

**Research Degrees Panel of Education Committee**

**Approved at the meeting of Research Degrees Panel on 11 June 2019**

**General Regulations for the Degree of Master of Letters**

**Brief note about nature of change:** introduction of time limit for reinstatement

**Location of change**

In *Examination Regulations 2018*, <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2018-19/grftdomastoflett/> as amended by the Gazette notice of 25 July 2019.

**Effective date**

**From MT 2019**

**Detail of change**

Amend section 2 (cit. ref. 1.5-1.10) and section 6 (cit. ref. 1.61-1.71) as indicated, new text underlined, deleted text struck through.

**§2. Status of Student for the Degree of Master of Letters**

1. The following may be admitted to the status of Student for the Degree of Master of Letters:

- (i) a member of the University who, having held the status of Probationer Research Student under the provisions of the appropriate regulation has successfully completed the relevant qualifying test or tests and fulfilled the other requirements for transfer to M.Litt. status prescribed in §3 of this section;
- (ii) a member of the University who, having held the status of student for another higher degree within the University, has successfully completed the relevant qualifying test or tests and fulfilled the other requirements for transfer to M.Litt. status prescribed in §3 of this section;
- (iii) a member of the University who has successfully completed the examination for the Degree of Bachelor or Master of Philosophy or Master of Science by Coursework or of Bachelor of Civil Law and who has fulfilled the conditions laid

down in §3 of this section for applicants in that category.

2. It shall be the duty of the Registrar to keep a register of those admitted to the status of Student for the Degree of Master of Letters.

3. A board may grant a student suspension from the Register or deprive a student of his ~~or her~~ their status; and in such cases it shall at all times follow the procedures determined by the Education Committee by regulation. ~~A board may also reinstate a student to the Register, provided that the number of terms a student has spent with the status of Student for the Degree of Master of Letters shall not have exceeded fifteen in all in the case of a full-time student, or eighteen terms in the case of a part-time student.~~

4. It shall be open to a candidate whose name has been removed from the Register of Students to apply to the Board for reinstatement as a Student for the Degree of Master of Letters. The application should have the support of their society and supervisor, and such reinstatement fee as may from time to time be prescribed by Council should be paid. Permission for reinstatement to the Register of Students may be granted by the Board provided that:

(i) no more than twenty-four months have passed since the student's name was removed from the Register; and

(ii) the number of terms the candidate spent with the status of Student for the Degree of Master of Letters did not exceed fifteen terms in the case of a full-time student, or eighteen terms in the case of a part-time student. (This limit includes any time spent with the status of Probationer Research Student or other relevant status before admission to the status of Student for the Degree of Master of Letters.)

5. Exceptionally, a candidate who is not able to apply for reinstatement within the provisions above may make an application to Council's Education Committee for reinstatement to the Register of Students. Such candidates must meet the requirements for reinstatement by the Board and in addition must provide a statement explaining why it is reasonable for Education Committee to permit their reinstatement and outlining the circumstances that have prevented earlier submission. For such applications, Education Committee will consider the length of time since the candidate's name was on the Register of Students, the seriousness of the causes for the delay, and the views of the candidate's department/faculty, supervisor and college.

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## **§6. Examination of Students for the Degree of Master of Letters**

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6. Having completed the examination of a candidate for the first time, the examiners may make recommendation (i) or (ii) below only. Having completed the examination of a candidate who has revised and re-submitted their thesis, the examiners may make any one of recommendations (i) to (iii). The recommendations are:

(i) that the candidate should be granted leave to supplicate for the Degree of Master of Letters. In this case the examiners must include in their report statements that:

1. the candidate possesses a good general knowledge of the field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls;
2. that the candidate has shown competence in investigating the chosen topic;
3. that the candidate has made a worthwhile contribution to knowledge or understanding in the field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls;
4. that the thesis is presented in a lucid and scholarly manner;
5. that it merits of the award of the Degree of Master of Letters.

Examiners shall bear in mind that their judgement of the extent of the candidate's contribution to knowledge or understanding of the relevant field of learning shall take into account what may reasonably be expected of a capable and diligent student after two years of full-time study in the case of a full-time student, or twelve terms in the case of a part-time student.

If the examiners are satisfied that the candidate's thesis is of sufficient merit for the degree but consider, nevertheless, that before the thesis is deposited the candidate should make minor corrections (which are not sufficiently substantial to justify reference back for re-examination), they must require the candidate to correct the thesis to their satisfaction before they submit their report. If the candidate has not completed these corrections within one calendar month of the date of the oral examination, ~~his or her~~ their name shall be removed by the Registrar from the Register of Students for the Degree of Master of Letters, provided that the board may, on good cause shown by the candidate, grant an extension of time of one further calendar month in which the candidate may fulfil this requirement before the removal of ~~his or her~~ their name from the Register. ~~No subsequent extension shall be granted, but it shall be open to a candidate who has failed to fulfil this requirement within those one or two months in total, as the case may be, to apply to the board for reinstatement as a Student for the Degree of Master of Letters, with the support of his or her society and supervisor, upon submission to the Registrar of a copy of his or her thesis incorporating the required corrections, and upon payment of such reinstatement fee as may from time to time be prescribed by Council by decree. Permission to supplicate shall not be granted until this fee has been paid;~~

No subsequent extension shall be granted, but it shall be open to a candidate whose name has been removed from the Register of Students to apply to the Board for reinstatement as a Student for the Degree of Master of Letters. The application should have the support of their society and supervisor, a copy of their thesis incorporating the required corrections should have been submitted to the relevant Board, and such reinstatement fee as may from time to time be

prescribed by Council should have been paid. Leave to supplicate shall not be granted until this fee has been paid.

Permission for reinstatement to the Register of Students may be granted by the Board within six months of the date the student was notified of the outcome of their examination.

Exceptionally, a candidate who is not able to apply for reinstatement within that timeframe may make an application to Council's Education Committee for reinstatement to the Register of Students. Such candidates must meet the requirements for reinstatement by the Board and in addition must provide a statement explaining why it is reasonable for Education Committee to permit their reinstatement and outlining the circumstances that have prevented earlier submission. For such applications, Education Committee will consider the length of time since the student was last examined, the seriousness of the causes for the delay, and the views of the student's department/faculty, supervisor and college. Education Committee will not normally consider applications if sixty months or more have elapsed since the notification of the outcome of the examination.

(ii) that the board should refer the thesis back to the student in order that ~~he or she~~ the student may revise it for re-examination. If the examiners so recommend they shall annex to their report to the board a statement (for transmission to the student) setting out the respects in which the thesis falls below the standard required for the degree. If the board adopts this recommendation the student shall retain the status and obligations of a Student for the Degree of Master of Letters, and may apply again for the appointment of examiners, in accordance with the procedure laid down in this subsection, not later than the third term after that in which the board gave permission so to reapply. If such permission shall have been given by a board during a vacation, it shall be deemed to have been given in the term preceding that vacation. On re-submission of the thesis, students should submit a separate report indicating the specific changes made. The word limit for the accompanying report shall be 1,000 words;<sup>12</sup>

If the student is unable to apply again for the appointment of examiners within three terms, no subsequent extension shall be granted, but it shall be open to a candidate whose name has been removed from the Register of Students to apply to the Board for reinstatement as a Student for the Degree of Master of Letters. The application should have the support of their society and supervisor, a copy of their thesis incorporating the required changes should have been submitted to the relevant Board along with a separate report indicating the specific changes made, and such reinstatement fee as may from time to time be prescribed by Council should have been paid. Leave to supplicate shall not be granted until this fee has been paid.

Permission for reinstatement to the Register of Students may be granted by the Board within twenty-four months of the date the student was notified of the outcome of their examination.

Exceptionally, a candidate who is not able to apply for reinstatement within that timeframe may make an application to Council's Education Committee for reinstatement to the Register of Students. Such candidates must meet the requirements for reinstatement by the Board and in addition must provide a statement explaining why it is reasonable for Education Committee to permit their reinstatement and outlining the circumstances that have prevented earlier submission. For such applications, Education Committee will consider the length of time since the student was last examined, the seriousness of the causes for the delay, and the views of the student's department/faculty, supervisor and college. Education Committee will not normally consider applications if sixty months or more have elapsed since the notification of the outcome of the examination;

(iii) that the board should refuse the candidate's application for leave to supplicate.

#### **Explanatory Notes**

At its meeting in Trinity term 2019, Research Degrees Panel agreed that there should be a time limit for boards to consider requests for reinstatement to a previously held research degree status. Requests received after the time limit will be considered by Education Committee. These regulation changes bring into effect that decision.