

Humanities Divisional Board

Title of Programme

Honour School of History

Brief note about nature of change: Curriculum reform in undergraduate History degrees.

Effective date

For students starting from MT 2018

For first examination from 2019-20

Location of change

In *Examination Regulations* on-line, Honour School of History
[\(http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2015-16/hschoofhist/\)](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2015-16/hschoofhist/)

Explanatory Notes

These changes bring about undergraduate curriculum reform in History. The theme of the reforms is diversification:

- i) The enlargement of the scope of an Oxford History degree, through the requirement that all undergraduates take one paper in a historical subject outside Europe at some point in the three years of the degree, although this requirement will not apply to the five Joint Schools which include History.
- ii) The introduction of a number of Theme papers to the Outline menus, of a type which is new to the syllabus and which will enable specific themes to be followed over longer periods. There is no requirement that students choose a Theme paper from a given Outline menu.
- iii) The assessment of the History of the British Isles (HBI) in Finals by a take-away examination in week 9 of Trinity Term of the second year.

Changes (i) and (ii) are being introduced for entry in Michaelmas term 2017 (i.e. students starting their FHS in Michaelmas term 2018). Change (iii) will be introduced as soon as possible, so for entry in Michaelmas term 2016 (i.e. for students starting their FHS in

Michaelmas term 2017) – see regulation change HDB(16)78_U, published in the Gazette of 21 July 2016.

The opportunity to undertake significant re-drafting of the relevant regulations has also been taken, partly to make them shorter and less burdened with unnecessary detail, and partly to remove detailed menus of specific papers: such material is more appropriately covered within course handbooks. Lists of Further and Special Subjects were removed some time ago, and the detailed menus for the History of the British Isles and European & World History are also being removed, which will provide flexibility to make changes to those menus and to rotate the Theme papers.

Detail of change

Delete all regulations for the Honour School of History and substitute those appended to the end of this notice.

Honour School of History

A

1. The Honour School of History shall offer both wide diversity in terms of chronology, geography and historical themes, and a range of methodologies encompassing breadth, depth and theoretical awareness. The examination shall include:
 - (1) Outline and Theme papers in the History of the British Isles;
 - (2) Outline and Theme papers in European & World History;
 - (3, 4) Papers in two specialist historical subjects ('Further' and 'Special') studied with reference to primary sources;
 - (5) A methodological and historiographical paper;
 - (6) A thesis.
2. No candidate shall be admitted to examination in this School unless she or he has *either* passed or been exempted from the Preliminary Examination *or* has successfully completed the Foundation Certificate in History at the Department for Continuing Education.
3. The examination shall be under the supervision of the Board of the Faculty of History, which will specify rules and procedures respecting the examination, and will define the lists of specific papers from which candidates will choose within the various subjects described below. These lists will be published in the fourth week of Hilary Term prior to candidates beginning their studies for the Honour School.
4. The Board shall issue annually the Handbook for the Honour School of History by Monday of first week of the first Michaelmas Full Term of candidates' work for the Honour School.
5. The Board will categorise each of the papers in the History of the British Isles and European & World History in both the Preliminary Examination and the Honour School as falling into one of three chronological groups: Early, Middle and Late.
Three Outline papers in the History of the British Isles and European & World

History offered by a candidate in the Preliminary Examination and the Honour School must be drawn from each of these three periods.

Candidates who have been exempted from the First Public Examination, or have passed the First Public Examination in a course other than History or one of its Joint Schools, and who choose Outline papers in both the History of the British Isles and European & World History, must draw those papers from two different periods.

Candidates who have passed the Preliminary Examination in one of the History Joint Schools must choose an Outline paper in the History of the British Isles or European & World History so as to cover at least two of the three periods across the two examinations.

Candidates who have passed the Foundation Certificate in History must choose at least one Outline paper in the History of the British Isles or European & World History which differs in its chronological and geographical scope from the Outline papers which they took for the Foundation Certificate. The Board will specify which Outline papers overlap significantly with those in the Foundation Certificate.

6. The Board will categorise every paper in the Preliminary Examination and the Honour School as covering British *or* European *or* World history. Candidates who take both examinations must offer at least two papers in European History and at least one paper in World History from amongst the following subjects: the European & World History papers; the Optional Subjects in the Preliminary Examination; and the Further and Special Subjects in the Honour School.
7. Each candidate shall offer six subjects, as follows. Subjects 2, 3, 5 and part of 4 will be assessed by timed written examinations taken in candidates' final Trinity Term. Subjects 1, 6 and part of 4 will be examined by submitted written work subject to procedures described below.

B

- B1. History of the British Isles: any one from a list of Outline and Theme papers defined by the Faculty Board. No candidate may offer a period similar to one offered when passing the Preliminary Examination. Illegal combinations will be specified by the Board.

The History of the British Isles is taken to include the history of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, and of other territories in so far as they are specifically connected with the History of Britain.

Candidates will be examined by means of three essays of no more than 2,000 words each, under titles from a question paper published by the examiners on the *Wednesday of eighth week of the Trinity Term* in the year preceding the examination. The essays must be submitted by noon on *Friday of ninth week of that term*. Detailed procedures governing this process will be published by the Board.

- B2. European & World History: any one from a list of Outline and Theme papers defined by the Faculty Board. No candidate may offer a period similar to one offered when passing the Preliminary Examination. Illegal combinations will be specified by the Board.

- B3. Further Subject: any one from a list of subjects defined by the Faculty Board, to be studied with reference to primary sources. Illegal combinations of Further and Special Subject will be specified by the Board.

- B4. Special Subjects: any one from a list of subjects defined by the Faculty Board, to be studied with reference to primary sources.

Candidates will be examined in two ways: a timed paper comprising compulsory passages for comment; and an extended essay of no more than 6,000 words under a title from a question paper published by the examiners on the Friday of fourth week of the Michaelmas Term in the year of examination. The extended essay must be submitted by noon on the Friday before the beginning of Hilary Full Term in the year of examination. Procedures governing this process will be published by the Board.

B5. Disciplines of History

Candidates will be expected to answer two examination questions selected from a paper divided into two sections. One question must be answered from each section. The sections are:

1. Making Historical Comparisons;
2. Making Historical Arguments.

B6. A Thesis from Original Research

1. Candidates must submit a thesis as part of the fulfilment of their final examination.
2. Theses shall normally be written during the Hilary Term of the final year. All theses must be submitted not later than noon on Friday of eighth week of the Hilary Term of the final year.

3. A candidate may submit

(a) any essay or part of any essay which the candidate has submitted or intends to submit for any university essay prize; or

(b) any other work

provided in either case that (i) no thesis will be accepted if it has already been submitted, wholly or substantially, for a final honour school other than one involving History, or another degree of this University, or a degree of any other university, and (ii) the candidate submits a statement to that effect, and (iii) the subject is approved by the Chair of the Examiners for the Honour School of History.

4. The provisos in sub-clause 3 above shall not debar any candidate from submitting work based on a previous submission towards the requirements for a degree of any other university provided that:

(i) the work is substantially new;

(ii) the candidate also submits both the original work itself and a statement specifying the extent of what is new. The examiners shall have sole authority to decide in every case whether proviso (i) to this clause has been met.

5. Every candidate must submit the title proposed together with a typed synopsis of the thesis topic and proposed method of investigation (no more than 250 words) and the written approval of their College History Tutor to the Chair of the Examiners for the Honour School of History, the History Faculty, George Street, Oxford, not earlier than the beginning of Trinity Full Term in the year preceding that in which the

candidate takes the examination and not later than the Friday of sixth week of Michaelmas Term in the final year. If no notification is received from the Chair of Examiners by the first Monday of Hilary Full Term of the final year, the title shall be deemed to be approved. Any subsequent changes to title require formal application to the Chair of Examiners by the Friday of Week 4 of the Hilary Term of the final year and subsequent approval.

6. Theses should normally include an investigation of relevant printed or unprinted primary historical sources, and must include proper footnotes and a bibliography. They must be the work of the author alone. In all cases, the candidate's tutor or thesis adviser shall discuss with the candidate the field of study, the sources available, and the methods of presentation. Candidates shall be expected to have had a formal meeting or meetings with their College History Tutor, and, if necessary, an additional meeting or meetings with a specialised thesis adviser in the Trinity Term of their second year, as well as a second formal meeting or meetings with their thesis adviser in the Michaelmas Term of their final year, prior to submitting the title of their thesis. While writing the thesis, candidates are permitted to have further advisory sessions at which bibliographical, structural, and other problems can be discussed. The total time spent in all meetings with the College History Tutor and/or the specialised thesis adviser must not exceed five hours. A first draft of the thesis may be commented on, but not corrected in matters of detail and presentation, by the thesis adviser.

7. No thesis shall exceed 12,000 words in length (including footnotes, but excluding bibliography and, in cases for which specific permission has been obtained from the Chair of Examiners, appendices), except in the case that a candidate is submitting a thesis as a critical edition of a text, in which case the regulations on word length in sub-clause 10, sections iii and x, below, apply. The thesis should conform to the standards of academic presentation prescribed in the course handbook. Failure to conform to such standards may incur penalties as outlined in the course handbook.

8. All candidates must submit two copies of their thesis, addressed to the Chair of Examiners, Honour School of History, Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford, not later than noon on Friday of eighth week of the Hilary Term of the year in which they are presenting themselves for examination. The University's regulations on *Late Submission of Work* will apply. Every candidate shall present a certificate, signed by him or herself, in a separate envelope bearing the candidate's examination number, addressed to the Chair of Examiners. The certificate (forms are available from the History Faculty Office) should declare that (a) the thesis is the candidate's own work, (b) that no substantial portion of it has been presented for any other degree course or examination, (c) that it does not exceed 12,000 words in length, except in the case that a candidate is submitting a thesis as a critical edition of a text, in which case the regulations on word length in sub-clause 10, sections iii and x, below, apply, (d) that no more than five hours have been spent in preparatory or advisory meetings between the candidate and his or her College History Tutor or thesis adviser, and (e) that only the first draft of the thesis has been seen by the thesis adviser. Candidates delivering theses will be required to complete a receipt form, which will only be accepted as proof of receipt if it is countersigned by a member of the Examination Schools staff.

9. Candidates shall not answer in any other paper, with the exception of Disciplines of History (regulation B5), questions which fall very largely within the scope of their thesis. Candidates should not choose a thesis that substantially reworks material

studied in the Further or Special Subjects, and should demonstrate familiarity with and use of substantially different and additional primary sources.

10. As an alternative route to fulfilling the requirement for the compulsory thesis, or to submitting an optional one, a candidate may prepare an edition of a short historical text with appropriate textual apparatus, historical annotation and introduction. This exercise, which is different in kind from the writing of a normal dissertation, is governed by the following additional regulations:

i. The original work selected for editing may be a narrative, literary, or archival text of any kind, and may be of any period and in any language. It must be susceptible to historical analysis and commentary, and of a kind that requires the application of editorial and historical skills and techniques, including linguistic and palaeographical skills where appropriate.

ii. The choice of text must be approved by the submission to the Chair of the FHS in History, with the support of a supervisor, of a 250-word outline of the text and its context, and specifying its length. This submission must be made by Friday of eighth week of the Michaelmas Term of the candidate's final year, but candidates are advised to seek permission well before this. The Chair must consult appropriate colleagues before approving the project: they will need to be satisfied that it provides scope for displaying appropriate levels of knowledge and expertise.

iii. The length of the chosen text will depend upon the linguistic and technical challenges which it poses, and the scope it offers for historical analysis and commentary; the advice of the supervisor will be essential. A complex text in a difficult language may only run to a few thousand words. The absolute maxima are 15,000 words for a non-English text, and 30,000 for one in English; but these are not norms or targets. An extract from a longer text is permissible, so long as the selection is rationally justified, and the extract can stand on its own for purposes of historical commentary.

iv. A text in a language other than English must be accompanied by an English translation.

v. The examiners must be provided with a facsimile of no less than 30 per cent of the text in its primary manuscript or printed form. Where there are several versions, the most important should be chosen.

vi. A textual introduction should state how many versions (whether manuscript or printed) there are to the text, how they relate to each other, and what editorial principles have been employed.

vii. A textual apparatus should list variant readings, emendations and textual problems in accordance with normal editorial practice.

viii. Historical notes to the text should comment as appropriate on people, places, events and other references, and should draw out points of wider historical interest.

ix. A historical introduction should discuss the immediate context of the work, including its author or the record-creating system that produced it, and should explain its wider historical context and significance.

x. The textual and historical introductions and the historical notes should not exceed 8,000 words (for an English text) or 6,000 (for a translated one).

xi. The dissertation should be arranged and bound in the following order: historical introduction; textual introduction; text, with textual notes (keyed to the text in the sequence *a, b, c*, etc.) at the foot of the page; historical notes (keyed to the text in the sequence 1, 2, 3, etc.) on separate pages; sample facsimile.

B7. An Optional Additional Thesis

1. Any candidate may offer an optional additional thesis.

2. Regulation B6, sub-clause 3 above applies.

3. Regulation B6, sub-clause 4 above applies.

4. Every candidate intending to offer an optional thesis except as defined in regulation B6 sub-clause 3(a) above must submit the title proposed together with the written approval of a thesis adviser or College History Tutor to the Chair of the Examiners for the Honour School of History, the History Faculty, George Street, Oxford, not earlier than the beginning of Trinity Full Term in the year preceding that in which the candidate takes the examination and not later than Friday of the first week of the following Hilary Full Term. The Chair shall decide whether or not to approve the title, consulting the Faculty Board if so desired, and shall advise the candidate as soon as possible.

5. Optional additional theses should normally include an investigation of relevant printed or unprinted historical sources, and must include proper footnotes and a bibliography. They must be the work of the author alone. In all cases, the candidate's College History Tutor or thesis adviser shall discuss with the candidate the field of study, the sources available, and the methods of presentation (which should conform to the standards of academic presentation described in the course handbook). The College History Tutor or thesis adviser may comment on the first draft.

6. No optional additional thesis shall exceed 12,000 words in length (including footnotes but excluding bibliographies), except in the case that a candidate is submitting a thesis as a critical edition of a text, in which case the regulations on word length in regulation B6 sub-clause 10, sections iii and x, above, apply. All theses must be typed or word-processed in double spacing on one side of A4 paper with the notes and references at the foot of each page, with a left-hand margin of one-and-a-half inches and all other margins of at least one inch.

7. Candidates must submit two copies of their theses, addressed to the Chair of Examiners, Honour School of History, Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford, not later than noon on Monday of first week of the Trinity Term of the year in which they are presenting themselves for examination. Every candidate shall present a certificate signed by him or herself and by a College History Tutor or thesis adviser, in a separate envelope bearing the candidate's examination number, addressed to

the Chair of Examiners. The certificate (forms are available from the Faculty Office) should declare that (a) the thesis is the candidate's own work, (b) that no substantial portion of it has been presented for any other degree course or examination, (c) that it does not exceed 12,000 words in length.

8. Candidates shall not answer in any other paper, with the exception of Disciplines of History (regulation B5), questions which fall very largely within the scope of their optional additional thesis.

9. Candidates may submit an optional additional thesis in the form of an edition of a short historical text with accompanying scholarly apparatus, in which case the requirements detailed in regulation B6 sub-clause 10, above, apply.

10. The Final Honour School Examiners will arrive at a formal degree result for candidates who submit an Optional Additional Thesis by inclusion of the 7 highest marks awarded for the 8 papers submitted, except that the mark awarded for the Optional Additional Thesis may not substitute for a mark lower than 50. Thus, the papers to be included are determined by the following procedures:

- (i) In the event that the Optional Additional Thesis is awarded a mark below 50, it will be disregarded and the formal degree result will be determined solely by the marks awarded for the compulsory papers.
- (ii) In the event that the Optional Additional Thesis is awarded a mark of 50 or above, the paper awarded the lowest mark of 50 or above (which may be the Optional Additional Thesis) will be disregarded. All other papers awarded a mark of 50 or above, and all papers awarded a mark below 50 will be included.