

Changes in Examination Regulations to the University Gazette – Social Sciences Division

SSD/2/2/4

Social Sciences Divisional Board

Approved by Chair's action on behalf of divisional Quality Assurance Committee on 26 February 2025

Title of Programme

Master of Philosophy in Comparative Social Policy

Brief note about nature of change:

Changes to module order and associated assessment modifications.

Effective date

For students starting from Michaelmas term 2025

For first examination from 2025/26

Location of change

In *Examination Regulations* [2024-25, Master of Philosophy in Comparative Social Policy](#)

Details of Change:

Strike all existing citations:

~~¹⁻¹The regulations made by the Divisional Board of Social Sciences are as follows:~~

~~Qualifying Test~~

~~¹⁻²Every candidate must pass a qualifying test at the end of the third term from the beginning of the course in the two compulsory papers, *Methods of Social Research* and *Core Paper: Comparative Social Policy and Social Policy Analysis*, and one *Optional Paper* from the list of optional papers, specified by the Department of Social Policy and Intervention. This will be from a list published annually by Friday of the sixth week of Michaelmas Full Term in the Department of Social Policy and Intervention. Candidates may, after special permission of the Course Director, offer subjects outside this list. This may also include papers offered in any other relevant master's degree in the University subject to the permission of the relevant Course Director as appropriate. The examiners may examine candidates viva voce. Candidates who fail the qualifying test may, in exceptional circumstances, be allowed to retake the test before the beginning of the first~~

~~week of the next academic year. The examiners can decide that the retake shall consist of the whole test or parts thereof.~~

~~Final Examination~~

~~^{1.3}Every candidate must offer:~~

~~^{1.4}1. One further option paper. This will be from a list published annually by Friday of the sixth week of Michaelmas Full Term in the Department of Social Policy and Intervention or, in exceptional circumstances and with the special permission of the Course Director, from subjects outside this list.~~

~~^{1.5}2. A thesis of not more than 30,000 words that employs the comparative method in the study of a social policy topic. The word count applies to the text, but does not include graphs, tables and charts in the main text, or bibliography. An additional word limit of 6,000 words in total applies to the abstract, footnotes, endnotes and technical appendices (including graphs, tables and charts). Candidates are required to upload the thesis using the University approved online assessment platform by noon on Friday of the sixth week of Trinity Full Term in which the examination is to be taken. Technical information on the requirements for online submissions is provided in the Course Handbook.~~

~~^{1.6}The examiners may examine any candidate viva voce.~~

~~Compulsory Papers~~

~~^{1.7}*Methods of Social Research*~~

~~^{1.8}A course of practical work in (i) basic principles of statistical inference, and statistical models for the analysis of quantitative social science data, and (ii) the rationale and techniques of qualitative research appropriate to social policy and related social enquiry. Such practical course work in social research methods shall be assessed by a series of assignments set during the first two terms of the course. These shall be listed in the Course Handbook and submission dates set for each assignment. Each of the two quantitative assignments will be of a maximum length of 2,500 words. The qualitative assignment will be of a maximum length of 3,000 words. These shall be marked during the course. Candidates shall submit their assignments using the University approved online assessment platform. Technical information on the requirements for online submission is provided in the Course Handbook. In the event of any candidate not reaching the pass mark set for either the qualitative or quantitative assignments, one further attempt shall be permitted within the same examination year, though in the event of a successful resubmission only the bare pass mark shall be awarded.~~

~~^{1.9}*The Core Paper: Comparative Social Policy and Social Policy Analysis*~~

~~^{1.10}This paper is based on two courses: Comparative Social Policy and Social Policy Analysis.~~

~~Option Papers~~

~~1.14 These will be from a list published annually by Friday of the sixth week of Michaelmas Full Term in the Department of Social Policy and Intervention. In exceptional circumstances and with the special permission of the Course Director, the option paper may be from subjects outside this list. The option paper will be assessed by a 4,000-5,000 word essay, to be submitted using the University approved online assessment platform by noon on the date specified in the Course Handbook. In the event of any candidate not reaching the pass mark set for the essay, one further attempt shall be permitted within the same examination year, normally at the end of the following term, though in the event of a successful resubmission only the bare pass mark shall be awarded.~~

Insert and number as follows:

1. The programme shall be under the supervision of the Comparative Social Policy Teaching Committee of the Department of Social Policy and Intervention.

2. Each candidate will be required to follow a course of instruction in Comparative Social Policy for at least six terms full-time.

3. Candidates must submit assessments as detailed below.

Qualifying Test

4. Methods of Social Research – Candidates must submit:

(1) a 3,000 word quantitative methods assignment by noon on Tuesday of week 0 of Hilary term of the first year.

(2) a 3,000 word qualitative methods assignment by noon on Wednesday of week 11 of Hilary term of the first year.

5. Core Paper: Comparative Social Policy and Social Policy Analysis – Candidates will sit a written examination in Trinity term of the first year.

6. One Option Paper – Candidates must submit a written assignment of up to 4,000 words by noon on Wednesday of week 0 of Trinity term of the first year.

Final Examination

7. One Option Paper – Candidates must submit a written assignment of not more than 4,000 words by noon on Wednesday of week 0 of Trinity term of the second year.

8. Thesis – Candidates must submit a thesis of not more than 30,000 words by noon on Friday of week 6 of Trinity term of the second year. An additional word limit of 6,000 words in total applies to the abstract, footnotes, endnotes and technical appendices (including graphs, tables and charts).

9. Candidates should refer to the Course Handbook for full details of the requirements for each assessment.

10. Option Papers will be chosen from a list published annually by Friday of the week 6 of Michaelmas term in the Department of Social Policy and Intervention. In exceptional circumstances and with the special permission of the Course Director, the option paper may be from subjects outside this list offered in any other relevant master's degree in the University.

11. All assessments must be submitted using the University approved online submission system. Technical information on the requirements for online submissions is provided in the Course Handbook.

12. Candidates who fail either/both of the Methods of Social Research assignments, or the Option Paper assessment will have the opportunity to resubmit in the same academic year. Candidates will be informed of the exact dates for re-submission after the exam board has confirmed that reassessment is required. Candidates who fail a written examination paper will have the opportunity to retake the exam, normally before the start of the next academic year. In the case of failure of the dissertation, the candidates may resubmit by noon on 15 August (or the weekday nearest 15 August) the following year.

13. Candidates must present themselves for an oral examination if required by the examiners.

Explanatory Notes

Approved changes:

1. Moving the timing of the 8 Quantitative Research Methods applied workshops from Hilary term to Michaelmas term.
2. Moving the 8 sessions in Qualitative Research Methods from Michaelmas term to Hilary term.
3. Aligning the assessment load between the two courses by reducing the Quantitative Research Method assessment to one 3,000 words piece of coursework.
4. Changes to timing of the option paper and qualitative assessment deadlines.
5. Shortening the option paper word-count from 5,000 to 4,000 words.