

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

SSD/2/2/4

Social Sciences Board

Approved by Chair's Action on behalf of the Teaching Audit Committee on 06/07/16

Title of Programme

MPhil International Relations

Brief note about nature of change: change to assessment for research methods

Effective date

For students starting from MT 2016

For first examination from 2016-17 (qualifying examination)

Location of change

In *Examination Regulations* 2015

Detail of change

Master of Philosophy in International Relations

(See also the general notice at the commencement of these regulations.)

The regulations made by the International Relations Graduate Studies Committee are as follows:

First-Year Examination

Every candidate must pass a first-year examination before the end of the third term from commencement of the course unless given exemption by the International Relations Graduate Studies Committee. The first-year examination shall be set and administered by the examiners appointed to examine for the M.Phil. in International Relations. This test shall

consist of ~~three~~two parts, as follows:

~~1. A formally assessed Research Design Proposal of 4,000 words, excluding bibliography, on the subject of the student's proposed M.Phil. thesis. Two hard copies, together with a copy on CD, must be submitted to the Examination Schools by noon on the Monday of sixth week of Trinity Term. It must be accompanied by a separate signed declaration that it is the candidate's own work except where otherwise indicated and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment, either at Oxford or at another institution. The scope and the format are as stated in the *Student Handbook*.~~

12. A single, three-hour examination paper covering material from the core papers taught in the first year, namely:

- *The Development of the International System*: The history of the relations between states in peace and war, and the development of the international system. It will include such topics as: major traditions of thought on International Relations; 19th century imperialism and euro-centrism; the concert system, the balance of power and the causes of the First World War; the peace settlement, collective security and the League of Nations; political and economic co-operation in the interwar period; the USA, Soviet Union, Middle East and Far East in the inter-war years; the impact of revolution, domestic politics and ideology on foreign policy; the causes of the Second World War; post-war reconstruction and the origins of the Cold War; the nuclear revolution and the impact of technological change; the evolution of the Cold war; decolonization, nationalism and self-determination; détente, arms control and regional conflicts; the end of the Cold War; the evolution of international economic institutions; the evolution of security institutions; and international relations in the post-Cold War world.
- *Contemporary Debates in International Relations Theory*: Ideas about, and explanations of, international relations, concentrating mainly (but not exclusively) on the major theoretical approaches in the academic study of international relations since 1945. The key theories and approaches to be examined include: realism and neo-realism; theories about war, security, and the use of force in international relations; classical liberalism, globalization, and transformation in world politics; theories about inter-state co-operation and transnationalism; the concept of international society; constructivism and the impact of law and norms in international relations; neo-Marxist and critical theory approaches to international relations; normative theory and international ethics.

Details of the scope and coverage are given in the *Student Handbook*.

~~23. The examiners must also be satisfied that candidates have satisfactorily completed their designated course of research training, and candidates must submit to the~~

~~examiners all coursework completed as a part of their research methods training. The coursework requirements, including administrative arrangements and dates of submission, are set out in the *Student Handbook*. Candidates should note that the *Student Handbook* will set dates for the submission (and, where necessary resubmission) of work for individual research modules. A single, three-hour examination paper covering material from the methods programme as taught in the first year, namely:~~

- ~~• *Research Design and Approaches to Research in International Relations: An introduction to the various methods used in, and approaches to, research in International Relations, and to the major debates and controversies in the field. Students should acquire knowledge of the skills, techniques and questions involved in undertaking research projects, including research design, theory building, derivation of hypotheses, and the choice of appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods to develop critical arguments and to test hypotheses and theories. Topics to be examined may include: the relationship between debates in the history and philosophy of science and different understandings of research methods in International Relations; logic of enquiry and theory building; concepts and measurement; causality and casual inference; single case studies, case selection and selections bias; comparative case studies and QCA; process tracing and longitudinal analysis; the relationship between qualitative and quantitative methods; quantitative methods, including linear regression analysis; formal methods and rational choice; public goods, collective action and cooperation; issues in the study of institutions, including historical institutionalism and the study of practice; methods and approaches for the study of ideas, norms and ideology; discourse and language; methodological controversies in the history of ideas; historiographical disputes over method and approaches to history; methodological developments in the study of global history; critical theory as an approach to International Relations, including feminism and post-colonialism; inter-disciplinarity and the virtues and limits of pluralism. The examination paper will be sub-divided in order to test different elements of the first-year coursework (which will vary from year to year but will be fully specified in the Course Handbook), but will always include one section devoted to testing statistical literacy.*~~

~~34. Candidates who fail either or both of the first-year written examinations part of the first-year examination will normally be allowed to retake it the failed paper(s) before the beginning of the next academic year. Candidates who fail the Research Design Proposal or the coursework submitted for the research modules may resubmit their work, resubmission dates are set out in the Student Handbook.~~

Final Examination

No candidate shall enter the final examination unless he or she has already passed the first-year examination or has been granted exemption by the Graduate Studies Committee as stated above. In the final examination every candidate must offer:

1. A thesis of not more than 30,000 words, excluding bibliography, to be delivered to the Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford, by noon on Monday in the first week of the

Trinity Full Term in which the examination is to be taken. Two hard copies of the thesis, together with a copy on CD or USB flash drive, must be accompanied by a separate signed declaration that it is the candidate's own work except where otherwise indicated and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment, either at Oxford or at another institution. After the examination process is complete, each successful candidate must deposit one hardbound copy of their thesis in the Bodleian Library.

2. Two subject papers taken from the approved list of optional subjects in International Relations, as published in the *Student Handbook* by the International Relations Graduate Studies Committee on Monday of first week of Michaelmas Term each academic year to apply to candidates being examined in the Trinity Term of that year. Candidates should note that the International Relations subjects available in any particular year will depend on the availability of teaching resources. Not all subjects will be available in every year and restrictions may be placed on the number of candidates permitted to offer certain subjects in any particular year. Candidates may, with the special permission of the International Relations Graduate Studies Committee, offer subjects beyond the approved list of International Relations subjects. Applications must be made by the last Friday of the Trinity Term preceding that in which the examination is to be taken, and must be supported by the student's supervisor. Supervisors should ensure that applications are submitted as early as possible so that if approval is not given, the candidate has sufficient time to choose an alternative.

3. Candidates must present themselves for viva voce examination when requested by the examiners. The examiners shall not normally fail any candidate without inviting him or her to attend such an examination. However, in the case of a failing mark in two of a candidate's final examination papers, the examiners shall not be obliged to ask the candidate for a viva.

The examiners may award a distinction for excellence in the whole examination.

Explanatory Notes

Change to assessment for research methods paper

