Changes in the regulations governing the Honour Moderations and the Preliminary Examination in Music: communication from the Board of the Faculty of Music

Ref: MUS/2

Approved on behalf of the Divisional Board on 20 March 2012.

Humanities Divisional Board

Honour Moderations and the Preliminary Examination in Music

Note about nature of the changes
Removal of regulations for Honour Moderations in Music. Amendments to number and choice of papers for Preliminary Examination in Music. Changes in the examination of reading at the keyboard and in composition.

With effect from 1 October 2012 (for first examination in 2013)

1. In Examination Regulations, 2011, p.57, delete l. 31.

2. Ibid., p. 62, after l.27, insert:
   ‘Music 3rd’

3. Ibid., p.95, delete ll. 25-44.


5. Ibid., p. 144, after l. 18, insert:

   ‘Special Regulations for the Preliminary Examination in Music

   A

   1. The subjects of the examination and the number of papers shall be as prescribed by regulation from time to time by the Board of the Faculty of Music.

   2. In the case of candidates who have satisfied the Moderators in all the written and practical subjects, the Moderators may award a distinction to those of special merit.

   B

   Each candidate will be required to offer papers 1-3 and two of the options in paper 4.

   1. Special Topics

      A three-hour paper in which candidates should attempt to answer three questions.

   2. Musical Analysis

      A three-hour paper in which candidates should attempt to answer one question from a choice of two.

   3. Techniques of Composition and Keyboard Skills

      The paper shall consist of two parts:
A. Techniques of Composition: Studies in Harmony and Counterpoint

A seven-day take-away paper in which candidates should attempt three questions: the two compulsory questions and one other. The examination paper will be available for collection in the Music Faculty Library from noon on Friday of the fifth week in the Trinity Term in which candidates are presenting themselves for examination. Completed papers must be submitted to the Chairman of Moderators in Music, Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford, not later than noon on Friday of the sixth week of the same term. Each paper must be accompanied by a declaration, in a sealed envelope bearing the candidate’s examination number, in the form prescribed for the portfolio of compositions and the extended essay.

B. Keyboard Skills

A practical examination in which candidates will be asked to: (a) realise a figured bass line at the keyboard or, where appropriate, on another continuo instrument (e.g., lute); (b) read at the keyboard three- or four-part writing in three different clefs. Preparation time for candidates in the examination will be 30 minutes.

4. Options

Candidates must choose two from the following:

(a) Issues in the Study of Music

A two-hour paper in which candidates should attempt to answer two questions.

(b) Composition

Candidates will be required to submit a portfolio of compositions and to take a listening examination. The specifications for the portfolio are as published in the Faculty Undergraduate Handbook relating to the examination.

(c) Performance

A solo performance, vocal or instrumental, of some 10-12 minutes in length. Instrumental candidates may choose to perform a single work, a movement from a longer work, or two pieces in contrasting style. The choice of instrument is limited to related families of instruments. Singers may choose to perform up to four pieces. Programmes must be submitted to the Chairman of Moderators in Music, Faculty of Music, St Aldate’s, not later than noon on Friday of the sixth week in the Hilary Term of the academic year in which the candidates are presenting themselves for examination.

(d) Extended Essay

An essay of 4,000-5,000 words on a subject to be chosen in consultation with the candidate’s tutor.

Each portfolio submitted for the subjects of Portfolio of Compositions and Extended Essay must be accompanied by a declaration placed in a sealed envelope bearing the candidate’s examination number and in the following prescribed form.

Form of Declaration

I, ................................................................., hereby declare that this submission is my own work, except where otherwise stated, and that it has not previously been submitted, either wholly or in part, for any other examination.

Signed..................................................
..................................................College
Date....................................................
Candidates who fail one or two of papers 1, 2, 3 or 4 above may resit only that paper or papers at a subsequent examination; candidates who fail three or four papers will be required to resit all four papers at a subsequent examination.

Explanatory note

These changes remove the regulations for Honour Moderations in Music, following consideration of proposals from Education Committee recommending that there should normally be a single type of First Public Examination, namely the Preliminary Examination, with a common approach to re-sits.

The regulations for the Preliminary Examination in Music are amended in four ways:

(a) Two previously separate papers, ‘Techniques of Composition’ and ‘Keyboard Skills’, are combined into a new single paper, emphasising the congruence of skills required in these subjects. The assessment of this paper will be weighted 70% Techniques 30% Keyboard Skills.

(b) Since the workload for the new paper will be the same as for the previous two separate papers, it is necessary to reduce the overall number of papers taken; this is achieved by making ‘Issues in the Study of Music’ an optional paper and requiring candidates to choose two of four options (rather than one of three). The addition of a further option in this way makes it possible for students to sample (and have assessed) at Prelims a greater number of the disciplines that can readily be taken in combination at FHS; it will also serve to encourage many students to attempt a more extended writing project, something not facilitated under the current regulations, but valuable at FHS and beyond.

(c) The regulation concerning the practical examination of keyboard skills is amended to allow candidates the option to demonstrate their ability to read four-part writing if they wish, rather than simply three-part writing, i.e. from a string quartet score rather than from a three-voice vocal score.

(d) The option ‘Portfolio of Compositions’ is amended to include a new listening examination in contemporary music. The option title is accordingly changed to ‘Composition’. Assessment will be weighted 70% composition portfolio 30% listening examination. Detailed specifications for portfolios will now be published in the handbook each year, and are therefore removed from the regulations.