

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

SSD/2/2/4

Social Sciences Divisional Board

Approved on behalf of Education Committee on 4 July 2024.

Title of Programme

Research Degrees in Economics

Brief note about nature of change:

Changing to qualifying examination and Transfer of Status requirements.

Effective date

For all students commencing the DPhil in October 2023 onwards

Location of change

In *Examination Regulations 2023-24, Research Degrees in Economics* ([ox.ac.uk](https://www.ox.ac.uk))

Details of Change:

Amend citations and re-number as follows:

1.11. Governance

^{1.2}The DPhil in Economics shall be under the supervision of the Graduate Studies Committee of the Department of Economics.

1.32. Attendance requirements

^{1.4}The DPhil in Economics 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 60 days in the first year of registration where a first year M.Phil. Economics subject is 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.

1.5.3. Qualifying Examination

1.6 Probationer Research Students in Economics are required to take a Qualifying Examination, unless exempted from all or part of the examination by the Graduate Studies Committee, on the grounds of an appropriate previous graduate degree or substantial professional experience since graduation. ~~The examination shall consist of either one first year MPhil Economics subject and three second year subjects, or five second year subjects.~~

For students who have successfully completed the MPhil in Economics at Oxford from entry in the academic year 2021-22 onwards:

The examination shall consist of three "Advanced" papers as offered for the MPhil in Economics chosen from {Advanced Macroeconomics, Advanced Microeconomics, Advanced Econometrics and Advanced Empirical Research Methods} of which one or more may be waived, or substituted with a Field paper as offered for the MPhil in Economics, with support from the supervisor(s) and the agreement of the Graduate Studies Committee. Papers already successfully passed as part of the MPhil in Economics will count towards the fulfilment of this requirement.

For all other students:

The examination shall consist of four papers, at least three of which must be "Advanced" papers as defined above and the fourth paper either being a further "Advanced" paper or a Field Paper. One or more of these papers may be waived, or "Advanced" papers substituted with a Field paper with support from the supervisor(s) and the agreement of the Graduate Studies Committee.

1.7(i) -Full-time students

1.8 Full-time students will attend teaching for the Qualifying Examination during their first year ~~of registration~~ and will be assessed ~~for each subject in Trinity Term of~~ by the method(s) published on the Department's VLE for each paper in their first year. A student who does not achieve the required mark ~~on a subject in a paper as set out in the Course Handbook~~ is automatically granted a two term deferral of Transfer of Status and is allowed to re-sit that ~~subject paper~~ subject paper once more when next offered, unless a special dispensation is obtained from the Graduate Studies Committee. If a student ~~fails any subject~~ does not achieve the required mark in any paper on the second attempt they will be withdrawn from the Register of Graduate Students.

1.9(ii) Part-time students

1.10 Part-time students will attend teaching for the Qualifying Examination during their first two ~~to three~~ years ~~of registration~~, and will be assessed by the method(s) published on the Department's VLE for each paper in the year of completion of the teaching for that paper. ~~on each subject in the Trinity Term following completion of the teaching for that subject.~~ A student who does not achieve the required mark in a paper as set out in the Course Handbook is allowed to re-sit that ~~subject paper~~ subject paper once more when next offered, unless a special dispensation is obtained from the Graduate Studies Committee. Where a student

~~does not achieve the required mark in any paper~~ ~~fails a subject in~~ ~~by the end of~~ Trinity Term of their ~~second~~ ~~third~~ year, they will automatically be granted a three term deferral of Transfer of Status to permit time to take the re-sit. If a student ~~does not achieve the required mark in any paper~~ ~~fails any subject~~ on the second attempt they will be withdrawn from the Register of Graduate Students.

1.11 **4. Transfer to MLitt (or MSc by Research) or DPhil status**

1.12 Candidates will normally be expected to achieve Transfer of Status in their third or fourth term after admission (or in their ninth term after admission for part-time students). Applications should be submitted to the Graduate Studies Coordinator and will comprise the following:

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

1.14(b) a provisional thesis title and a short outline statement of the proposed research topic of between 500-700 words, which should include sources and methods to be used; and

1.15(c) a piece of written work relevant to the thesis of between 5,000 and 7,000 words.

Students who have successfully completed the MPhil in Economics at Oxford may, with support from their supervisor(s), submit a letter to the Graduate Studies Committee with their application form for Transfer of Status, to apply for a waiver of the written work requirement in (c) above, based on the work submitted for their MPhil thesis. If approved, students should submit a longer version of the outline statement on the proposed research topic in place of (b) above, of between 1,500-2,000 words.

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

1.17 The Graduate Studies Committee will appoint two assessors who will read the work, 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.

1.18 A student whose first application for Transfer of Status is not approved (including where the outcome is a recommendation to transfer to the MLitt or the MSc by Research) is permitted to make one further application and will be granted an extension of one term (or 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 or to the MLitt, the student will be removed from the Register of Graduate Students.

1.19 **5. Confirmation of DPhil status**

1.20 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 normally earlier than their sixth term (or not later than the eighteenth term or normally earlier than the twelfth

term for part-time students). ~~Students admitted directly to DPhil status having completed the full-time MPhil in Economics 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 Economics.~~

Applications should be submitted to the Graduate Studies Coordinator and will comprise the following:

1. ^{1.21}(a) a completed Confirmation of Status application form; and
2. ^{1.22}(b) a comprehensive outline of the treatment of the thesis topic including details of progress made and an indication of the anticipated timetable for submission; and
3. ^{1.23}(c) two draft chapters intended to form part of the final thesis.

^{1.24}Candidates applying for Confirmation of Status shall also present their preliminary results of their research at a departmental seminar or workshop as part of the confirmation process, under arrangements to be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

^{1.25}The Graduate Studies Committee will appoint an assessor 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.

^{1.26}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 (two terms for part-time students) if necessary. For the second attempt, the Graduate Studies Committee will appoint two assessors who will read the work, interview the student, and submit a written report to the committee. 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.

^{1.27}**6. Theses**

^{1.28}DPhil theses which exceed 100,000 words, MLitt theses which exceed 50,000 words and MSc by Research theses which exceed 25,000 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.

^{1.29}*Integrated thesis format*

^{1.30}A DPhil thesis may be accepted for examination if it consists of a minimum of three papers of publishable quality, framed by an introduction, a literature survey (either written as a stand-alone chapter or divided among the constituent chapters), and a conclusion. Such a body of work shall be deemed acceptable provided it represents a coherent and focused body of work. A minimum of one paper must be authored solely by the candidate. Any co-authored papers must include a statement indicating the candidate's contribution to the paper. Where the co-author is another student at the University who also intends to

include the paper in their thesis, permission to include the paper must be sought from the Director of Graduate Studies prior to applying for appointment of examiners. Current word limits and conditions remain in place.

Explanatory Notes

Changes to the qualifying examination requirements

To introduce the requirement for students who have completed the MPhil in Economics to complete qualifying examination requirements.

The QE requirements will vary as follows

For students who completed the MPhil in Economics at Oxford from 2021-22 – students must complete 3 of the ‘advanced’ papers offered for the MPhil in Economics, with papers taken during the MPhil counting towards the fulfilment of the requirement.

For all other students – students must complete 4 papers offered for the MPhil Economics, of which 3 must be ‘advanced’.

Changes to Transfer of Status requirements

To remove the possibility of waiving Transfer of Status for students who have previously completed the MPhil in Economics at Oxford (regardless of when the MPhil was completed)

Students who have completed the MPhil can apply to the Graduate Studies Committee for a waiver of the requirement to submit a piece of written work relevant to the thesis, based on work submitted for the MPhil thesis. If the waiver is approved, the student would be required to submit a longer version of the outline statement of research topic (1500-2000 words instead of 500-700 words) as part of the ToS materials.