

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 13 July 2025

Title of Programme

Research Degrees in International Development

Brief note about nature of change:

Introduction of the ability to waive Transfer of Status for MPhil graduates from outside of the department.

Effective date

For all students on course from Michaelmas term 2025

Location of change

In *Examination Regulations* [Research Degrees in International Development](#)

Details of Change:

Amend citations as follows:

1.1 *(These regulations replace the combined regulations for Research Degrees in Social Policy and Intervention, Sociology, and International Development from MT 2019 for all students registered for research degrees in International Development.)*

1.21. Governance

1.3 The DPhil in International Development shall be under the supervision of the Graduate Studies Committee of the Department of International Development.

1.42. Attendance requirements

1.5 The DPhil in International Development shall be offered on a full-time and part-time basis. Full-time students are required to meet the residence requirements set out in §6 of the General Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Part-time students are required to meet the following attendance requirements for their period of part-time study: attendance for a minimum of 30 days of university-based work each year (or up to 48 days in the first year of registration depending on the choice of paper required as part of the

Qualifying Examination), normally coinciding with the full terms of the academic year, to be arranged with the agreement of their supervisor, for the period that their names remain on the Register of Graduate Students unless individually dispensed by the Graduate Studies Committee. During a student's probationary period the attendance arrangements must take account of relevant induction and training events scheduled by the department.

1.6 3. Qualifying Examination

1.7 Probationer Research Students in International Development are required to take a Qualifying Examination, unless exempted by the Graduate Studies Committee on the grounds of an appropriate previous graduate degree. The examination shall consist of any course listed for the MPhil in Development Studies or an appropriate course from another postgraduate degree at the **University of Oxford University**, as agreed by the Course Director for the option, Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Studies Committee. Details of the required course will be conveyed to the student after the offer of a place is made. Probationer Research Students are required to pass the Qualifying Examination.

1.8 All students will attend teaching for the Qualifying Examination during their first year of registration and will be assessed in either Hilary or Trinity Term of their first year. Students who do not achieve the required mark will be allowed to re-sit that paper once more when next offered, unless a special dispensation is obtained from the Graduate Studies Committee. Full-time students will also automatically be granted a two term deferral of Transfer of Status. If a student fails the paper on the second attempt they will be withdrawn from the Register of Graduate Students.

1.9 4. Transfer to MLitt or DPhil status

1.10 Candidates will normally be expected to achieve Transfer of Status in their third or fourth term after admission (or in their sixth to eighth term after admission for part-time students). Applications should be submitted via Student Self Service and will comprise the following:

1.11 (a) a completed Transfer of Status application form; and

1.12 (b) a provisional thesis title and an outline of the proposed research; and

1.13 (c) a transfer paper of no more than 10,000 words, which justifies and locates the research in relation to earlier work in the field, sets out the questions on which it will focus and explains the methods by which these will be answered.

1.14 Candidates will also be required to present their research plan at a Transfer Preparation Workshop.

1.15 To successfully achieve Transfer of Status, students must have satisfactorily passed the Qualifying Examination. In cases where a full-time student is required to re-sit the paper, a deferral of Transfer of Status will be granted automatically as set out in section 3 above.

1.16 The Graduate Studies Committee will appoint two assessors who will read the transfer paper, interview the student and submit a recommendation to the committee in a written report. The committee will then decide whether Transfer of Status will be approved.

1.17 A student whose first application for Transfer of Status is not approved (including where the outcome is a recommendation to transfer to the MLitt) is permitted to make one further application and will be granted an extension of one term (or up to two terms for part-time students) to Probationer Research Student status if necessary. If after a second attempt, the Graduate Studies Committee can neither approve transfer to the DPhil nor to the MLitt, the student will be removed from the Register of Graduate Students.

1.18 **5. Confirmation of DPhil status**

1.19 Students who were initially admitted to the status of a Probationer Research Student must achieve Confirmation of Status not later than their ninth term (or not later than the eighteenth term for part-time students). Students admitted directly to DPhil status having completed the full-time MPhil in Development Studies, or an MPhil deemed to offer equivalent preparation for doctoral study at the University of Oxford, must achieve Confirmation of Status by the end of their eleventh term (sixteenth term for part-time students) as a graduate student, inclusive of the time spent on the MPhil in Development Studies.

1.20 Applications should be submitted via Student Self Service and will comprise the following:

1.21 (a) a completed Confirmation of Status application form; and

1.22 (b) a comprehensive outline (up to 3,000 words) of the treatment of the thesis topic including details of progress made and an indication of the anticipated timetable for submission; and

1.23 (c) a written submission of between 15,000 ~~to~~ and 20,000 words of the main thesis which may be one chapter, two chapters, or parts of two or more chapters. The submission should be core material based on fieldwork or other research.

1.24 The Graduate Studies Committee will appoint two assessors who will read the work, interview the student, and submit a written report to the committee. The committee will then decide whether Confirmation of Status will be approved.

1.25 A student whose first application for Confirmation of Status is not approved is permitted to make one further application, normally within one term (two terms for part-time students) of the original application, and will be granted an extension of one term (up to two terms for part-time students) if necessary. If after the second attempt the Graduate Studies Committee can neither approve the application nor approve transfer to the MLitt ~~or MSc by Research~~, the student will be removed from the Register of Graduate Students.

1.26 **6. Theses**

1.27 DPhil theses which exceed 100,000 words and MLitt theses which exceed 50,000 words (each excluding the bibliography) are liable to be rejected unless students have, with the support of their supervisors, been granted permission to exceed the word limit by

the Graduate Studies Committee. These figures are maxima and students are advised that many successful theses have been significantly shorter.

1.28 *Integrated theses*

1.29 A D.Phil. thesis may be accepted for examination either in the form of an articles-based thesis if it consists of a minimum of three published articles or articles intended for future publication, or as an integrated thesis which may include one or more published articles or articles intended for future publication combined with one or more conventional chapters.

1.30 Such a body of work shall be deemed acceptable provided it represents a coherent body of research. It should include an introduction placing the individual papers in context, a literature review, and an overall conclusion. The articles-based or integrated thesis should reflect the amount, originality and level of work expected for a conventional thesis. Current word limits and conditions remain in place. Co-authored work will only be permitted under exceptional circumstances, and with the approval of the supervisor(s) and Graduate Studies Committee. Where co-authored articles are included, the supervisor(s) and all co-authors must certify in writing to the Graduate Studies Committee that the majority of that work represents the work of the candidate. Co-authored work with supervisors is not normally permitted.

1.31 Candidates wishing to submit an articles-based or integrated thesis must obtain permission from their supervisor and the Department's Graduate Studies Committee before applying for Confirmation of D.Phil. status. Students applying for Confirmation of Status will be required to submit a statement of the intended basis for the overall coherence of the work, and may submit draft articles in place of draft chapters. If, after an application is accepted, a candidate wishes to revert to a standard D.Phil. thesis format, the candidate must submit an application to their supervisor and the Department's Graduate Studies Committee showing good cause for the change. ~~Students applying for Confirmation of Status will be required to submit a statement of the intended basis for the overall coherence of the work, and may submit draft articles in place of draft chapters.~~

1.32 Further guidance can be found in the Course Handbook.