MEDICAL SCIENCES BOARD

M.Sc. in Psychological Research

With effect from 1 October 2011 (for first examination in 2012)

1. In *Examinations Regulations*, 2010, p. 761, l. 38, delete ‘, in consultation with the School of Social Sciences and Law at Oxford Brookes University,’

2. Ibid., l. 46, delete ‘six’ and insert ‘ten’

3. Ibid., p. 762, l. 3, delete ‘in sections (a) and (e)’ and insert ‘in sections (e), (f), (i), and (j).’

4. Ibid., l. 9, delete ‘statistics portfolio, and literature review’ and insert ‘journal article review, literature review, and activities report’

5. Ibid., p. 762 delete ll. 19-47 and p. 763 delete ll. 1-32 and insert:

   *(a) Philosophical Foundations of Psychological Research*

   This module begins with historical and foundational issues and progresses to philosophical issues arising from areas of contemporary research in psychology. Topics studied will include some of: the subject matter of psychology; levels of description; the epistemology of psychology; psychological understanding; cognitive science; the study of neuropsychological and psychiatric disorders; the scientific study of consciousness; and philosophical issues arising from areas of contemporary research.

   Each candidate shall be required to submit an essay of no more than 3,000 words. Essay topics must be approved by the course committee. The deadline for submission shall be notified to students at the start of the course.

   *(b) Design Skills*

   This module is delivered as a series of oral presentations collaboratively prepared by groups of students followed by group discussions. The focus is on research articles that illustrate the use of particular kinds of methodology and/or design.
Each candidate shall be required to produce a 2,000 word review of a journal article assigned by the course committee. Details of this assessment shall be notified to students at the start of the course.

(c) Brain and Cognition

This module covers methods used in research in cognitive psychology and neuropsychology. It presents foundational knowledge from neuroanatomy, neurological disorders, neurological and psychological assessment and the use of experimental methods, to familiarise students with the diverse methodologies which contribute to cognitive neuropsychology. Methodologies deployed in the investigation of perception and cognition are discussed and evaluated.

Each candidate shall be required to submit an essay of no more than 3,000 words. Essay topics must be approved by the course committee. The deadline for submission shall be notified to students at the start of the course.

(d) Social Behaviour and Personality

This module provides a critical analysis of the range of methods and approaches used in social psychology and the study of individual differences.

Each candidate shall be required to submit an essay of no more than 3,000 words. Essay topics must be approved by the course committee. The deadline for submission shall be notified to students at the start of the course.

(e) Project Design

This module provides practical instruction in research and presentation skills. Students will undertake detailed planning of the research project to be carried out under (j).

Each candidate shall be required to submit a 3,000 word review of relevant literature and methods relating to their research project. The deadline for submission shall be notified to students at the start of the course. In addition each candidate shall be required to give an oral presentation outlining the design of his or her research project and the ideas behind it, but this shall not contribute to the overall result for this module.

(f) Statistical Theory and Methods
This module comprises a series of statistical lectures and complementary statistical workshops.

Each candidate shall be required to submit an essay of no more than 3,000 words. Essay topics must be approved by the course committee. The deadline for submission shall be notified to students at the start of the course. Each candidate shall also be required to complete a portfolio of reports based on SPSS data analyses carried out during the workshops, in addition to a computer-based test but neither of these shall contribute to the overall result for this module.

(g) Mini Project

Small groups of 2-4 students will be assigned to research teams within the Department of Experimental Psychology and guided through research tasks involving, for example, setting up equipment and procedures for a study, collection of pilot data, coding and processing of data, and statistical analysis.

The module will be assessed by a written report of activities conducted in the mini-project. The deadline for submission shall be notified to students at the start of the course.

(h) Language and Development

This module addresses methods used in selected areas of developmental psychology with a particular emphasis on language. Longitudinal designs, and observational and experimental methods are reviewed and evaluated with examples from recent research. Attention is also given to studies of brain function during development and to the uses of fMRI and EEG data. Particular issues arising from the study of infants lacking verbal skills are identified.

Each candidate shall be required to submit an essay of no more than 3,000 words. Essay topics must be approved by the course committee. The deadline for submission shall be notified to students at the start of the course.

(i) Computational Neuroscience

This module provides an introduction to the goals and methods of computational modelling in the context of cognitive neuroscience, covering the architecture, function, and properties of a number of basic prototypical classes of neural network. It also looks at how these basic neural networks provide building blocks for larger-scale models of brain function. Lectures will be supplemented by practical sessions providing hands-on experience of computational modelling.
Each candidate shall be required to submit an essay of no more than 3,000 words. Essay topics must be approved by the course committee. The deadline for submission shall be notified to students at the start of the course. In addition, candidates shall be required to complete reports based on practical assignments conducted as part of the module but these shall not contribute to the overall result for this module.

(j) **Research Project**

Each student shall carry out a project under the supervision of a research supervisor on a subject selected in consultation with the academic advisor and approved by the course committee. The course committee shall be responsible for the appointment of the research supervisor. The Research Project module shall consist of data collection, analysis of the data, delivering a poster presentation and writing a dissertation on the project.

Candidates shall be required to submit to the examiners not later than noon on the first Monday in September three copies of a typewritten or printed dissertation of not more than 10,000 words in length (excluding bibliography and any appendices) on his or her research project. The cover of the copies must bear the candidate’s examination number and name of the examination, but not their name or college, and must be sent in a parcel to, ‘The Chairman of Examiners: M.Sc. in Psychological Research, c/o Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford’. The dissertation must be accompanied by a signed statement by the candidate that the dissertation is his or her own work.

Candidates shall also be required to deliver a poster presentation based on their research project, however this shall not contribute to the overall result for this module. The date on which candidates are required to deliver their presentations will be in the long vacation.’