Changes in the regulations governing the Degree of Master of Studies in Music: communication from the Board of the Faculty of Music

Ref: MST/1/7

Approved on behalf of the Humanities Divisional Board on 28 August 2012 and on behalf of the Education Committee on 14 September 2012.

Humanities Divisional Board

Master of Studies in Music

Note about nature of the changes
Clarification of course structure; introduction of new formative assessment; clarification of the wording for award of a distinction; removal of the requirement for candidates to attend an oral examination.

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

1. In Examination Regulations, 2011, delete from p. 642, l. 43 to p. 643, l. 41, and substitute:

‘1. Each candidate will be required:

(a) to follow for at least three terms a course of study in music;
(b) to specialise in musicology, performance or composition;
(c) to take a three-part examination (Part 1a, Part 1b and Part 2).

2. The elements of the examination will be determined by the candidate’s chosen specialism.

3. Candidates specialising in musicology will be required to submit:

Part 1a: an essay or exercise on issues and methods in musicology of between 5,000 and 6,250 words (or equivalent in notation, visual documentation, or analytical diagrams), two copies of which must be submitted, not later than noon on Friday of the ninth week of Michaelmas Term, to the Chairman of Examiners for the M.St. in Music, c/o Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford.

Part 1b: three essays in musicology (broadly conceived), none of which shall be less than 5,000 words, and which taken together shall be not more than 18,750 words; two copies must be submitted, not later than noon on Friday of the seventh week of Trinity Term, to the Chairman of Examiners for the M.St. in Music, c/o Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford. A portfolio of appropriately assessed language work that is directly relevant to the candidate’s intended field of research may substitute for one such essay or exercise with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies by noon on Friday of the third week of Hilary Term.

Part 2: a dissertation of not more than 13,000 words (this word limit including footnotes but excluding bibliography and appendices) in musicology or ethnomusicology, or an editorial exercise (edition), with prefatory matter, of comparable length. The topic for the dissertation or edition must be submitted for approval to the Director of Graduate Studies, Faculty of Music, by noon on Friday of the third week of Hilary Term. Two typewritten copies of the dissertation or edition must be submitted, not later than noon on the first Monday in July, to the Chairman of Examiners for the M.St. in Music, c/o Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford.

4. Candidates specialising in performance will be required to submit:

Part 1a: (i) an essay on either performance or issues and methods in musicology of between 5,000 and 6,250 words (or equivalent in notation, visual documentation, or analytical diagrams), two copies of which must be submitted, not later than noon on Friday of the ninth week of
Michaelmas Term, to the Chairman of Examiners for the M.St. in Music, c/o Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford; (ii) a performance of not more than ten minutes' duration, to be given by the candidate in an examination in noughth week of Hilary Term;

Part 1b: two essays in musicology (broadly conceived), none of which shall be less than 5,000 words, and which taken together shall be not more than 12,500 words; two copies must be submitted, not later than noon on Friday of the seventh week of Trinity Term, to the Chairman of Examiners for the M.St. in Music, c/o Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford.

Part 2: a recital of not more than thirty minutes’ duration, vocal or instrumental, of at least two contrasted pieces, to be performed not later than the tenth week of Trinity Term. Two possible programmes must be submitted for approval to the Director of Graduate Studies, Faculty of Music, by noon on Friday of third week of Hilary Term. Candidates will be informed of the examiners’ choice of programme by Friday of eighth week in the same term.

5. Candidates specialising in composition will be required to submit:

Part 1a: a musical composition produced in response to techniques presented in composition seminars, two copies of which must be submitted, not later than noon on Friday of the ninth week of Michaelmas Term, to the Chairman of Examiners for the M.St. in Music, c/o Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford.

Part 1b: two essays in musicology (broadly conceived), none of which shall be less than 5,000 words, and which taken together shall be not more than 12,500 words, and one musical composition produced in response to techniques presented in composition seminars; two copies must be submitted, not later than noon on Friday of the seventh week of Trinity Term, to the Chairman of Examiners for the M.St. in Music, c/o Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford.

Part 2: a musical composition or portfolio of compositions, of not more than fifteen minutes’ duration in total, two copies of which must be submitted, not later than noon on the first Monday in July, to the Chairman of Examiners for the M.St. in Music, c/o Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford.

6. The examiners may award a distinction for excellence in the whole examination. In this case the work will normally display an excellent command of the subject studied, evidence of critical understanding, and some demonstration of an original conceptual approach.

7. A candidate who fails the examination will be permitted to retake it on one further occasion only, not later than one year after the initial attempt. Such a candidate whose work has been of satisfactory standard in one or more elements examined will be required to resubmit for examination the element(s) which fell below the passmark when originally examined.

Explanatory note

These regulations take account of changes to the pattern of teaching on the MSt (and MPhil Year 1) which have been introduced after lengthy consideration of the nature of the course by the Music Faculty Board and in response to student feedback. The changes include the introduction of a new formative assessment at the end of the first term of the MSt and make clearer the distinct requirements for each of the three ‘pathways’ through the degree (musicology, performance, composition). The wording of the regulations for the award of a distinction is clarified, in response to a recommendation made by the external examiner for the MSt / MPhil Year 1 in 2011. The requirement for candidates to attend an oral examination when required to do so by the examiners is removed.