Changes in the regulations governing the Honour School of Modern Languages: communication from the Board of the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages

Subject to approval on behalf of the divisional board, which is now sought the following changes in regulations have been made:

Humanities Divisional Board

Honour School of Modern Languages

Brief note about nature of the change(s)
The changes are to remove the listing of the paper XII (special subject) options from the Examination Regulations and the requirement to list them in the Gazette. Instead students will be informed (within the same timescales) via the Faculty’s WebLearn site.

With effect from 1 October 2013 (for first examination in 2014)

1 In Examination Regulations 2012, p.351, l.36-37: delete ‘published in the University Gazette’ and substitute ‘published by the Faculty’

2 Ibid., p.366, ll.49-51: delete ‘a candidate may… in every year’ and substitute: A candidate may offer one or two (depending on the regulations outlined above) of the Special Subjects from the list circulated in the Trinity Term one year before the examination. The list of options available in that year will be publicised on the Faculty’s internal website (and circulated to all students and tutors by e-mail) by the beginning of fifth week of Trinity Term.

3 Ibid., delete l.1, p.367 – l.10, p.369.

4 Ibid., p.367, l.13 – l.14: delete ‘The method of… the following key:’ and substitute: ‘The method of assessment for each subject will be published with the list of options by the beginning of the fifth week of the Trinity Term one year before the examination, according to the following key:’

Explanatory note

(i) The reason for this change is to allow a more timely and appropriate publication of the special topics; and to minimise the potential for error/discrepancy in their circulation. The HT deadline for publication in the Examination Regulations hard copy, means that decisions as to which courses might be available are made before all availability is clear.

It will also simplify the Faculty’s entry in the Examination Regulations and reduce the amount of paper required in the grey book.

(ii) There are no vested interests, in that the content of the course, the method of examination, or the timing of teaching/decision making is not changing.

As it stands, the Examination Regulations, allow the Faculty the ability to confirm the paper XII special topics in the year preceeding their examination (this is to ensure the availability of teaching resources), and all students choose their special subject options by the beginning of their 4th year, and receive the teaching for this during this 4th year (the logic being that students need to have completed as much of their course as possible, and have completed their year abroad where further ideas might be formed, before choosing a more specialised area). The proposed change does not alter the timing of this, merely the means of publication of the special topics.

It will be made clear to students where the information is to be found, and the Faculty will enforce robust procedures to ensure that – once the information has been published – the information/options cannot be changed without due process. It is hoped that the later deadline for publishing this
information (ie. the removal of the publication deadlines for the Examination Regulations and the Gazette) will minimise/eradicate the need for late changes. New procedures will be put in place for the Faculty’s Undergraduate Studies Committee to review proposed Paper XII options at its week 0 Trinity Term meeting.

There will occasionally be issues where a student defers for a year, or completes the course a year early (for example where they are dispensed from the year abroad), typically this should not create a problem as they will be working to the same timescale (receiving details of options just before the commence their 4th/final year). Where a student has already received some teaching for an option (for example if they take a break mid year), the Faculty will commit to allowing the student to select this option, even if it were not otherwise available in that year. This situation is no different from under the current Examination Regulations.

(iii) There are no resource implications because the course content is not changing.