

REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREES OF MPhil AND PhD¹

Programme of Study

1. The length of a research degree is determined for each student individually by the authorities of the College but will not be less than laid down in Regulations 2 and 3 below.
2. Save as otherwise prescribed in Regulation 3 below the **minimum** length of course for the degrees of MPhil and PhD will be two calendar years of full-time study or three calendar years of part-time study.
3. A student accepted under the provisions of the Research Student Admission Policy for exemption of part of the programme of study may be exempted by the College from part of the programme of study for the MPhil or PhD degree of the University of London, provided that the programme of study followed at the University is not less than one calendar year or two calendar years in part-time study.
4. A course must be pursued continuously except by where a break in study is approved by the College.
5. After completing an approved programme of study a student will normally be registered to "write up" status, and required to submit her/his thesis within one calendar year (full-time) or two calendar years (part-time). A student must apply to the College for permission to enter at a date later than that specified within this Regulation.

Requirements of a Thesis

Thesis for the PhD degree

6. The scope of the thesis should be what might reasonably be expected after three or at most four years of full-time study.
7. The thesis must:
 - (a) consist of the candidate's own account of their investigations, the greater proportion of which must have been undertaken during the period of registration under supervision for the degree and must indicate how they appear to him/her to advance the study of the subject;

[The part played by the candidate in any work done jointly with the supervisor(s) and/or fellow research workers must be clearly stated by the candidate and certified by the candidate and supervisor.]

¹ For regulations applying to the MPhilStud please see Regulations for the Degree of Master in Philosophical Studies (MPhilStud)

- (b) form a distinct contribution to the knowledge of the subject and afford evidence of originality by the discovery of new facts and/or by the exercise of independent critical power and / or creative investigation and achievement;
- (c) be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument;

[A series of papers, whether published or otherwise, is not acceptable for submission as a thesis. Research work already published, or submitted for publication, at the time of submission of the thesis, either by the candidate alone or jointly with others, may be included in the thesis. The published papers themselves may not be included in the body of the thesis, but may be adapted to form an integral part of the thesis and thereby make a relevant contribution to the main theme of the thesis. Publications derived from the work in the thesis may be bound as supplementary material at the back of the thesis]

- (d) give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describe the method of research and its findings, and include a discussion on those findings, and indicate in what respects they appear to the candidate to advance the study of the subject; and, in so doing, demonstrate a deep and synoptic understanding of the field of study, (the candidate being able to place the thesis in a wider context), objectivity and the capacity for judgement in complex situations and autonomous work in that field;
- (e) be written in English and the literary presentation must be, in the judgement of the examiners, satisfactory, although the College may permit on an exceptional basis only a thesis in the field of modern foreign languages and literatures only to be written in the language of study;; in such cases the thesis must include additionally a submission of between 10,000 and 20,000 words which must be written in English and must summarise the main arguments of the thesis;
- (f) not exceed 100,000 words or the lesser number of words prescribed by the College for the subject area concerned as set out in Appendix 1;

[Note: the bibliography is excluded from the word count; footnotes are included within the word count; appendices are excluded from the word count and should only include material which examiners are not required to read in order to examine the thesis, but to which they may refer if they wish]

- (g) be of a standard to merit publication in whole or in part or in a revised form (for example as a monograph or as a number of articles in learned journals).

Thesis for the MPhil degree

- 8. The scope of the thesis must be what might reasonably be expected after two or at most three years of full-time study.
- 9. The thesis must:
 - (a) consist of the candidate's own account of their investigations, the greater proportion of which must have been undertaken during the period of registration under supervision for the degree;

[The part played by the candidate in any work done jointly with the supervisor(s) and/or fellow research workers must be clearly stated by the candidate and certified by the candidate and supervisor]

- (b) be either a record of original work or of an ordered and critical exposition of existing knowledge and must provide evidence that the field has been surveyed thoroughly;
- (c) be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument;

[A series of papers, whether published or otherwise, is not acceptable for submission as a thesis. Research work already published, or submitted for publication, at the time of submission of the thesis, either by the candidate alone or jointly with others, may be included in the thesis. The published papers themselves may not be included in the body of the thesis, but may be adapted to form an integral part of the thesis and thereby make a relevant contribution to the main theme of the thesis. Publications derived from the work in the thesis may be bound as supplementary material at the back of the thesis]

- (d) give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describe the method of research and its findings and include a discussion on those findings;
- (e) be written in English and the literary presentation must, in the judgement of the examiners, be satisfactory, although the College may permit on an exceptional basis a thesis in the field of modern foreign languages and literatures only to be written in the language of study; in such cases the thesis shall include additionally a submission of between 10,000 and 20,000 words which must be written in English and must summarise the main arguments of the thesis;
- (f) include a full bibliography and references;
- (g) must not exceed 60,000 words or the lesser number of words prescribed by the College for the subject area concerned as set out in Appendix 1.

[Note: the bibliography is excluded from the word count; footnotes are included within the word count; appendices are excluded from the word count and should only include material which examiners are not required to read in order to examine the thesis, but to which they may refer if they wish.]

Requirements applicable to Theses submitted for the Degrees of MPhil *and* PhD

10. The greater proportion of the work submitted in a thesis must have been done after the initial registration for a research degree, except that in the case of a student accepted under the provisions of the Research Student Admissions Policy for exemption from part of a programme there will be allowance for the fact that the student commenced their registration at another institution.
11. A candidate will not be permitted to submit as their thesis one which has been submitted for a degree or comparable award of this or any other University or institution, but a candidate will not be precluded from incorporating in a thesis covering a wider field work which he/she has already submitted for a degree or comparable award of this or any other

University or institution provided that he/she indicate on their entry form and also on their thesis any work which has been so incorporated.

12. A candidate may submit the results of work done in conjunction with their supervisor and/or with fellow research workers provided that the candidate states clearly their own personal share in the investigation and that the statement is certified by the supervisor. (see also Regulation 21)
13. A candidate must have the title of their thesis approved by their supervisor.
14. The decision to submit a thesis in any particular form rests with the candidate alone and the outcome of the examination is determined by two or more examiners acting jointly.
15. A candidate must include in each copy of their thesis a signed declaration that the work presented in the thesis is their own (see also paragraph 18) and that the thesis presented is the one upon which the candidate expects to be examined.
16. A thesis must be presented for examination in a final form in accordance with the instructions issued by the University.
17. A request for the thesis to be submitted in A3 format and/or printed on both sides of the pages may be approved by the College where there is a demonstrable need
18. The form of the retainable documentation submitted by a candidate who is undertaking practice / performance research in accordance with Regulations 8 - 10 or 13 - 15 above will be approved by the College on an individual basis
19. After the examination has been completed and before the degree is awarded, successful candidates are required to submit to the College, for lodging in the College and University libraries, one digital copy of the final version of their thesis.
20. Every candidate is required to present a short abstract of their thesis of not more than 300 words and bound with each copy of the thesis submitted to the College.

Entry to Examination and Submission of Thesis

21. The College requires the submission of a completed entry form for each of its candidates to the Birkbeck Graduate Research School.
22. A candidate will be examined in accordance with the regulations in force at the time of their entry or re-entry to the examination.
23. A candidate is required to submit with their entry form a short description of the content of the thesis in about 300 words to assist in the appointment of suitable examiners (see also Regulation 20 above).
24. If the candidate has not submitted their thesis for examination within 18 months from the submission of the form of entry for the examination, the entry will be cancelled.

25. A candidate is required to submit two copies of their thesis in accordance with University instructions obtainable from the College Registry (see Regulation 16 above).
26. A candidate for the MPhil or PhD degree is required to bring to the oral examination a copy of their thesis paginated in the same way as the copies submitted to the College.

Availability of Theses

27. It is a requirement for the award of the degree that one copy of a successful thesis is retained in the College Library.
28. Subject to Regulation 29 below, candidates for the MPhil and PhD degrees will at the time of entry to the examination be required to sign a declaration in the following terms:
 - (a) I authorise that the thesis presented by me in [year] for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the University of London shall, if a degree is awarded, be deposited in the library or electronic institutional repository of the appropriate College and in Senate House Library and that, subject to the conditions set out in Regulation 28(d) below, my thesis be made available for public reference, inter-library loan and copying.
 - (b) I authorise the College or University authorities as appropriate to supply a copy of the abstract of my thesis for inclusion in any published list of theses offered for higher degrees in British universities or in any supplement thereto, or for consultation in any central file of abstracts of such theses.
 - (c) I authorise the College and the University of London Libraries or their designated agents to make a microform or digital copy of my thesis for the purposes of electronic public access, inter-library loan and the supply of copies.
 - (d) I understand that before my thesis is made available for public reference, inter-library loan and copying, the following statement will have been included at the beginning of my thesis or clearly associated with any electronic version:

“The copyright of this thesis rests with the author and no quotation from it or information derived from it may be published without the prior written consent of the author.
 - (e) I warrant that this authorisation does not, to the best of my belief, infringe the rights of any third party.
 - (f) I understand that in the event of my thesis not being approved by the examiners, this declaration would become void.

² Provided that where, in the opinion of the College of registration, the thesis includes material that is of significance for national security, arrangements may be made, with the agreement of the graduate concerned, so that the copies of the thesis placed in the public domain may have certain parts excised from them; in such cases the copies of the thesis placed in the public domain shall include an accompanying statement indicating by whom and at what location the full thesis on which the award was made may be consulted.

29. A candidate may apply to the College for restriction of access, for a period not exceeding two years, to their thesis and/or the abstract of the thesis on the grounds of commercial exploitation or patenting or in very exceptional circumstances and in accordance with the procedure adopted by the College for consideration of such applications.

Conduct of Examinations

General

30. Examiners will be appointed for each candidate in accordance with the procedures adopted for the appointment of examiners by the College. At least one examiner for each candidate must have experience as an examiner for a research degree awarded by a British higher education institution.
31. All matters relating to the examination must be treated as confidential. Examiners are not permitted to divulge the content of previously unpublished material contained in a candidate's thesis until such time as any restrictions on access to the thesis, which have been granted by the College, are removed.
32. The examiners will normally prepare independent preliminary written reports on the thesis to assist in conducting the oral examination (or the preparation of the joint report in those cases where no oral examination is held - see paragraphs 39(c)/(d) and 45(c)/(d) below). Copies of the preliminary reports should be submitted to the Birkbeck Graduate Research School together with the joint report. The preliminary reports will not normally be released to candidates but may be made available to the members of an appellate Committee in the case of an appeal against the result of the examination for consideration at an appellate Committee hearing. In such an event the preliminary reports will also be provided to the candidate. After any oral examination, a joint final report must be prepared for submission to the College. The joint final report will be released routinely to candidates for their personal information.
33. Each joint final report of the examiners must indicate whether the thesis meets the requirements specified in Regulations 6-7 or 8-9 as appropriate and must include a reasoned statement of the examiners' judgement of the candidate's performance.
34. The supervisor will be invited, unless the candidate indicates otherwise on their entry form, to attend the oral examination of their MPhil or PhD candidate as an observer. The supervisor does not have the right to participate in the examination of the candidate but may contribute if invited to do so by the examiners. Otherwise the oral examination will be held in private.
35. The examiners may, at their discretion, consult the supervisor before completing their report, particularly if they have doubts relating to the appropriate decision to be made.

Method of Examination for the PhD degree

36. Candidates for the PhD degree must submit a thesis and be examined orally, save as prescribed otherwise in Regulations 37-41 below.

Conduct of PhD Examination

37. Except as provided in Regulations 39(c) and 39(d) the examiners, after reading the thesis, must examine the candidate orally and at their discretion by written papers or practical examination or by both methods on the subject of the thesis and, if they see fit, on subjects relevant thereto.
38. Candidates are required to present themselves for oral, practical or written examinations at such place and times as the College may direct and to bring with them to the oral examination an additional copy of their thesis, as stated in Regulation 26 above.
39. There are seven options open to examiners in determining the result of the examination as follows:
 - (a) If the thesis fulfils the criteria (set out in 7 above) and the candidate satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners will report that the candidate has satisfied them in the examination for the PhD degree.
 - (b) If the thesis otherwise fulfils the criteria but requires minor amendments and if the candidate satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners may require the candidate to make amendments specified by them, within a time limit to be specified by the examiners; this may be up to a maximum of twelve months. The amended thesis must be submitted to the examiners (or one of the examiners, nominated by them) for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory.
 - (c) If the thesis, though inadequate, shall seem of sufficient merit to justify such action, the examiners may determine that the candidate be permitted to re-present their thesis in a revised form within 18 months. Examiners must not, however, make such a decision without submitting the candidate to an oral examination. The examiners may at their discretion exempt from a further oral examination, on re- presentation of their thesis, a candidate who under this regulation has been permitted to re-present it in a revised form.
 - (d) If the thesis satisfies the criteria but the candidate fails to satisfy the examiners at the practical or written examination prescribed under Regulation 37, the examiners may determine that the candidate be exempted on re-entry from presentation of the thesis and be permitted to submit to a further practical or written examination within a period specified by them and not exceeding 18 months. The examiners may at their discretion exempt the candidate from taking a further oral examination.
 - (e) If the thesis satisfies the criteria for the degree, but the candidate fails to satisfy the examiners at the oral examination, the examiners may determine that the candidate be permitted to re-present the same thesis, and submit to a further oral examination within a period specified by them and not exceeding 18 months.
 - (f) If, after completion of the examination including the oral examination or re-examination for the PhD degree, the examiners determine that a candidate has not reached the standard required for the award of the degree nor for the re-presentation of the thesis in a revised form for that degree, they shall consider whether the thesis does or might be able to satisfy the criteria for the award of the

MPhil degree. If they so decide, the examiners must submit a report which demonstrates either (a) how the criteria for the MPhil degree are satisfied, or (b) what action would need to be taken in order for these criteria to be satisfied³. Thereafter the following conditions and procedures will apply:

Either

- (i) the candidate will be informed that he/she has been unsuccessful at the examination for the PhD degree, but that their examiners have indicated that he/she has reached the standard required for the award of the MPhil degree or with minor amendments to their thesis he/she will satisfy the criteria for the degree, and that he/she may be considered for the award of the MPhil degree if he/she indicates within two months that he/she wishes to be so considered. Any minor amendments required must be made within three months and the amended thesis must be submitted to the examiners or one of their number nominated by them for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory.
- (ii) a candidate who indicates that he/she wishes to be considered for the award of the MPhil degree under this Regulation will not be required to submit the thesis, as may be required under the Regulations for the MPhil degree or to undergo an oral examination thereon, but will be required to fulfil the requirements for the MPhil examination in all other respects.
- (iii) a candidate who has reached the standard for the award of the MPhil degree who does not indicate that he/she wishes to be considered for the award of that degree within the period given in paragraph (i) above will be informed that he/she has failed to satisfy the examiners for the PhD degree and that he/she may no longer be considered for the award of the MPhil degree

or

- (iv) if the thesis, though inadequate, shall seem of sufficient merit to justify such action, the examiners may determine that the candidate be permitted to enter the examination for the MPhil degree and re-present their thesis in a revised form within 12 months. The examiners may at their discretion exempt from a further oral examination, on re-presentation of their thesis, a candidate who under these regulations has been permitted to re-present it in a revised form.
- (g) The examiners may determine that the candidate has not satisfied them in the examination. The examiners may not, however, save in very exceptional circumstances, make such a decision without submitting the candidate to an oral examination.
40. If the examiners are unable to reach agreement, their reports will be referred to the Academic Registrar of the College, who will determine the action to be taken.
41. A candidate who fails to satisfy the examiners will not be permitted to re-enter for the examination. A candidate may however apply to a College to register for another course of study leading to the submission of a thesis on a different topic.

³ In reporting they shall have regard to the different normal maximum lengths of the thesis for the PhD and MPhil degrees but shall have discretion to waive the thesis length for the MPhil degree if appropriate.

Method of Examination for the MPhil degree

42. Candidates for the MPhil degree must submit a thesis and be examined orally, save as prescribed otherwise in Regulations 43-47 below.

Conduct of MPhil Examination

43. Candidates are required to present themselves for oral, written and/or practical examinations at such place and times as the College may direct and to bring with them to the oral examination an additional copy of their thesis, as stated Regulation 26.
44. Except as provided in Regulations 45(c) and 45(d) the examiners, after reading the thesis, will examine the candidate orally and at their discretion by written papers or practical examination or by both methods on the subject of the thesis and, if they see fit, on subjects relevant thereto.
45. There are six options open to examiners in determining the result of the examination as follows:
 - (a) if the thesis fulfils the criteria (see Regulation 7 above) and the candidate satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners will report that the candidate has satisfied them in the examination for the degree of MPhil.
 - (b) if the thesis otherwise fulfils the criteria but requires minor amendments and if the candidate satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners may require the candidate to make within three months amendments specified by them. The amended thesis must be submitted to the examiners or one of their number nominated by them for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory.
 - (c) if the thesis, though inadequate, seems of sufficient merit to justify such action, the examiners may determine that the candidate be permitted to re-present their thesis in a revised form within 12 months. Examiners may not, however, make such a decision without submitting the candidate to an oral examination. The examiners may at their discretion exempt from a further oral examination, on re-presentation of their thesis, a candidate who under this regulation has been permitted to re-present it in a revised form.
 - (d) if the thesis fulfils the criteria but the candidate fails to satisfy the examiners at the practical or written examination prescribed under paragraph 44, the examiners may determine that the candidate be exempted on re-entry from presentation of the thesis and be permitted to submit to a further practical or written examination within a period specified by them and not exceeding 12 months. The examiners may at their discretion exempt the candidate from taking a further oral examination.
 - (e) if the thesis fulfils the criteria but the candidate fails to satisfy the examiners at the oral examination, the examiners may determine that the candidate be permitted to re-present the same thesis, and submit to a further oral examination within a period specified by them and not exceeding 12 months.

- (f) the examiners may determine that the candidate has not satisfied them in the examination. The examiners may not, however, save in very exceptional circumstances, make such a decision without submitting the candidate to an oral examination.
- 46. If the examiners are unable to reach agreement, their reports will be referred to the Academic Registrar of the College, who will determine the action to be taken.
- 47. A candidate who fails to satisfy the examiners will not be permitted to re-enter for the examination. A candidate may however apply to the College to register for another programme of study leading to the submission of a thesis on a different topic.

Notification of Results of MPhil and PhD Examinations

- 48. After the examiners have reached a decision, every candidate will be notified of the result of their examination. The degree will not be awarded until one digital copy of the successful thesis has been submitted.
- 49. A diploma under the seal of the University will be subsequently delivered to each candidate who has been awarded a degree.
- 50. The diploma for the degree will bear the names of the candidate in the form in which they appear in the records of the College at the date of issue.

General

- 51. Except insofar as Regulation 12 applies, the work in the thesis submitted by the candidate must be their own and submission of a thesis for examination for the MPhil or PhD degree will be regarded as a declaration of this fact.
- 52. All work submitted as part of the requirements for any examination of the University of London must be expressed in the candidate's own words and incorporate their own ideas and judgements. Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's thoughts or words as though they were the candidate's own and is an examination offence. Direct quotations from the published or unpublished work of another must always be clearly identified as such by being placed inside quotation marks, and a full reference to their source must be provided in the proper form. A series of short quotations from several different sources, if not clearly identified as such, constitutes plagiarism as much as does a single unacknowledged long quotation from a single source. Equally, if another person's ideas or judgements are summarised, the candidate must refer to that person in their text, and include the work to which reference is made in the bibliography.
- 53. Allegations of plagiarism will fall to be considered under the College's Assessment Offences Policy, as will any other allegations of examination misconduct including, but not limited to
 - (i) deliberate attempts to represent falsely or unfairly the ideas or work of others;
 - (ii) the invention or fabrication of data;

(iii) the submission of work commissioned from another person.

54. If a candidate has entered the examination for the MPhil or PhD degree, but the authorities of a College, or of a Central Activity, or of the University Library, or the University Accountant notify the Academic Registrar that he/she has not settled with them or made acceptable arrangements to settle any account outstanding, no report will be made on the result of the examination until the same authority certifies that payment has been made in full.
55. The College has approved a Procedure for Consideration of Appeals Against Decisions of Examiners for Research Degrees. An application under the Procedure must be made within the time specified by the relevant policy.

Academic Board
November 2013

Academic Board
September 2022
(Minor amendments)

REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREES OF MPhil AND PhD

Appendix 1

1. Length of Thesis for the PhD Degree

Regulation 7 of the Regulations for the Degrees of MPhil and PhD requires that the length of the thesis in any field shall not, other than in the most exceptional circumstances, exceed 100,000 words inclusive of footnotes and appendices, other than documentary or statistical appendices, and exclusive of bibliography. This word limit and those below do not apply to editions of a text or texts.

In the following fields the thesis shall not normally exceed the number of words indicated, but a candidate wishing to exceed the prescribed limit may apply for permission to the College through their supervisor, such application being made in writing at least six months before the presentation of the thesis:

Biology: normally 65,000 words, exclusive of experimental data, appendices and bibliography

Classics: 80,000

Crystallography: 60,000, exclusive of tables and figures
Geology: 60,000

German: 80,000, exclusive of quotations from primary and secondary texts

Materials Science: 40,000 - 50,000 and in any event not exceeding 80,000 (exclusive of any accompanying data in microfiche form)

Philosophy: 75,000

2. Length of Thesis for the MPhil Degree

Regulation 9 of the Regulations for the Degrees of MPhil and PhD requires that the length of the thesis in any field shall not, other than in the most exceptional circumstances, exceed 60,000 words inclusive of footnotes and appendices, other than documentary or statistical appendices, and exclusive of bibliography. This word limit and those below do not apply to editions of a text or texts.

In the following fields the thesis shall not normally exceed the lesser number of words indicated, but a candidate wishing to exceed the prescribed limit may apply for permission to the College through their supervisor, such application being made in writing at least six months before the presentation of the thesis:

Classics: 40,000

Economics: 55,000

Materials Science: 40,000-50,000 and in any event not exceeding 60,000 (exclusive of any accompanying data in microfiche form)

Philosophy (all fields of study): normally around 45,000 words with a maximum of 60,000 words

Sociology: 55,000