MSt/MPhil Classical Archaeology
Examining Conventions
Academic Year 2018–2019

1. Introduction

Examination conventions are the formal record of the specific assessment standards for the course or courses to which they apply. They set out how examined work will be marked and how the resulting marks will be used to arrive at a final result and classification of an award. The supervisory body responsible for approving the examination conventions is the Social Sciences Board's Quality Assurance Committee.

2. Rubrics for individual papers

MSt

1. Option paper from List A – 3-hour written examination: 4 questions of which one is a mandatory picture question, in which candidates comment on 3 out of 5 pictures, and 3 essay questions out of a total of questions 12 set. Each of the 4 questions carries the same weight.

2. One or two option papers from List B – two pre-set essays of not more than 5,000 words each.

3. An option paper from List C may be offered in place of one of the option papers from List B – two pre-set essays of not more than 5,000 words each.

A dissertation of not more than 10,000 words may be substituted for one pair of pre-set essays in respect of one option, but only for 2 and 3 – that is, a dissertation may NOT be substituted for the option paper from List A.

MPhil

Year 1

1. Option paper from List A – 3-hour written examination: 4 questions of which one is a mandatory picture question, in which candidates comment on 3 out of 5 pictures, and 3 essay questions out of a total questions 12 set. Each of the four questions carries the same weight.

2. One or two option papers from List B – two pre-set essays of not more than 5,000 words each.

3. An option paper from List C may be offered in place of one of the option papers from List B – two pre-set essays of not more than 5,000 words each.

Year 2

1. One further option paper from either List A, B or C – two pre-set essays of not more than 5,000 words each. A candidate who chose a paper from List C in the first year may not normally choose a paper from List C in the second year.

2. One thesis of not more than 25,000 words. The thesis topic must be approved by the end of the Trinity Term of the first year.

3. Marking conventions

3.1 University scale for standardised expression of agreed final marks

For students starting PGT courses from Michaelmas term 2018, agreed final marks for individual papers will be expressed using the following scale.

70 - 100	Distinction
65 – 69	Merit
50 - 64	Pass
0 - 49	Fail

For students who started their PGT courses before Michaelmas term 2018 only, agreed final marks for individual papers will be expressed using the following scale:

70 – 100	Distinction
50 – 69	Pass
0 - 49	Fail

3.2 Qualitative criteria for different types of assessment
The general criteria in section 4.1 apply equally to dissertations and theses, but for the larger theses (MPhil thesis) the following aspects can be assessed, in terms of marks, as: over 79: exceptional; 70–79: excellent; 65–69: very good; 60-64: good; 50–59: satisfactory; 40–49: less than satisfactory; under 40: poor.

- The delineation of the aims, assessment of methods, and appreciation of limitations, of the thesis.
- The placing into a scholarly context of the central concerns and outcomes of the thesis.
- The choices of material, of methodology and, where appropriate, methods of data analysis.
- The competence of execution, presentation, and illustration, including, proper citation of relevant primary sources and modern scholarship, and appropriate analysis.
- The quality of interpretation in terms of intelligence, knowledge of relevant context, originality, and subtlety.
- The ability to present a large-scale project and its outcomes as a whole, and to summarise these succinctly and accurately.

3.3 Verification and reconciliation of marks
All pre-submitted items of work and all exam scripts are double-blind marked according to the marking criteria set out in these Exam Conventions.

First and second markers should make all reasonable efforts to reconcile mark differences with reference to the marking criteria; and this might involve agreeing with one or other initial mark rather than necessarily finding a mark in the intervening range. Such reconciliations should be justified by recording on marksheets the essence of the reconciliation conversation with explicit reference to the marking criteria. Only in the case where first and second markers are unable to agree should work be third-marked, by one of the examiners where possible. Where such third-marking happens, work should be initially blind-marked by the third-marker; and the third-marker should then if necessary adjust his/her mark with reference to the comments and marks of the first and second markers; and record the process used to come to that decision with explicit reference to the marking criteria.

In three-hour exams, each of the 4 questions is weighted equally in marking, as are the 2 pre-submitted essays for option papers. The marks for each question in exam papers and for each essay in option papers preserve decimal accuracy until they are averaged between the two markers at which

point any mark of 0.5 or above is rounded up. In the calculation of the average across the whole examination for the degree, any final mark of 0.5 or above is rounded up. In the MPhil, the second-year thesis, which corresponds to two terms' work, is double-counted.

3.4 Scaling N/A

3.5 Short-weight convention and departure from rubric
The maximum deduction that can be made for short weight should be equivalent to the proportion of the answer that is missing. Where a candidate has failed to answer a compulsory question, or failed to answer the required number of questions in different sections, the complete script will be marked and the issue flagged. The board of examiners will consider all such cases so that consistent penalties are applied.

3.6 Penalties for late or non-submission
Under normal circumstances the following penalties will be applied by the Examiners:

Late submission	**Penalty**
Up to one day *(submitted on the day but after the deadline)*	-5 marks (- 5 percentage points)
Each additional day *(i.e., two days late = -6 marks, three days late = -7 marks, etc.; note that each weekend day counts as a full day for the purposes of mark deductions)*	-1 mark (- 1 percentage point)
Max. deducted marks up to 14 days late	-18 marks (- 18 percentage points)
More than 14 days late	Fail

Failure to submit a required element of an assessment will result in the failure of the assessment. The mark for any resit of the assessment will be capped at a pass.

3.7 Penalties for over-length work and departure from approved titles or subject-matter

Under normal circumstances the following penalties will be applied by the Examiners:

For work that is over length: Essays or dissertations will be penalised by up to 1 mark for every 2% (or part thereof) by which they exceed the specified word limit. If the piece of work exceeds the limit by 10% or more, it will fail.

3.8 Penalties for poor academic practice

The Examination Board shall deal wholly with cases of poor academic practice (as set out below) where the material under review is small and does not exceed 10% of the whole.

Assessors should mark work on its academic merit with the board responsible for deducting marks for derivative or poor referencing.

Determined by the extent of poor academic practice, the board shall deduct between 1% and 10% of the marks available for cases of poor referencing where material is widely available factual information or a technical description that could not be paraphrased easily; where passage(s) draw on a variety of sources, either verbatim or derivative, in patchwork fashion (and examiners consider that this represents poor academic practice rather than an attempt to deceive); where some attempt has been made to provide references, however incomplete (e.g. footnotes but no quotation marks, Harvard-style references at the end of a paragraph, inclusion in bibliography); or where passage(s) are 'grey literature' i.e. a web source with no clear owner.

If a student has previously had marks deducted for poor academic practice or has been referred to the Proctors for suspected plagiarism the case must always be referred to the Proctors. Also, where the deduction of marks results in failure of the assessment and of the programme the case must be referred to the Proctors.

In addition, any more serious cases of poor academic practice than described above should also always be referred to the Proctors.

3.9 Penalities for non-attendance

Non-attendance at an examination for the PGT programme will result in failure of the assessment with any resit capped at the pass mark.

4. Progression rules and classification conventions

4.1 Qualitative descriptors of Distinction, Merit Pass, Fail

Over 79 Outstanding work, including all the qualities listed below, but showing complete command of the subject, originality, evidence of extensive reading, and a developed understanding of the overall context of the problem or question.

79–70 Excellent work, with an unequivocal grasp of current major issues in the field, a depth of knowledge of the concepts and material involved. Knowledge, argument and methodology are reviewed critically, with insight and independence of thought. Arguments should show sophisticated reasoning and be clear, well focused and cogent. Thoroughness, insight, wide reading and understanding, clarity of thought and expression, critical ability and originality are all present.

65 – 69 Work of high standard that covers the major points and shows familiarity with relevant literature or theory. It will include some elements of distinction quality, but is either not sufficiently original, is less well-written, a less well-structured argument, or includes inaccuracies.

60–64 Work shows consistency, fluency and critical ability in discussing and evaluating evidence and draws upon theories from a variety of sources, with the whole organised into a structured argument. An understanding and assimilation of the relevant literature is demonstrated, and there is a relation of concepts and ideas from different part of the teaching, showing some degree of independence of thought.

50–59 Work shows knowledge and understanding, but there may be little development of ideas and methodology. There are some omissions, shortcomings, or errors of fact, and limited deployment of evidence to support ideas or argument. There is reference to the literature, though not extensive, and there may be limited evidence of critical ability. Candidates must show that they have grasped the fundamental concepts and procedures in the field, and the work is adequately executed, although there may be some lack of clarity and focus.

40–49 Work shows a limited degree of knowledge and understanding of the essential literature for the course. Examination answers contain some relevant material but may demonstrate significant inaccuracies, be insufficiently focused on the question, or simply general and diffuse. Dissertations demonstrate some familiarity with the relevant literature, but may show significant deficiencies in organisation and discussion of ideas, while arguments may be inadequately supported or hard to follow. Practical work shows some ability but aspects of data collection and processing may be problematic.

Under 40 Work that shows little understanding of and/or is barely relevant to the question, shows minimal evidence of reading, contains largely erroneous or irrelevant material, and is very short and/or unfocused; may be poorly expressed and organised.

4.2 Final outcome rules

MSt

The three elements of the MSt (period option and two subject options) carry the same weight. Candidates whose average mark across the course is 50 or above will be awarded a pass.

Candidates whose average mark across the course is 65 or above will be awarded a Merit.

Candidates whose average mark across the course is 70 or above will be awarded a Distinction.

Candidates who have initially failed any element of the examination will not be eligible for the award of Merit or Distinction.

MPhil

Candidates whose average mark in the Qualifying and Final Examinations is 70 or above, and whose thesis receives a mark of 70 or above, will be awarded a Distinction. Candidates whose average mark in the Qualifying and Final Examination is 65 or above, and whose thesis receives a mark of 65 or above, will be awarded a Merit. Candidates whose work in the Qualifying and Final Examinations reaches an average of 50 or above, and whose thesis receives a mark of 50 or above, will be awarded a pass. In calculating the average, the marks for the written examination and for each pair of pre-set essays are given equal weight; the thesis mark is given double weight.

The board of examiners considers all borderline marks in light of performance at the mandatory viva voce examination. Candidates who have initially failed any element of the examination will not be eligible for the award of Merit or Distinction.

4.3 **Progression rules**

For the MPhil, all candidates are required to satisfy the examiners in a Qualifying Examination identical with that for the degree of Master of Studies in Classical Archaeology and governed by regulations 5-9 for that degree, in the Trinity Full Term of the academic year in which their name is first entered on the Register of MPhil students except that under regulation 5(*b*) of that degree a 10,000 word dissertation may not normally be offered in place of one of the subject options (examined by two pre-set essays). In the case of failure in one part of the qualifying examination, the candidate will have the same rights of resubmission as for the MSt in Classical Archaeology and, if successful, will be granted permission to supplicate for the degree of MSt in Classical Archaeology but will not be permitted to proceed to the second year of the MPhil in Classical Archaeology.

Candidates who achieve an overall mark of 60 or above in the Qualifying Examination will be permitted to proceed to the second year of the MPhil in Classical Archaeology. Candidates who receive an overall mark of 50–59 in the MPhil Qualifying Examination will not be permitted to proceed to the second year of the MPhil, but will be awarded an MSt in Classical Archaeology.

4.4 **Use of vivas**

There will be a compulsory *viva voce* examination for all MSt candidates and for MPhil candidates in both years of the degree. The viva covers all examined components of the degree.

STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO BE IN OXFORD AND AVAILABLE FOR VIVAS UNTIL THE END OF 9th Week of Trinity Term

4.5 Resits

In the case of failure in just one part of the MSt examination, the candidate will be permitted to retake that part of the examination on one further occasion, not later than one year after the initial attempt. Written papers would be retaken the following year.

In the case of failure in one part of the MPhil qualifying examination, the candidate will have the same rights of resubmission as for the MSt in Classical Archaeology. Written papers would be retaken the following year. In the case of failure in just one part of the final examination, the candidate will be permitted to retake that part of the examination on one further occasion, not later than one year after the initial attempt.

Where a candidate has failed an assessment unit as a result of poor academic performance the mark for the resit of the assessment unit will be awarded on the merits of the work. The candidate will not be eligible for an overall award of Merit or Distinction

Where a candidate has failed an assessment unit as a result of non-submitting an assessment item or as a result of non-attendance at a timed examination the mark for the resit of the assessment unit will be capped at a pass. The candidate will not be eligible for an overall award of Merit or Distinction

In this context, an 'assessment unit' can refer to a single timed examination, a submission, other exercise, or a combination of assessment items. Where the assessment unit consists of more than one assessment item, for example a submission and a timed examination, if the candidate passes the submission but fails the timed examination, they are only required to resit the failed assessment item (in this example the timed examination) not all the assessment items for the assessment unit.

5 **Mitigating circumstances notices to examiners**

Where a candidate or candidates have made a submission, under Part 13 of the Regulations for Conduct of University Examinations, that unforeseen circumstances may have had an impact on their performance in an examination, a subset of the board (the 'Mitigating Circumstances Panel') will meet to discuss the individual applications and band the seriousness of each application on a scale of 1-3 with 1 indicating minor impact, 2 indicating moderate impact, and 3 indicating very serious impact. The Panel will evaluate, on the basis of the information provided to it, the relevance of the circumstances to examinations and assessment, and the strength of the evidence provided in support. Examiners will also note whether all or a subset of papers were affected, being aware that it is possible for circumstances to have different levels of impact on different papers. The banding information will be used at the final board of examiners meeting to decide whether and how to adjust a candidate's results. Further information on the procedure is provided in the Policy and Guidance for examiners, Annex C and information for students is provided at www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/guidance

6 **Details of examiners and rules on communicating with examiners**

The External Examiner for the MSt and MPhil in Classical Archaeology for the 2018-19 academic year is Dr Alan Greaves (University of Liverpool). The internal examiners are Dr Maria Stamatopoulou (Chair), Dr Peter Stewart and Dr Dominik Maschek.

Candidates should not under any circumstances seek to make contact with individual internal or external examiners about the examination.