

# **Code of Practice for students studying for the Master of Philosophy by Advanced Study or Master of Research**

## **Starting their course in 2017-18**

### **Introduction**

This Code of Practice is for students studying for the Master of Philosophy (MPhil) by Advanced Study or the Master of Research (MRes).

This code has been issued by the University's main academic authority, the General Board, to make clear what you should expect during your study in terms of teaching support and assessment. Of equal importance, it also sets out what the University and those responsible for your study should expect of you. These mutual responsibilities and expectations are intended to provide a framework within which you can flourish on your course.

This Code is issued for new students starting their course in 2017-18 and applies for the duration of their course. It is issued each year, and all those with responsibility for students on the MPhil by Advanced Study and MRes are made aware of changes between issues.

Although this Code draws on the University's formal requirements as set out in its Statutes and Ordinances, it does not override them.

A glossary of terms and a list of useful links are included as appendices, but if you have any questions about this Code please do raise them with your Course Director or the Director of Graduate Education in your Faculty/Department.

A checklist of key requirements is included at the start of this Code. This is intended as a quick guide, and must be read in conjunction with the detailed information provided in the Code itself.

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Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education

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## Checklist of key requirements

This checklist is intended as a quick guide and must be read in conjunction with the detailed information provided in the Code itself. A list of courses to which this Code applies is contained in Appendix 1.

Depending on your course, you will be a member of a Department or Faculty (para 1).

The content and structure of your course will be overseen by a University Committee. This Committee, usually a Degree Committee, is responsible for the structure and content of your course, for monitoring your progress and is usually the formal body which will decide whether to approve your award (para 5).

Day to day management of your course will be by a Course Director (para 11). He or she has specific responsibilities in relation to oversight of your study, provision of information, and setting out expectations (para 14). There may also be a course administrator to provide additional support.

Graduate student provision in your Faculty/Department is overseen by a Director of Graduate Education (para3).

You are expected to take full advantage of the facilities, teaching, supervision and support offered to you and to be proactive and self-directed in your study and to make independent use of the facilities available (para 34).

You are expected to meet deadlines for submission of work and to complete your Course within the timeframe specified (para 44).

If you are experiencing difficulties with your study you are expected to discuss these with your Course Director without delay (para 11). If you are experiencing difficulties with your Course Director you are expected to raise these with the Director of Graduate Education in your Faculty/Department (para 3). You may also wish to speak to your College Tutor.

If at any point your Course Director is concerned about your progress, he or she is required to highlight this, and to alert the Director of Graduate Education in your Faculty/Department (para 56).

In certain circumstances, you may make a request a review of the result of your examination under the Graduate Student Examination Review procedure (para 62). There are other complaints procedures to cover academic, non-academic and personal matters (para 63). Your Degree Committee/ Faculty Board is responsible for investigating and responding to any complaints and examination appeals (para 10).

## A Responsibilities and expectations of those involved in your study

The following section describes the roles of the various individuals who share responsibility for your course of study, and also your responsibilities as a student of the University. It also describes the roles of the various formal committees that oversee your progress and the award of your degree.

### University Faculties and Departments

- 1 As a student on the MPhil by Advanced Study or MRes you are formally a member of a Department (which may be part of a larger Faculty) or a Faculty. This is referred to as your **Faculty/Department** in this Code of Practice. Although you will be a member of one Department or Faculty, you may need to spend time in another Department or Faculty, depending on the requirements of your course.
- 2 The **Head of your Faculty/Department** is responsible for personnel matters within your Faculty or Department. He or she may reasonably expect to be involved in resolution of any difficulties that fall into this category between staff and students.
- 3 **Your Department or Faculty will also have a Director of Graduate Education.** He or she will usually be supported by a Faculty/Department committee with responsibility for graduate education. You will be told the name of the person in who carries the responsibilities of the Director of Graduate Education in your Faculty/Department. Titles may vary, and in some Faculties this role may be undertaken by the Secretary of the Degree Committee.
- 4 Your Director of Graduate Education is a source of advice if you experience difficulties that cannot be resolved directly, and may act as an intermediary between you and your Course Director if difficulties arise. If you experience difficulties with your Course Director you are expected to raise these with the Director of Graduate Education in your Faculty/Department without delay.

### University Committees

- 5 Your offer of admission will indicate your **Degree Committee**.
- 6 Your Degree Committee is formally responsible for recommending to the **Board of Graduate Studies** that you be admitted on to your course and for monitoring your progress.
- 7 If you need to request any special permission, such as to intermit or leave to work away from Cambridge, the Degree Committee will need to support your request before it can be considered by the Board of Graduate Studies.

- 8 The Degree Committee will nominate examiners for appointment by the University's General Board.
- 9 The Degree Committee will confirm whether you have met the requirements for the award of your degree.
- 10 If you make a complaint about your course or request a review under the Graduate Student Examination Review Procedure (para 64) your Degree Committee will be required by the Board of Graduate Studies to investigate your complaint or request for review and respond to the Board, who will consider your complaint request for review and the Degree Committee's response and form a view as to whether your complaint or request for review is justified or unjustified. If justified, the Board will confirm options available to you.

### **Course Director**

- 11 Your **Course Director** takes overall responsibility for course content and assessment, and for ensuring that necessary arrangements for academic and administrative support are available to you.
- 12 Your Course Director is expected to be familiar with this Code and related guidance provided by the University authorities. Your Course Director is also expected to advise you on planning your personal and skills development.
- 13 Your Course Director is a source of advice and support.
- 14 Your Course Director will ensure that you are informed of the following:
  - Course structure, including details of mandatory and optional modules, research projects, and placements, and timetables for lectures and assessments;
  - What to expect in terms of frequency of contact between you and your course director. This may depend on your course and where you are in your studies.
  - Assessment methods, deadlines and other requirements for each component of your course, these may include progression hurdles which you are required to pass to progress to the next stage of the course;
  - Details of how your progress will be monitored during your course and what feedback you should expect to receive;
  - Details of how to apply to change your student status, such as to apply to intermit your studies or to work away from Cambridge to complete a placement or fieldwork for your thesis. Your Course Director will provide an academic commentary on any such applications you make.

- Academic conventions for scholarly writing including how to present your work and how to acknowledge the work of others to avoid plagiarism.
  - Conventions and requirements for research and data collection that pertain to your subject with respect, for example, use of archives and collections; and integrity in collecting and analysing data, including relevant University policies on research ethics, working with children or vulnerable adults (where relevant) and Animal Welfare (where relevant).
- 15 Your Course Director will monitor your progress - liaising with lecturers and thesis supervisors - and will arrange for regular reports on your progress to be submitted (para 55). Your Course Director will also take action if your progress is a cause for concern in that you are not progressing satisfactorily and may be in danger of failing an assessment, or are not likely to make the standard for progression to the next stage of your course or for the award of the degree.
- 16 If there are extenuating circumstances which are affecting your progress or performance, your Course Director may advise you to seek a period of intermission, or to request an examination allowance or a review under the Graduate Student Examination Review procedure.
- 17 If your progress is unsatisfactory the Course Director may ask the Degree Committee to recommend to the Board of Graduate Studies that you be withdrawn from the course.
- 18 Your Course Director is responsible for ensuring that you receive feedback (para 13) in a timely manner.
- 19 If your Course Director is to be away from Cambridge for an extended period, the Director of Graduate Education will make appropriate arrangements for replacing him or her.

## **Your thesis supervisor**

- 20 If your course involves completion of a thesis or extended project, portfolio or research proposal, you will be appointed a **Supervisor** to help you with your research. Your thesis supervisor is supported by the Course Director and Director of Graduate Education for your Faculty/Department.
- 21 The appointment of your thesis supervisor will be arranged by your Course Director and Degree Committee. You may be appointed more than one supervisor if your project is interdisciplinary. The timing of the appointment will depend on your course.
- 22 Your thesis supervisor will advise on the scope and structure of your thesis and will agree progress arrangements with you, including a plan for your work and a timetable for production of your thesis.

- 23 Your thesis supervisor is responsible for ensuring that you are aware of health and safety issues pertinent to your thesis; relevant University policy on research ethics and ethical matters specific to your research area; University policy on working with children or vulnerable adults (where relevant); University policy on Animal Welfare (where relevant); and intellectual property rights.
- 24 Your thesis supervisor will establish an effective means of communication with you, which may include meetings, email communication and feedback on draft work. Your thesis supervisor will confirm the frequency and timings of contact, what will be required and who is expected to initiate contact. The nature and frequency of communication may change depending on the stage of your research project.
- 25 Your Supervisor will monitor your progress against the timetable and plan for your work you have agreed together, and take appropriate action if you do not keep in contact, or your progress is poor. It is likely that this will involve informing the Course Director who may take further action.
- 26 Your thesis supervisor will also read and comment on draft submissions so that you have the opportunity to incorporate any feedback into subsequent writing, but is not expected to proofread your thesis. Your thesis supervisor should respond promptly – given adequate notice – to requests from you to meet and to comment on your work. In exceptional circumstances, your thesis supervisor may be one of the markers of your thesis.

### **Assessors and Examiners**

- 27 Your work will be assessed by a number of examiners and assessors appointed by the Course Director and Degree Committee.
- 28 The Examination board for your course, which is made up of all the appointed Examiners, is collectively responsible for the examination and results including setting examination papers, approving marks and the grade awarded. The board will include an External Examiner who reports to the University and plays a vital role in ensuring that the standard of the examination is appropriate and that the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards are sound and fairly conducted.
- 29 Course lecturers may also act as assessors of coursework, and your thesis supervisor may assess your thesis.

### **Graduate Tutor**

- 30 You will be allocated a Graduate Tutor at your College. Your Graduate Tutor is a valuable source of advice and support and when necessary can act as a liaison with your Faculty or Department and with central University offices, such as the Disability Resource Centre and the Student Registry.

- 31 Your College will provide a commentary on any applications you make to change your student circumstances (such as intermission or working away from Cambridge).
- 32 Your Graduate Tutor can also apply for an examination allowance on your behalf (para 52).

## **B Your responsibilities as a student**

### **General**

- 33 When you matriculated as a student at the University, you promised to abide by the University's Statutes and Ordinances and supplementary policies, including those relating to Graduate Students and those concerning conduct, discipline and avoidance of plagiarism. You should ensure that you read and understand all the information provided to you by your Course Director, Director of Graduate Education and available on the Cambridge Students website (<http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/>) about the University's regulations and policies pertaining to your course.
- 34 You are expected to take full advantage of the facilities, teaching and supervision offered to you by your Faculty/Department. You are also expected to be aware of, and if necessary utilise support mechanisms such as your Course Director, College Tutor and the Students' Unions' Advice Service.
- 35 You should receive a course handbook which will provide details of the course structure, including any compulsory and optional modules and timetables for course attendance and assessment. The handbook should also include information on sources of student support. You should ensure that you know and understand the structure of your course, and what is required of you at each stage of your course. Your course may include attendance at lectures, seminars and workshops, short research projects and placements in organisations outside the University. There may also be elements as part of a virtual learning environment (VLE). You are expected to attend and participate in classes, modules, training sessions and other activities as specified in your course handbook.
- 36 You are expected to be proactive and self-directed in all aspects of your study, and to make independent use of library and other available resources, including laboratory facilities where appropriate. Your course handbook will make it clear how much time you are expected to devote to the various aspects of your studies, which may be up to 48 hours per week, or part-time equivalent.
- 37 You are expected to keep your Course Director informed of any circumstances affecting your academic performance or participation in any part of the course. Your Course Director will advise on any necessary further action depending on your circumstances (e.g. intermitting your studies).



- 38 You are expected to keep the University informed of changes in your contact details, and to inform your College and Course Director promptly if you cease to attend your course through ill health or other grave cause, or withdraw from it.
- 39 You are expected to pay fees in a timely manner.
- 40 You are expected to provide feedback on your course as requested by the Course Director.

## **Residence**

- 41 Full-time students are expected to reside in Cambridge in term time. If your course requires you to spend all or part of a term away from Cambridge (for example to undertake data collection for a thesis or to complete a work-based placement) you must apply to work away from Cambridge and this application must be approved before you leave Cambridge. Formal permission is not required for conferences and short research visits. If you are unable to work on your studies for a specific period due to illness or other circumstance you must apply for an intermission.
- 42 Part-time students are not expected to maintain residence in Cambridge, but depending on your course you may be required to be resident in Cambridge for particular periods. Also, if you plan to work away from your usual place of residence to undertake any fieldwork or placement necessary for the completion of your course you are required to apply to do so; if you are unable to work on your studies for a specific period due to illness or other circumstance you must apply to intermit for that period.

## **Examination and assessment**

- 43 Details of the assessments for your course will be set out in your course handbook and may include a variety of assessment methods such as essays, written examinations, oral presentations and a thesis.
- 44 You should ensure that you are aware of and adhere to any deadlines for the submission of assessed work and that you are aware of the date, time and location of any written examinations. You should ensure that you organise your work to meet deadlines set. If you are experiencing difficulties, you should seek advice and help from your Course Director, Director of Graduate Education or your College Tutor.
- 45 You might complete both formative and summative assessment: Formative assessment may include submission of essays or other work which is not formally assessed as part of your course but for which feedback will be provided in order for you to identify areas of strength and areas of potential improvement; summative

assessment may include submitted work, written exams, oral presentations, etc. and will be formally assessed as part of your course.

### **Written Examinations**

- 46 You should ensure that you are aware of the date, time and location of any written examinations and that you adhere to the University's rules on sitting examinations.
- 47 You should apply through your Graduate Tutor (within the required timeframe) for any reasonable adjustments necessary for you to complete your examinations because of a disability or other educational need.

### **Faith provision in University examinations**

- 48 If you find that a University examination has been scheduled at a time which clashes with a religious observance which means that you may not be able to attend the examination you should submit an application under the faith-provision for University examinations.

### ***Written coursework or theses submitted for examination***

- 49 You are expected to take responsibility for the quality of any work required to be submitted for examination. Note that the advice and guidance of your Course Director or thesis supervisor carries no guarantee of success at examination, nor will encouragement or the approval of a piece of work by any course lecturer or your thesis supervisor constitute grounds for complaint if you fail in the examination.
- 50 You are expected to follow the conventions and comply with the requirements that pertain in your subject with respect, for example, to scholarly writing; use of archives and collections; and integrity in collecting and analysing data. You should ensure that you comply with the requirement for honesty in presenting your work; the conventions for acknowledging the work of others in your subject and ensure that you understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. The University reserves the right to require the submission of your work in both electronic and paper format and to submit your work for screening with text-matching software.

### **Theses**

- 51 If your course involves submission of a thesis, you should discuss drafts of your thesis with your Supervisor and confer on its state of readiness for submission. Where your Supervisor is unable to comment, for good reason, on drafts of your work in reasonable time, you should contact your Course Director for assistance. If your Course Director is unable to assist, you should contact the Director of Graduate Education in your Faculty/Department.

### ***Requesting an Examination Allowance***

- 52 If your preparation for an examination or attendance at part of the assessment for your course has been hindered by illness or other grave cause, you should seek advice from your Graduate Tutor who may apply to the Board of Graduate Studies for an examination allowance. A request for an allowance must be accompanied by evidence of the extenuating circumstances, and must be received by the Board of Graduate Studies within three months of the date of the letter which gives you formally the outcome of your examination. An examination allowance may consist of providing you with the opportunity to resubmit work or take or retake an examination at a later stage. In restricted circumstances an allowance may lead to you being awarded the degree with no further assessment.

## **Feedback and Progress**

### **Feedback**

- 53 You will receive feedback on work in a number of forms including verbal feedback in one to one meetings or following group presentations; comments on draft and submitted work; and progress reports. Feedback may come from your Course Director, College Tutor, thesis supervisor as well as from assessors and examiners of your work.
- 54 You may receive provisional marks for assessed work throughout your course. Provisional marks are subject to moderation and ratification as part of the formal examination process and as such may increase or decrease. You will receive formal marks after the examination process is completed.

### **Progress**

- 55 Your course director is responsible for monitoring your progress during your course. As part of the progress monitoring, a series of progress reports will be submitted during your period of study, as follows:

**Michaelmas Term:** during the Michaelmas Term you will be required to submit an online reflective self-evaluation report. Your course director and College Tutor will provide comments on your report.

**Lent and Easter Terms:** at the end of each term your course director will arrange for an online progress report to be submitted. The course director may use feedback on your performance in assessments and lectures, etc., to inform the content of the report. These progress reports will be submitted

to you, your College Tutor, your Degree Committee and the Board of Graduate Studies.

***If your progress is unsatisfactory***

- 56 If at any point your Course Director is concerned about your progress, he or she is required to highlight this to the Director of Graduate Education in your Faculty/Department. Similarly, a thesis supervisor will highlight progress concerns to your Course Director. He or she should also submit a formal report (para 55) indicating their concerns about your progress. Your Course Director may ask you to meet with him or her to discuss their concerns and possible remedies. If there are extenuating circumstances affecting your progress or performance the Course Director may recommend that you meet with your College Tutor to discuss possible options including a period of intermission, an examination allowance or a request for a review under the Graduate Student Examination Review procedure.
- 57 In some circumstances, you may be referred to the University's Occupational Health Service, Counselling Service or Disability Resource Centre. If there are serious concerns about your fitness to study or undergo academic assessment (e.g. because of your health or because your conduct or performance suggests underlying health issues), you may be referred for assessment to a Fitness to Study panel.

***Permanent removal from the Register of Graduate Students***

- 58 The Degree Committee may recommend to the Board of Graduate Studies that you be removed from the Register of Graduate Students on the following grounds:
- a) you have not been working to its satisfaction; or
  - b) you have not complied with the conditions laid down in your case; or
  - c) in its opinion, you are not likely to reach the standard of the course on which you are registered.
- 59 If you are taken off the Register of Graduate Students, you will lose your student status. If you consider that you have been unfairly treated, provision exists for you to make representations under the Graduate Student Examination Review Procedure or the Student Complaints Procedure (para 62).

**Problems and Complaints**

- 60 Most problems or complaints can be resolved quickly and efficiently with the support, involvement or intervention of University staff or, sometimes, your Graduate Tutor. You may also seek independent advice from the Students' Unions' Advice Service. You are expected to exhaust all avenues of local, early informal resolution before initiating any formal complaint, review or appeal processes. In the first instance, you should consult and seek the advice of the appropriate

departmental member of staff. If you are unclear who this is, you should consult the Director of Graduate Education in your Faculty/Department. Although your Graduate Tutor might not be able to solve the problem directly, he or she might be able to intervene, or at least offer suitable advice about how to proceed or where to go for assistance or advice.

- 61 If, however, you have reason to think that a problem or issue has not been dealt with satisfactorily at the initial, local level – or if the problem is demonstrably of a more serious nature – then other, formal complaint procedures are available.

***Formal complaints procedures***

- 62 The University has a range of complaint procedures, designed to cover academic, non-academic and personal matters, and detailed information about these procedures are available on the web via the links given in the annex to this Code. Your College will have its own complaint procedure. A student who remains dissatisfied following completion of the University's internal formal review, appeal or complaint procedures may be able to apply for a review of their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), providing that the complaint they take to the OIA is eligible under its rules.
- 63 The principal complaint or review procedures affecting a Graduate Student are likely to be: the Student Complaints Procedure; the Graduate Student Examinations Procedure; and the Procedure for the review of decisions of the certain University bodies.

## Glossary

**Assessor:** a person who will assess your submitted work.

**Board of Graduate Studies:** the formal body in the University which is responsible for graduate degrees covered by this Code

**Counselling Service:** the University's Counselling Service  
(<http://www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/general>)

**Course Director:** the person with overall responsibility for course content and assessment and who will monitor and support your progress.

**College Tutor:** see Graduate Tutor.

**Degree Committee:** the Committee in your Faculty which has responsibility for your course and examination and for the approval of your degree

**Director of Graduate Education:** the person in your Faculty/Department who is responsible for oversight of its research students and courses.

**Disability Resource Centre:** the University's Disability Resource Centre  
(<http://www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk/>)

**Examination Allowance:** if you do not perform well in an examination, and there are mitigating circumstances, you may be able to apply for an allowance. This may mean that you are permitted to re-take part or all of the examination.

**Examination board:** a board consisting of the examiners of your course, who will ratify the marks for your assessments and make a recommendation to the Degree Committee on whether you be awarded the degree.

**Examiner:** someone appointed by the General Board to assess work submitted for the degree.

**Faculty:** the body responsible for organising teaching and research in individual subjects or groups of subjects. Their work is normally organised into sub-divisions called Departments.

**Faculty/Department Head:** the person in your Department or Faculty with responsibility for that Department or Faculty, including personnel matters.

**Fitness to study:** the University's fitness to study procedure  
(<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/2016/chapter02-section29.html#heading1-29>)

**General Board:** the central body which advises the University on educational policy and resources. It is responsible for maintaining a high standard of teaching and research.

**Graduate Student Examination Review:** the procedure for requesting a review of the results of an examination.

**Graduate Tutor:** the person your College has appointed to provide general advice and guidance to you. This person may also be called your Tutor or College Tutor.

**Intermission:** a period of temporary authorised absence from your course for ill health or other non-medical reasons

**Occupational Health Service:** the University's Occupational Health Service (<http://www.ohss.admin.cam.ac.uk/>)

**Office of the Independent Adjudicator:** an independent body set up to review student complaints (<http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>)

**Register of Graduate Students:** the list maintained by the Board of Graduate Studies of all students studying for a graduate degree. Being on the Register means that you are a student.

**Statutes and Ordinances:** the University's regulations (<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/2016/contents-sections.html>)

**Student Complaints Procedure:** the procedure under which you can make a formal complaint.

**Students' Union's Advice Service:** <http://www.studentadvice.cam.ac.uk/>

**Supervisor:** a person to support and oversee your progress in your thesis

**Term dates:** Dates of terms in which lectures may take place. Full-time students are expected to be resident in Cambridge during terms unless they have formal permission to be elsewhere. Details of term dates can be found at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/about-the-university/term-dates-and-calendars>

**Thesis supervisor:** see supervisor

**Tutor:** see Graduate Tutor

**Working away:** permission you will need to seek from the Board of Graduate Studies if you need to study outside Cambridge during your course

## **Appendix 1 Courses covered by this Code of Practice**

1. Master of Philosophy by Advanced Study
2. Master of Research

### **Courses covered by the Code of Practice for research students**

1. Doctoral courses
2. Master of Philosophy by thesis and viva
3. Master of Science
4. Master of Letters (except those detailed above)
5. Certificate of Postgraduate Study