Changes in Examination Regulations to the University Gazette

Social Sciences Divisional Board

Approved at the meeting of 25 February 2011

Title of Programme
MSc in Criminology and Criminal Justice (Research Methods)

Brief note about nature of change: Amendment to assessment for the Research Design and Data Analysis course and for the Statistical Methods for Social Scientists course

Effective date
With effect from 1 October 2011

Location of change
In Examination Regulations 2010 as amended by Gazette of 23 September 2010

Detail of change
The regulations for this programme were extensively revised as set out in 23 September 2010 Gazette. In light of this, and for the purposes of clarity, the agreed changes are set out below as tracked changes to the updated on-line version, as follows:

**Criminology and Criminal Justice (Research Methods)**

1. Every candidate must follow, for at least three terms, a course of instruction in Criminology and Criminal Justice (Research Methods).
2. There shall be a Board of Studies for the course, to be chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies for Criminology and also comprising all the members of the Board of Examiners for the Master of Science in Criminology and Criminal Justice(Research Methods) for the current year, the Director or Assistant Director of the Centre for Criminology and a student representative (the latter for open business only).
3. The course will consist of four components: two compulsory core course in
Explanation and Understanding in Criminology and in Understanding Criminal Justice; four compulsory core research methods courses in Research Design and Data Collection, Social Explanation and Data Analysis, Statistical Methods for Social Scientists, and Qualitative Methods; three options; and a dissertation. The core course will run for six weeks throughout the first two terms (Michaelmas and Hilary). Options will run for six weeks in each term (Michaelmas Term and Trinity Term). Candidates will be required to choose one option for the first term and two options for the final term. The dissertation, which must not exceed 15,000 words and should not normally be less than 13,000 words, will be on a topic to be agreed by the Board of Studies. The required format for this dissertation is the common format prescribed for all law theses, which is printed in the Faculty of Law's Graduate Students' Handbook.

4. The options are listed in the Schedule below.

5. Not all options will necessarily be taught or examined in any one year. Details of those which are available will be published in the Graduate Student Handbook produced by the Centre for Criminology for the year of the examination, subject to any amendment posted on the designated notice board in the Centre for Criminology by Monday of Week Minus One of the Michaelmas Term before the examination is held.

6. In addition to the options set out in the Schedule, candidates may offer any other option that may be approved from time to time by regulation published in the Gazette by the end of Monday of Week Minus One of the Michaelmas Term before the examination is held.

7. The course shall be assessed as follows:

   (i) Core Courses in Explanation and Understanding in Criminology, and Understanding Criminal Justice: There shall be a single three-hour examination covering both courses to be taken in Week Nought of Trinity Term.

   (ii) Core courses in Research Design and Data Collection, Social Explanation and Data Analysis, Statistical Methods for Social Scientists and Qualitative Methods: These courses will each be examined by one written assignment of 2,500-3,000 words to be submitted by noon on Friday of Week Nine of the relevant term. In addition, candidates shall be required to complete to the satisfaction of the respective Course Tutor a form of continuous assessment, which will be approved by the Board of Studies and the details of which will be published in the Graduate Student Handbook for the relevant year.

   (iii) Options: Each option shall be examined by means of an assessed essay of no less than 3,500 and no more than 5,000 words (inclusive of footnotes, but excluding bibliography and appendices), for which time will be set aside during the last three weeks of term. A selection of three titles (as determined by the Board of Examiners) shall be posted on the designated noticeboard at the Centre for Criminology by noon on Friday of Week Six of the relevant term. Essays should be submitted not later than three weeks after this date, by
noon.

(iv) **Dissertation**: Two typewritten copies of the dissertation shall be submitted to the Examination Schools by noon on the Friday nearest to 14th September in the year in which the examination is taken. One bound copy of the dissertation of each candidate who passes the examination shall be deposited in the Bodleian Social Science Library, Manor Road.

Candidates shall be required to submit two typewritten copies of each essay and the dissertation detailed in (ii) to (iv) above to the Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford, on the dates and times specified.

1. The degree of M.Sc. shall be awarded to any candidate who achieves a mark of at least 50 per cent in all four components of the course, namely the Explanation and Understanding in Criminology, and Understanding Criminal Justice Core Courses; the Research Methods courses; the options; and the dissertation.

2. The examiners may award a distinction for excellence in the whole examination.

3. Arrangements for reassessment shall be as follows:

   (i) **Core Courses in Explanation and Understanding in Criminology, and Understanding Criminal Justice**: Candidates who fail, or withdraw from, the joint examination may resit the examination in the Trinity Term of the following academic year. Such candidates who have completed successfully all or part of any of the other three components may carry forward the marks gained for the successfully completed parts of the degree.

   (ii) **Research Methods courses**: Candidates who fail to obtain an aggregate average mark of 50 per cent for their assessed assignments for the Research Methods courses in Michaelmas and Hilary Terms, or who withdraw, may resubmit those assignments in which they have received a mark of 49 per cent or less may resubmit the assessment(s) to the Examinations Schools, High Street, Oxford, according to the standard timetable for submitting essays in the following academic year. Candidates who have completed successfully all or part of any of the other three components of the degree may carry forward the marks gained for the successfully completed components.

   (iii) **Options**: Candidates who have failed to obtain an aggregate average mark of 50 per cent for their assessed essays, or have withdrawn from any of the assessed essays, may resubmit those essays in which they have received a mark of 49 per cent or less to the Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford, according to the standard timetable for submitting essays in the following academic year. Candidates who have completed successfully all or part of any of the other three components of the degree may carry forward the marks gained for the successfully completed components.

   (iv) **Dissertation**: Candidates who fail, or withdraw from, the dissertation may resubmit the dissertation by the required date in the following academic year. Candidates who have completed successfully all or part of any of the other three components of the degree may carry forward the marks gained for
the successfully completed components.

[ Schedule – please note that this remains the same as for the current entry – it should be retained unchanged]

Explanatory Notes

A. Change in assessment structure for the course Research Design and Data Collection

In September 2010 the Centre for Criminology made the course Research Design and Data Collection compulsory for MSc students (not just the students on the Research Methods version of the MSc as it had been previously) in response to the November 2008 Divisional Review of the Centre’s Masters courses. At the same time the RM students were required to take one option in Michaelmas term. In the original format, the Research Design and Data Collection course was assessed via two pieces of course work during term time. It became clear to the Board of Studies however, that students were struggling to complete these two essays and maintain their participation in their other options. As a result, it was decided to amend the assessment structure for this course to reduce the assessed coursework during term-time and to introduce an end-of-term assessment. In this structure Research Design and Data Collection will be closer to the demands of the other two methods options offered by the centre (Qualitative Methods and Social Explanation and Data Analysis), both of which use a combination of continuous formative assessment and a final paper.

B. Change in assessment structure for the course Statistical Analysis for Social Scientists

The course Statistical Methods for Social Scientists is currently offered by the Department of Politics and International Relations. The Centre for Criminology has decided to offer the course in-house from the academic year 2011-2012 onwards. Criminology students will now get statistical methods tailored towards the study of criminology (not politics as has been the case until now) and the Centre can decide its own assessment structure. It has now been decided by the Centre’s Board of Studies that this course will have a similar assessment structure as the other research methods courses (one 2,500-3,000-word end-of-term essay and continuous assessment throughout the term).