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

SSD/2/2/4

Social Sciences Divisional Board

Approved by officer's action on behalf of Quality Assurance Committee on 7 July 2025

Title of Programme Master of Philosophy in Development Studies

Brief note about nature of change: Option course process changes.

Effective date For students starting from Michaelmas 2025 For first examination from 2025/26

Location of change In *Examination Regulations* Master of Philosophy in Development Studies Following *Gazette* notices 26 September; 31 October

Details of Change: Amend citations as follows: 1.11. The course shall be under the supervision of the Graduate Studies Committee of the Department of International Development. 1.22. Candidates must follow for six terms courses of instruction as laid down for the M.Phil. in Development Studies by the Graduate Studies Committee. 1.33. *Core Course in Development Studies* Candidates must pursue a core course in development studies which is taught in the first year of the degree. The core course covers the following aspects: (i) ideas about development: social, political and development theory, and (ii) key themes in development such as agrarian change, urbanisation, social policy, sustainable development, states and governance, and technology and innovation.

1.4 4. Candidates will be admitted to take the examination as defined below in a specific year. In exceptional circumstances candidates may be allowed to take an examination later than the one to which they were admitted. Permission for this must be sought from the Proctors through the candidate's college.

1.5 5. The registration of candidates shall lapse from the Register of M.Phil. Students on the last day of Trinity Term of their second academic year.

1.6 6. *First year examinations*

1.7 6.1. Every candidate must pass a qualifying test consisting of the following components to be permitted to progress to the second year of the course. The test comprises the following:

1.8 (a) two foundation papers to be taken at the start of the Trinity Term of the first year of study. Details of the foundations papers are set out below in section 6.2;

1.9 (b) one written paper in Research Methods, to be taken at the end of the Trinity Term of the first year of study. Questions will be set on qualitative and quantitative methods in the social sciences;

1.10 (c) one research design essay of not more than 5,000 words. Candidates are required to submit the essay in Trinity Term of the first year of study. Candidates should upload the essay to the University approved online assessment platform by the time and date specified in the Course Handbook. ~~The essay must be accompanied by a declaration indicating that it is the candidate's own work.~~

1.11 (d) two core course essays of not more than 5,000 words each. Candidates are required to submit these essays in the first year of the course at the times and date specified in the Course Handbook. Each essay should cover the topics of two components (one per essay) of the core course in Development Studies as described in section 3 above.

1.12 6.2. Candidates will select two foundation papers from the list set out below except that candidates with a non-economics background are required to include Economics as one of the two papers and candidates are not permitted, except with the permission of the Graduate Studies Committee, to offer a paper in the subject of their bachelor's degree.

1.13 (a) *History and Politics* Topics may include the themes of state formation and development; encounters between different civilisations; colonialism, collaboration, and resistance; nationalism, decolonisation; class formation, gender relations, and the formation of political identities; politics and policy. Students will be expected to show knowledge of developments in countries from more than one of the following regions: Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

1.14 (b) *Economics* The course focuses on the way economists think about development. Topics may include key concepts in economics (e.g. opportunity costs, the role of incentives) and applications to developing countries. The goal is to provide students with an understanding of economics as a discipline that speaks to other social sciences and that can help explain some of the recurring patterns that we see in developing countries.

1.15(c) *Social Anthropology* Topics may include the perspectives of anthropology upon social change, modernity, progress and commonwealth; personhood and well-being; social and personal agency; authority and responsibility in the field of productive activity; marriage, kinship, family and gender in theory and practice; technological innovations; development planning and identity struggles.

1.16.3. A candidate who fails to pass any of the components of the qualifying test will be permitted to retake/resubmit the failed assessment item(s) before the beginning of the first week of the next academic year.

1.17.4. The qualifying test marks awarded for the written paper in Research Methods, the research design essay, and the two core course essays will also contribute toward the final outcome of the degree.

1.18.5. Candidates may also be required to attend an oral examination for any assessment.

1.19.7. *Final year examinations*

1.20.7.1. Every candidate must satisfy the examiners in following components:

1.21(a) A thesis of not more than 30,000 words on a topic approved by the MPhil Teaching Committee, to which the Graduate Studies Committee delegates this function. The thesis must be on a topic in the general field of development studies. The topic of the thesis must be chosen in consultation with and with the approval of the candidate's supervisor. If a separate thesis supervisor is required, they must have agreed to undertake the supervision prior to the approval of the topic as specified above. It is acceptable for students to use material contained in their Research Design Essay in the final version of the thesis they submit for their MPhil providing (i) it has not been submitted in whole or in part for another degree of the University of Oxford, or a degree of any other university; (ii) the thesis itself is substantially new. The thesis must be uploaded to the University approved online assessment platform not later than the Friday of the first week of the Trinity Full Term in the second year of the programme.

1.22(b) Two options courses. Options courses will be assessed either by a timed written examination in Trinity term or by coursework submission(s) in the second year of study. Details of the options papers available, and the submission requirements and timings, will be made available for students to select at the start of Michaelmas term of the second year of the course. Candidates must select one option offered by the MPhil in Development Studies and may offer an option course in another relevant masters degree either in the Department of International Development or in the University. Option courses offered outside the Department of International Development are subject to permission from ~~the relevant Graduate Studies Committee and from~~ the MPhil Teaching Committee. Applications to do this must be made following the requirements and by the date specified in the Course Handbook.

1.23All coursework 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.

1.24Where an option course ~~is assessed by an essay and~~ is offered ~~in~~ **by** another relevant masters degree <mark>outside of the Department of International Development</mark> ~~in the University~~, candidates are required to follow the assessment requirements of the degree in question.

1.257.2. Candidates may also be required to attend an oral examination for any assessment.

1.267.3. Failure in one or more components of the final year examination results in failure of the degree. Candidates may re-take the assessment of the failed options paper(s) and/or resubmit the thesis in Trinity Term of the following academic year.

Explanatory Notes

Internal ODID options follow the student's 'home' degree's length expectations as governed by the exam conventions. Those outside of ODID follow the owning programme's requirements.