Title of programme
MPhil in Sociology and Demography

Brief note about nature of change:
Replacement of the MPhil in Sociology with the MPhil in Sociology and Demography, with effect from 1 October 2014.

Effective date
1 October 2014

Location of change
Examination Regulations 2012

Detail of change
1. P.586, after l.24, insert

“Sociology and Demography
(See also the general notice at the commencement of these regulations.)
The regulations made by the Graduate Studies Committee of the Department of Sociology are as follows:

Qualifying test

Every candidate must pass a qualifying test at the end of the third term from the beginning of the course in the four compulsory papers, Methods of Social Research,
Sociological Analysis, Demographic Analysis, Life Course Research and one Optional Paper from the list of optional papers, specified by the Department of Sociology. This list will be published annually by Friday of the third week of Michaelmas Full Term in the Department of Sociology. Where coursework forms a part of the assessment, two typewritten copies must be delivered to the Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford, by noon on Friday of the eighth week of the Trinity Full Term in which the examination is to be taken unless otherwise specified in the Graduate Studies Handbook, or, in the case of options taken outside the Department of Sociology, as specified by the department or faculty concerned. The examiners may examine candidates viva voce. Candidates who fail the qualifying test are allowed to retake the test before the beginning of the first week of the next academic year. Such candidates are required to retake only those elements of the qualifying test that they have failed. Candidates who fail only one out of the five papers may, by permission of the Sociology Graduate Studies Committee, proceed to the second year of the course and re-sit the failed paper at the same time as the final examination. No candidate will be permitted to re-sit any of the compulsory papers more than once.

Final Examination

Every candidate must offer:

1. One further optional paper from the list of optional papers specified by the Department of Sociology;

2. A paper in the Replication project as specified in the Graduate Studies Handbook;

3. A thesis* of not more than 30,000 words on a topic within the subject of the course, to be specified jointly by supervisor and student; two typewritten copies to be delivered to the Examination Schools, High St, Oxford, by noon on Friday of the sixth week of the Trinity Full Term in which the examination is to be taken. Successful candidates will be required to deposit a copy of their thesis in the Department of Sociology. Candidates are warned that they should avoid repetition in their theses of material used in their option papers and that substantial repetition may be penalised.

The examiners may examine any candidate viva voce.

The examiners may award a Distinction for excellence in the whole examination on the basis of the material submitted to them in both the qualifying and the final examination.

Compulsory Papers

Methods of Social Research

The satisfactory completion of a course of practical work including (i) statistical methods, and (ii) research design. Candidates shall submit reports of the practical work completed to the Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford, by the following deadlines: for (i) statistical methods by 12 noon on Friday of the fifth week of the second term of the course; for (ii) research design by 12 noon on Monday of the first week of the third term of the course. The reports must be accompanied by a statement that they are the candidate's own work except where otherwise indicated. For (i) statistical methods,
candidates will also be required to take a two-hour in-class test to be held on the Friday preceding the first week of the second term of the course. The Director of Graduate Studies, or a deputy, shall draw to the attention of the examiners the names of any candidates who have failed to complete to a satisfactory level of quality the course of practical work, and the examiners may require candidates to retake the course or a specified part thereof. The reports of practical work shall be available for inspection by the examiners.

**Sociological Analysis**

The object and objective of sociological analysis in relation to other social sciences. The nature of different sociological explanations, their possibilities and methodological implications. The relevance of rationality and of its limits with regard to both individual agents and institutions. The interrelationships between description and explanation, theory and empirical data, macro- and micro-levels of analysis as they emerge from areas of major sociological enquiry.

**Demographic Analysis**

The object and objective of demographic analysis in relation to other social sciences. Core demographic concepts, their related indicators and methods; and their application to the study of populations and population change. Demographic transition; the Second Demographic Transition; Fertility; Mortality; Migration; Life Tables; Temporal dimensions in demography; Demographic data.; Population projections.

**Life Course Research**

The theoretical foundation and practical implementation of the multilevel, actor-oriented life course approach in its application to demographic and sociological problems; the theoretical implications of life course designs; methods, design, and statistical techniques of life course research; key life course events (including births, deaths, migrations and relationship transitions); the role of the historical and geographical context for individual life courses; the role of kinship and network ties; and the role of human development (e.g. generalising the traditional demographic emphasis on period, cohort and age). Candidates shall submit research essay or reports as specified in the graduate studies handbook.

* See the general regulations concerning the preparation and dispatch of theses.”

**Explanatory Notes**

The above changes seek to introduce the new MPhil in Sociology and Demography programme, as approved by both the Social Sciences Division and the Education Committee.

The Department of Sociology has a strong empirical, analytical, and comparative tradition. Perfectly in line with this tradition, and consistently with some of the top departments in sociology in the US (e.g. Wisconsin-Madison, Berkeley, Princeton, Harvard), its focus on population/demographic issues has grown over time and increasingly so during recent years.
Prior to 2012, members of the Department who were interested in population issues (e.g. attending population conferences and publishing on demographic journals) were Prof Anthony Heath, Prof J Gershuny, Dr Tak Wing Chan, Mr Colin Mills, Dr Christiaan Monden and Dr Oriel Sullivan. Three new members with clear interests in population issues have joined the Department between 2012 and 2013: Prof Francesco Billari, Prof John Ermisch and Dr David Stuckler. To this should be added the recent (2012) appointment of Prof Janne Jonsson as Official Fellow of Nuffield College, and also a member of the Department of Sociology. Moreover, Dr Man-Yee Kan is being assessed to become a University Lecturer, as expected from her post so far funded by the British Academy. This will make a total of 11 senior members of the department with core interest in demographic issues, 7 of whom hold permanent appointments.

Together with these senior scholars with interests in population issues come a series of post-doctoral fellows with interests in various areas related to population (Dr Evrim Altintas - pending BA shortlisting), Dr Neli Demireva (moving to take up a lectureship at the University of Essex), Dr Kimberly Fisher, Dr Teresa Harms, Dr Ekaterina Hertog, Dr Alexander Janus, Dr Robert De Vries, and Dr Wojtek Przepiorka). Two of the recent offers to PRPF at Nuffield College (who will also be affiliated with the Department) come from US Population Centres (Dr Javier Garcia-Manglano and Dr Erik Vikstrom). Dr Maria Sironi, who comes from the University of Pennsylvania Population Studies Center, has received an offer for a post-doc in the Department of Sociology (pending acceptance).

An additional 4 post-doctoral fellows with key interests in population health will join the department as a consequence of the hire of Dr David Stuckler, who joined as of April 1st together with Dr Aaron Reeves.

These hires reflect the attractiveness of Oxford for scholars interested in population research, and it is expected that they will contribute, at least partially, to the new programme.

The Department currently offers two taught courses: an MSc in Sociology, and an MPhil in Sociology. The lack of clear differentiation in the content (and actual programmes) between the MSc and MPhil has been repeatedly criticised by students, with some students who enrolled in the MPhil subsequently deciding to transfer to the one-year MSc. This proposal solves the problem by proposing a differentiation that builds on under-exploited potential within the department.

The Department therefore proposes that the MPhil in Sociology should be modified into an MPhil in Sociology and Demography. We intend to establish the newly formatted MPhil as a course in 2014-15, with its promotion and intake starting in MT2013. Indeed, in order to respond to changing demands in the market, and to be able to compete effectively with other institutions, it would seem to be an obvious strategic move.

The MPhil in Sociology and Demography will also draw upon the evolution in other Departments of the Social Sciences Division. The process to hire a ULNTF in Demography (to replace the retirement of Prof David Coleman) has been concluded (involving Anthropology, Social Policy and Intervention, and with a Nuffield College affiliation within the Sociology group). Dr Chris Wilson (currently at the University of St. Andrews) has accepted the post and will start on 1 September 2013. It is expected that Dr Wilson will
have the opportunity to contribute to the MPhil (perhaps by allowing MPhil students to attend the options taught by him). There is clear potential for more extended links to be forged with SPI and COMPAS.

Please note that the regulations for the current MPhil in Sociology are to be retained for the 2013-14 academic year, and will be removed when they are no longer required.