if they will submit their thesis during 2017-18.