Changes in the regulations governing the Master of Studies in Women's Studies:
communication from the Board of the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages

Ref:

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

Humanities Divisional Board

Master of Studies in Women's Studies

Brief note about nature of the change(s)

Course structure and assessment.

With effect from 1 October 2011 (for first examination in 2012)

In Examination Regulations, 2010, delete from p. 668, l. 26 to p. 669, l. 41 and substitute:

'4. Syllabus: Candidates must offer A and B below, two options from C, and a dissertation (D).

   A. Feminist Theory

   B. Approaches to Feminist Research

C. Options. Candidates must follow two of a range of option courses approved by the Joint
Standing Committee for Women's Studies. A full list of the options available is given in the
course handbook for the academic year in question.

D. A dissertation of up to 12,000 words (and not less than 10,000), including footnotes but
excluding bibliography, on a subject proposed by the candidate in consultation with the
dissertation supervisor. Appendices should be avoided but must in any case be approved by
the Chair of Examiners on an individual basis. Cases must be made on the basis that they are
required for the examiners to understand the content of the dissertation. A form detailing the
title and subject of the dissertation, countersigned by the dissertation supervisor, must be
submitted for approval to the Chair of Examiners (c/o Modern Languages Graduate Studies
Office) not later than Friday of fourth week of Hilary Term. The subject matter of the dissertation
may be related to that of either or both of the two pieces of written work submitted for the
Options courses, but material deployed in such pieces of work may not be repeated in the
dissertation.

5. In the case of C candidates will be examined by the submission of written work. The essays
submitted under C should be of 6,000-7,000 words, including footnotes and excluding bibliography.
Forms detailing the titles and topics of the written work proposed, countersigned by a course
convenor and option tutor respectively, must be submitted for approval to the Chair of Examiners (c/o
Modern Languages Graduate Studies Office) not later than Friday of fourth week of Hilary Term. The two
pieces of written work under C (three typewritten or printed copies of each piece, bearing on the
front the candidate's examination number but neither his or her name nor the name of his or her
college) must be delivered envelopes bearing the words: 'Option Essay submitted for the M.St. in
Women's Studies' to the Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford. The first piece of written work
under C must be delivered not later than noon on Friday of eight week of Hilary Term; the second
piece of written work under C must be delivered not later than noon on Friday of first week of Trinity
Term. Candidates must themselves retain one typewritten or printed copy of each piece of work.
Supervisors or others are permitted to give bibliographical help with and to discuss drafts of written
work submitted. Each envelope of written work must be accompanied, under a separate cover, by a
signed statement by the candidate that it is his or her own work except where otherwise indicated.
6. In the case of D, the dissertation (three typewritten or printed copies, bearing on the front the candidate's examination number but neither his or her name nor the name of his or her college) must be delivered in an envelope bearing the words: ‘Dissertation submitted for the M.St. in Women's Studies’ to the Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford, not later than noon on Friday of eighth week of Trinity Term. Students must also submit three copies of a brief abstract (no more than 500 words) outlining the rationale and approach of the thesis. Candidates must themselves retain one typewritten or printed copy of their dissertation. Supervisors or others are permitted to give bibliographical help with and to discuss drafts of dissertations. The dissertation must be accompanied, under a separate cover, by a signed statement by the candidate that it is his or her own work, except where otherwise indicated.

7. In the case both of the submission of written work under C and of the submission of the dissertation (D), candidates must ensure that a separate receipt for each submission is received from the Examination Schools and is retained for future reference.

8. A candidate who fails to submit any of the three written elements (that is, the two pieces of written work and the dissertation) by the dates specified above shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the examination.

9. If the two pieces of written work, submitted for C and/or the dissertation, submitted for D, fail the examination, the candidate shall not be granted leave to supplicate for the degree of M.St. Such a candidate is permitted to resubmit the elements of the examination which have failed to satisfy the examiners, on one further occasion only. The two pieces of written work submitted for C shall be resubmitted by noon on Friday of first week of the Trinity Term following their first examination. The dissertation (D) shall be resubmitted by not later than noon of Friday of eighth week of the Trinity Term following their first examination.

Explanatory note

The changes seek to redefine the course much more explicitly within a humanities framework. The course provides “research preparation” training in humanities studies and cannot with credibility, and at the higher level required of master's training, also provide research preparation training in social sciences, although it takes full account of the ways in which social science theory and methods have informed women's studies in the core teaching elements. They therefore propose minor structural reforms and major syllabus reform.

Before the new course structure is in place the committee proposes to offer the same structure as currently but we aim to run the new ‘Approaches’ (previously ‘Methods’) and ‘Theory’ courses. Structurally, in the former case this is the same number of classes, in the latter this is a reduction of lecture provision from 16 to 8. The revised course will run with a convenor and co-convenor but without general supervisors, which we expect to be cost-neutral.