

University of Cambridge

Faculty of Philosophy

**Graduate Handbook
2017 – 2018**

Address: Raised Faculty Building
Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge CB3 9DA
Tel: (01223) 335078
Email: phil-admin@lists.cam.ac.uk
Web page: <http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk>

Contents

Introduction	4
Welcome!	4
Sources of advice and help.....	4
Organisational Matters	6
The Faculty of Philosophy – who we are	6
Colleges.....	6
Student Registry	6
The Philosophy Degree Committee	7
The Faculty Board	7
Graduate representation on the Faculty Board	7
Staff-Student Committee	8
The working environment.....	8
Course Details	9
MPhil Degree	9
Content.....	9
Essays	9
Thesis.....	9
Procedure for submission of essays and thesis	10
Assessment	12
Questionnaires	17
PhD and MLitt Degrees	18
Steps towards registration.....	18
After registration	20
Completion of theses.....	22
Examination.....	23
Plagiarism.....	25
Questionnaires	25
Supervision	26
Supervisors	26
Undergraduate supervising	27
Lectures, Seminars and Meetings	28
Lecture list	28
Seminars.....	28
Other Meetings	28
Faculty Resources and Support for Students	30
Library system	30
The Graduate Office and the Faculty Office	30
The Graduate Study Centre.....	31
Graduate training	31
Language learning.....	32
Computing facilities	32
Funding	33
Scheme for refund of conference expenses.....	33
Financial support, fees and expenses	33
Matthew Buncombe Prize.....	33
Further grants and awards from colleges.....	33
Postdoctoral research fellowships	34

Introduction

Welcome!

This Handbook provides information you'll find useful as a graduate student in the Faculty of Philosophy. It supplements the general information for graduate students that you can find on the University's Cambridge Students webpages:

<http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk>

Please read through the Handbook carefully, and keep it accessible, **especially for guidance about submission of your work**. You should also familiarise yourself with the Faculty's webpages for current graduate students:

<http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/graduates>

Further information

If you can't find the information you need in this handbook or online, please consult the Faculty's Graduate Secretary, in Room 324, Raised Faculty Building, telephone 35078 (University network) or 01223 335078 (external). MPhil students can also consult their Advisor or the MPhil Course Director; PhD students can consult their Supervisor or the Director of Graduate Studies.

Sources of advice and help

Graduate work should be – and usually is! - immensely rewarding and exciting, but if you feel in need of help or advice, please remember that the following people (among others) are here to help you:

- Your college Tutor
- Your Supervisor and Shadow Supervisor (PhD students)
- The Director of Graduate Studies
- The MPhil Course Director (for MPhil students)
- The Graduate Secretary
- The graduate representatives on the Faculty Board and Staff-Student Committee
- The code of practice for MPhil degrees:
https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/files/cop_m_adv_study_final_version.pdf
- The code of practice for PhD students:
https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/files/cop_research_201718.pdf

Their various roles and responsibilities are explained in what follows. If you have difficulties or matters you would like to discuss, from the serious to the trivial, do not hesitate to take your concerns to whomever among them is most appropriate.

If you have complaints in relation to your research or course of study they should be addressed in the first instance to your Advisor or Supervisor, or to the Director of Graduate Studies or MPhil Course Director. If this doesn't resolve matters to your satisfaction, you may make representations to the Degree Committee and also to the Student Registry. Your college Tutor will also be able to offer advice and, if need be, make representations on your behalf. You can find more information about making a formal complaint here: <https://www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/>

Organisational Matters

The Faculty of Philosophy – who we are

For lists of the Faculty's teaching and Research Staff, and Support Staff, please see the faculty website:

<http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/people>

Colleges

All graduate students belong to a College. The Colleges are responsible for the accommodation and welfare of graduate students, for their social, medical, legal and financial arrangements, and for presenting them for University Degrees. Colleges are not directly concerned with supervising or assessing graduate students' work, but they are kept informed of their students' progress and may, should the need arise, give help or advice, or make representations on students' behalf to their supervisors, their Degree Committee or the Student Registry.

Student Registry

<http://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk>

The Student Registry is formally responsible for seeing that the relevant regulations are observed, receiving and acting on reports and recommendations from supervisors, examiners and Degree Committees, and approving the award of some postgraduate Degrees.

The Student Registry is at 4 Mill Lane, Cambridge CB2 1RZ, opening hours 10 am to 4 pm, telephone x66302 (network) or 01223 766302(external). If you are a PhD or MLitt candidate, you will need to visit it at the end of your studies, to submit your thesis. Otherwise, Graduate Students will normally deal directly with the Student Registry only when applying formally for something (e.g. to work away from Cambridge, to intermit your research, or to defer your submission date). Some of these requests can be processed via your Self-Service page on CamSIS, without actually visiting the Student Registry. (For this you will need your 'Raven' password, supplied to new graduate students by the Computing Service.)

The Philosophy Degree Committee

The Degree Committee of the Philosophy Faculty is responsible to the Student Registry for organising and monitoring the work of graduate students in Philosophy, and is the University body with which Philosophy graduate students are most directly concerned. It comprises the Faculty's Professors, Readers, and Lecturers, together with representatives of related subjects, and meets twice each term.

Among other responsibilities, the Degree Committee appoints a Supervisor (PhD students) or Advisor (MPhil students) for each of the Faculty's graduate students. Supervisors and Advisors report on their students' progress to the Degree Committee and to the Student Registry, once a term. The Degree Committee reviews students' progress in the light of these reports, and decides when and for what degrees they shall become – or continue to be – registered as candidates. It also appoints examiners for the various essays and theses that graduate students are required to submit, and makes recommendations to the Student Registry about award of degrees, on the basis of reports from those examiners.

Enquiries about Degree Committee business should be directed in the first instance to the Graduate Secretary. Official correspondence with the Committee should be addressed to the Secretary of the Degree Committee at the Philosophy Graduate Office.

The Faculty Board

Like other Faculties in the University, Philosophy is run by its Faculty Board, which meets twice a term (on the same day as the Degree Committee). The membership largely overlaps with the Degree Committee, but also includes three student members (two undergraduates and one graduate), who are elected in the middle of each Michaelmas Term. The Faculty Board sets the regulations and syllabuses for the University's graduate and undergraduate courses in Philosophy, arranges lectures and seminars accordingly, and organises the Philosophy Tripos (undergraduate) examinations.

Graduate representation on the Faculty Board

The Graduate Representative is elected from among the graduate students of the Faculty. All graduates are eligible for this post. The representative is your direct link to the official running of the Faculty, and is there to help and advise you. If you have any views or queries, please discuss them with your representative first. S/he can then decide whether to take the matter further to the Staff-Student Committee or to the Faculty Board itself. Your representative is also responsible for

organising social events for graduates throughout the academic year.

Staff–Student Committee

All philosophy students are automatically members of this Committee, which is a forum for discussing matters that affect both undergraduate and graduate students in the Faculty and the route by which students are kept abreast of how the Faculty is run and encouraged to participate in decision making. There are three meetings a year, normally one per term, and they tend to fall between Faculty Board meetings, so that relevant matters from the Faculty Board can be discussed at the Staff-Student Committee and vice-versa. At an Open Meeting held in October/November a list of students willing to act as representatives of their group is compiled. It is useful to have representatives from amongst the MPhil and the PhD students.

The working environment

The Faculty is committed to creating and maintaining a working environment free of all forms of bullying, harassment and inappropriate discrimination. All students and staff are expected to be aware of the University's codes of practice regarding bullying and harassment, *Dignity@Work*, which applies equally to students and to staff.

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/policy/dignity/>

The *Dignity@Study* guidelines and procedures are also relevant to graduate students as well as to staff.

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/students/gateway/welfare/dignity@study.html>

The Faculty's adviser on racial and sexual harassment is currently Professor Rae Langton, and anyone with concerns on such matters is invited to consult her.

Course Details

MPhil Degree

Content

MPhil candidates are examined on one essay of not more than 4,000 words (including footnotes but excluding bibliography), an essay of not more than 8,000 words (including footnotes but excluding bibliography), and a thesis of not more than 12,000 words (including footnotes and appendices but excluding bibliography), all on subjects which must first be approved by the Degree Committee. For each of these pieces of work you will need to arrange a supervisor, and choose a topic, in consultation with your Advisor. There are some restrictions on topics – see below for details – and deadlines for submission of titles. But broadly speaking you will have a lot of choice about what you write about, and a lot of opportunity to choose topics that especially interest you.

Please note that it is a University regulation that work already submitted for a degree outside Cambridge cannot then be submitted for a Cambridge degree. If you are in any doubt about this, please consult your Advisor, or your Supervisor for the piece of work in question.

Essays

At least one essay topic must be in the following areas of Philosophy, including their history: *Metaphysics and Epistemology, Philosophy of Mind, Logic and Philosophy of language, Philosophy of Science, Ethics and Moral Psychology, Aesthetics, and Political and Legal Philosophy*. Both essays cannot come from the same area. With Degree Committee approval, one essay can be in some other area, provided it is still appropriately related to Philosophy.

Thesis

Your MPhil thesis must be related to Philosophy, and such that suitable supervisors and examiners are available; but need not fall within the areas listed above. It may be related to one or more of your essay topics, but must not reproduce any significant part of any of your essays.

Procedure for submission of essays and thesis

Please note that the word limit for both essays and thesis will be strictly applied. Examiners may decline to read any material in excess of it. For both essays and thesis candidates are required to provide a signed statement of the word length. In addition, candidates are required to send an electronic copy of their essays and thesis to the Graduate Secretary, so that the word count can be verified.

Please also note that submission deadlines for essays and thesis are taken very seriously. Except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. a medical emergency), late submission will attract a penalty of five marks for every working day, or proportion of this for part of a day.

Where deadlines are marked '*' below, see the Graduate Calendar on the Philosophy website for the exact dates

Essays

To encourage a prompt start on essay work, your first essay has to be submitted by the end of Michaelmas Term*. You should consult with your Advisor very early in Michaelmas Term to arrange a topic and a supervisor for this first essay. In case of any doubt, please consult the MPhil Course Director. You will receive a mark for your first essay, and any feedback and guidance, which may seem appropriate at that stage, before Christmas.

The other essay must be submitted in the last week of Lent Term*. Students are strongly advised to meet up with their Lent Term essay supervisor(s) before they depart for the Christmas break.

Before starting work on an essay, you should discuss the suitability of your topic with your essay supervisor (who may or may not be your Advisor). You must submit your essay title to the Graduate Secretary at the beginning of the sixth week of Michaelmas Term for the first essay, and in the first week of Lent Term* for the second essay, for formal approval by the Degree Committee. Minor amendments to titles of second essays may be accepted until the beginning of the sixth week of term*.

When choosing titles for your essays and thesis, keep in mind that their main function is to enable the Degree Committee to select the most suitable examiners. Titles should be direct and specific enough to serve this purpose (without, e.g. misleading witticisms!), but not so specific that they tie your hands if you want to make some late change of focus. (For example: 'Leibniz' is too vague; 'Leibniz on contingency' is fine; 'Two meanings of "analytic" in Leibniz and how the distinction between them helps us to defend his views on contingency' is probably too specific.)

MPhil essays must:

- be in English;
- be typewritten in 12 point type face;
- have numbered pages; and
- properly acknowledge your sources of information in notes and a bibliography.

You should consult the Presentation Guidelines on the Faculty's website.

Essays must be submitted in duplicate, together with a cover sheet giving the word length and the name of your supervisor. These cover sheets will be sent to candidates by the Graduate Secretary. Please do not provide any special form of binding for essays – a stapled typescript is entirely adequate.

Thesis

Titles of MPhil theses need to be submitted for approval shortly before the beginning of Easter Term* (with minor amendments possible up to the third week of Easter Term*). Thesis topics should be chosen carefully, and after consulting your thesis supervisor. As in the case of essays, don't be too general or too specific, and choose a title that makes it easy for the Degree Committee to appoint the most suitable examiners.

MPhil candidates hoping to continue to a PhD will often choose essay and thesis topics with an eye to their proposed PhD research. But you should not let this tempt you to make your MPhil theses too ambitious: you should bear in mind that you have a strict word limit (12,000 words), and a strict submission deadline at the end of Easter Term*. You should also bear in mind that no significant part of an MPhil thesis may be incorporated as it stands in a PhD thesis, although it may of course form the basis for new work.

Two copies of your MPhil thesis should be submitted to the Graduate Secretary at the end of Easter Term*.

MPhil theses, like the essays, must:

- be in English;
- be typewritten in 12 point type face; and
- have numbered pages.

They must also:

- be in a durable binding, e.g. plastic cover binders, spiral, or slide binders. (You may get your thesis hard-bound if you really want to, but this is not required and is expensive.)
- have your name clearly marked on the front sheet;

- properly acknowledge your sources of information in notes and a bibliography.
- incorporate the Student Registry 'Declaration in the Preface' (see <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/students/studentregistry/exams/submission/mphil/>)
- be accompanied by a cover sheet supplied by the Faculty Graduate Secretary; and
- not be substantially the same as anything submitted for any other degree, diploma or similar qualification at any university or similar institution; but they may be submitted concurrently e.g. for publication, or to obtain a Research Fellowship or other employment.

Theses may be accompanied by two copies of any unconnected or unrelated work which the candidate has published, and which the examiners may take into consideration.

Assessment

Marking criteria

For the purpose of examining, the work done in the MPhil is divided into two components: the essays, taken as a group and the thesis. Award of the MPhil Degree requires that EITHER both components reach the Pass standard OR one component reaches the Marginal Fail standard but this is compensated for by the other component reaching the High Pass (or above) standard. These standards are defined below.

The overall mark for the MPhil Degree is a weighted average of the marks for both essays and the dissertation. The weights are in proportion to the word limits for each, according to the following formula:

Overall mark = (1/6 x mark for 4,000 word Michaelmas Term essay) + (2/6 x mark for 8,000 word Lent Term essay) + (3/6 x mark for 12,000 word Easter Term Dissertation)

The examiners will award a Distinction for the MPhil as a whole to any candidate who gains Distinction marks (i.e. 75 or better) in both components of the MPhil and to any candidate who gains a Distinction mark in one component and an overall average mark of at least 72 for both components taken together.

MPhil theses should be clearly written, should take account of previously published work on the topic, and should represent a contribution to learning. Marking criteria for various grades are listed below. Examples of MPhil essays which were awarded high marks, and all theses submitted in recent years which received a Pass grade or higher, are available for consultation on request at the Faculty Library

issue desk.

There are many ways to write a successful MPhil essay or thesis. A successful piece might, for instance, provide new arguments or develop original positions; it might synthesise existing ideas and arguments in interesting ways; or it might present new explorations, criticisms or analyses of extant ideas. It might be fairly wide-ranging, or narrowly focused.

Assessment will take into account the different ways in which work can be successful. Nevertheless, there are criteria of excellence that are relevant to all MPhil writing, and which will be used in determining its mark:

(i) Breadth and depth of research. The piece will need to give an adequate coverage of its philosophical topic, including the relevant existing philosophical literature and demonstrate an adequate understanding of that literature. Adequacy here will depend on the nature of the topic. For example, it may be appropriate for an essay that is focused exclusively on a few recent articles to contain more depth, but less breadth, than an essay that is focused on a wider philosophical tradition. Similarly, the understanding that is required when the focus is on a notoriously difficult historical text will be different to that required when it is on a set of straightforward recent articles. The appropriate breadth and depth of research will also take into account the word limit for the piece, so that expectations are higher for a thesis than a shorter essay.

(ii) Quality of argumentation. This depends on the precision and sophistication with which the central philosophical points made in the piece are understood, developed, and defended, the strength of the arguments or interpretations that are given, and the extent to which the piece considers and responds to pressing objections. The appropriate type of argumentation will depend on the type of essay; e.g. an essay that intervenes in a contemporary debate may require a different type of argumentation to that required in an essay in the history of philosophy.

(iii) Quality of philosophical writing: This depends on a piece's ability to convey its ideas effectively: it requires a thoughtful structure that accommodates both the complexities of the material and the needs of the reader. A well written piece will display clarity, concision and elegance.

(iv) Originality. Philosophical originality can be demonstrated in many ways: for example, by posing new questions; by exploring and developing new arguments (even if these do not ultimately work); by providing new criticisms of existing work; by structuring or synthesising existing work in new ways; by providing new and stimulating examples;

or by opening up new avenues of philosophical inquiry e.g. an unexplored issue in the history of philosophy.

Of course these criteria are not entirely distinct: it is hard to write well in the absence of a good argument, and originality in the absence of understanding is rarely a virtue. But they are sufficiently distinct that a piece will sometimes shine with respect to one or two of them, whilst not being so successful with respect to the others; conversely, a piece may fail in virtue of one of these criteria, while being adequate with respect to the others.

In light of these criteria, essays and theses will be given marks as follows:

0: Unacceptable Fail

Work fails to contain anything of philosophical merit that is relevant to the question.

1–49: Low Fail

Work in this category will contain something of value, but is clearly deficient in all of the first three categories: that is, in terms of the breadth and depth of research, and the quality of argumentation and writing.

50–56: Clear Fail

Work in this category will contain something of value, but is clearly inadequate for the MPhil on the balance of the first three criteria: in terms of the breadth and depth of research, and the quality of argumentation and writing. There will be substantial failings in at least two of them.

57–9 Marginal Fail

Work in this category will contain something of value, but is marginally inadequate for the MPhil on the balance of the first three criteria: in terms of the breadth and depth of research, and the quality of argumentation and writing. This may be the result of performance that is only just below the standard on all three, or because of a more substantial failing in one of them that is not sufficiently compensated by success with respect to the others.

60–64: Low Pass

Work in this category is adequate for the MPhil on the balance of the first three criteria: in terms of the breadth and depth of research, and the quality of argumentation and writing. An essay can be adequate in

terms of this overall balance, while being inadequate with respect to one of them.

65–69: Clear Pass

Work in this category is adequate for the MPhil on the balance of the first three criteria: in terms of the breadth and depth of research, and the quality of argumentation and writing. In addition, it will show some strength on at least one of them.

70–74 High Pass

Work in this category is more than adequate for the MPhil on the balance of the first three criteria: in terms of the breadth and depth of research, and the quality of argumentation and writing. In addition, it will show some strength on at least two of them, and may show some originality. It constitutes some evidence of potential for PhD work.

75–79: Distinction

Work in this category makes a contribution to research. It is strong in terms of the first three criteria, and will show some originality. It constitutes strong evidence of the potential for PhD work.

80 and above: High Distinction

Work in this category makes a significant contribution to research. It is outstanding in terms of all four criteria: the breadth and depth of research and understanding that is displayed, and the quality of argumentation and writing. It will exhibit significant originality. It will typically be of sufficient quality to form the basis of a publication. It constitutes very strong evidence of the potential for PhD work.

Oral Examination

MPhil candidates will have an oral examination ('viva'), on a date to be arranged with them by the Examiners in the week following submission of the MPhil theses. Candidates should therefore ensure that they are available for the whole viva period*, excluding the weekend. (The Examiners may in exceptional circumstances waive the oral examination, but candidates must not assume that they will.)

In cases where the marks given to the thesis by the two examiners prior to the viva are significantly different, one purpose of the viva is to help them to come, if possible, to an agreed mark. However, the main purpose of the viva is to test the depth of the candidate's understanding of the issues discussed in the thesis, and surrounding issues. The examiners may decide to move their mark up or down, in

the light of the viva. For example, the candidate may persuade them during the viva that objections to the argument of the thesis they had formulated while reading it are not valid; in such a case they may move their marks up. Or the candidate may show an ignorance of relevant literature and a failure to respond to objections which persuades the examiners that a principle of charity which they had applied in reaching their marks was not warranted; in such a case they may move their marks down. Only in exceptional circumstances, however, should their post-viva agreed mark be more than 5 marks outside the range of their pre-viva marks. The viva will usually concentrate on the thesis, but it may also include questions on the general area of philosophy in which it falls.

MPhil candidates will be told the result of their examination as soon as possible after their Examiners' reports have been considered by the Degree Committee at its meeting in late June/early July*.

The final congregation (graduation ceremony) of the academic year is usually on the third Friday or Saturday in July*. Those hoping to graduate in July should contact the Praelector of their College in early June to check the ceremony date for their college and reserve a place.

Intermission / Examination Allowances

If your work is hindered or interrupted by medical, financial or other problems you should discuss your options with the MPhil Course Director and the Graduate Tutor in your college. Depending on the circumstances of your difficulties, it may be appropriate for you to request an intermission; or, if the problem occurs during an examination period, an examination allowance. More information on Intermission can be found here:

<http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/graduate-study/your-student-status/intermission>

More information on examination allowances can be found here:

<http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/graduate-exam-information/after-examination/examination-allowances-graduate>

We understand that sometimes it might be difficult to talk about personal problems, but the staff in the Faculty are here to help, and are positive in finding solutions to help you continue your studies. Please feel free to also consult the Graduate Secretary if you would like to discuss these options at any point in your studies.

Plagiarism

The Faculty of Philosophy takes plagiarism very seriously. The Faculty's plagiarism policy can be found here:

<http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/ugrads-exam-folder/Plagiarism/view>

The University's statement on plagiarism can be found at:

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/plagiarism/students/statement.html>

MPhil students will be asked to sign a Plagiarism Declaration that should be submitted with their first assignment. Students should be aware that the University has the right to use text-matching software to verify the originality of work submitted at any time during the MPhil course. It is the Faculty's policy to routinely check work submitted for plagiarism.

Questionnaires

We ask MPhil students to provide their feedback at regular intervals throughout the MPhil course, in the form of a questionnaire sent from the Graduate Office. Usually there is one questionnaire sent per term. Feedback from students is important in helping us to improve the course, and we ask that all students complete all questionnaires.

PhD and MLitt Degrees

Steps towards registration

[1] During the MPhil year

MPhil students may apply to continue as PhD candidates. If you are interested in doing so, you should discuss this with your Advisor early in Michaelmas Term, and also notify the Graduate Secretary, to ensure that you don't miss the relevant application and funding deadlines. You will need to complete an online GRADSAF (Graduate Application and Scholarship Form), similar to the one you completed in applying for the MPhil. It is available from the Graduate Admissions website:

<http://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/portal/continuer>

The deadline will be in early December* or Mid-October if you are a student from the US who wishes to apply for Gates funding. The application requires a research proposal of 500 words, two references, and two writing samples. One of these writing samples should be something produced on the MPhil course (typically a version of your first essay), while the other maybe one of the samples you submitted in applying for the MPhil. Please discuss your research proposal with your potential PhD supervisor before submitting it, and talk to your Advisor about the whole application.

Please note that admission to the PhD is not an automatic consequence of successful completion of the MPhil. The Faculty receives many more applications for the PhD than it is able to accept, and can admit only a minority of qualified candidates. The Degree Committee makes a judgement on each individual case, taking into consideration all the evidence it has available about the suitability of the candidate to complete a dissertation on the proposed topic. Ordinarily, several conditions need to be satisfied before the Degree Committee will recommend that an MPhil candidate proceed to work for the PhD. These are necessary but not sufficient conditions:

(i) The minimum mark required in the MPhil for candidates wishing to proceed to the PhD is 63 in the essay component and 65 in the thesis. Typically, however, a student proceeding to the PhD will have marks for the essays and thesis of 70 or better; many will have a Distinction for the MPhil as a whole. (If you are offered a PhD place, it may be conditional, requiring that you achieve a specified mark in the MPhil as a whole.)

(ii) In addition to satisfactory marks in the MPhil a candidate needs to show an ability to generate and to develop original ideas. (The MPhil marking criteria indicate that it is possible to obtain quite good marks without showing any substantial originality.)

(iii) A candidate who is to be accepted for the PhD needs to produce an acceptable research proposal.

(iv) The Faculty needs to be confident that it can provide proper supervision for the candidate's proposed research.

If you are an MPhil candidate who is then accepted into the PhD programme, and if your PhD research is suitably related to your MPhil work, you will usually be allowed to count some or all of your three MPhil terms towards the residency requirements of the PhD, if you are ready to submit your thesis before the minimum terms of study have elapsed. This means that you may submit a PhD thesis after only six more terms, if you wish.

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/students/studentregistry/exams/submission/phd/bestpractice.html#another>

[2] During the first year of the PhD

All students accepted for the PhD are on probation for their first year. In your third term of research, the Degree Committee will decide whether to register you as a candidate for the PhD (the registration then being backdated to your date of admission). You will have a registration interview with two Faculty assessors, other than your Supervisor. In some (rare) cases, your assessors may decide that you should be registered for the MLitt degree, instead of the PhD, at this stage. This registration interview cannot be delayed without good cause (e.g., illness). With your supervisors' help, you start working out your plan of research, and the topic or topics of your written work, as soon as possible after you arrive.

Before registering you as a PhD candidate the Degree Committee must be satisfied (i) that you have a suitable plan of work and (ii) that you have begun to write about some part of it, in a sustained way, at a standard likely to get you the degree in a reasonable time. You are therefore required to email the following documents to your two assessors and the Graduate Secretary by the last day of Lent full term*:

- a statement (1,000 words) of your plan of research.
- a piece of recent written work (6,000-10,000 words) on some topic within this plan; and
- an account of research already completed (1,000 words)

These submissions must be properly written up: rough drafts are not acceptable. The registration interview will take place shortly after the end of Lent Term, with your two assessors who will have read the submitted documents. The work will be marked according to the marking scheme used in the MPhil examination and the requirements

for registration are as outlined above.

Prospective PhD candidates whose work does not show sufficient progress will be given the opportunity to submit an improved set of work by the last day of Easter full term*. A further interview will then take place with the two Faculty members writing independent reports for the Degree Committee in late June/early July*.

The Degree Committee will recommend that prospective PhD candidates whose resubmitted work is still deemed to be unsatisfactory be either removed from the Register of Graduate Students or, less severely, registered only as MLitt candidates. In the latter case they may later be re-registered as PhD candidates (with registration again backdated to the date of admission) if they submit sufficiently improved work at the same time in their second year (i.e. at their fifth term review).

The Degree Committee will recommend that prospective MLitt candidates whose resubmitted work is still deemed to be unsatisfactory be removed from the Register of Graduate Students.

After registration

Timetable

Research students are expected to be in residence in Cambridge pursuing their research between terms, except during periods of holiday agreed with their supervisor, not normally exceeding 8 weeks in a 12 month period.

PhD candidates may submit their theses after nine terms (three years) of research, and MLitt candidates after six terms (two years). An MPhil year may count, according to the conditions described on page 16. The Student Registry and the Degree Committee expect a thesis to be a piece of work which can be produced by a capable, well-qualified and diligent research student, properly supervised and supported, within those times. It is very important that you design your project with these time-limits firmly in view. It is good both for morale and for your CV to submit your thesis within the stated times – and most PhD funding runs out after three years.

The Student Registry and the Degree Committee recognise, however, that original research is liable to unforeseen difficulties and delays, so all PhD students are allowed 4 years in which to complete and submit their thesis (3 years for the MLitt). Unless there are extenuating circumstances, candidates who do not submit by these final deadlines will be removed from the Register until such time as they are ready to submit.

Intermission

If your work is hindered or interrupted by medical, financial or other problems you may apply for leave to intermit your research for one or more terms. Terms intermitted do not count towards the above deadlines. Consult your Supervisor and the Graduate Secretary if you would like to discuss this option at any point in your studies.

Working away from Cambridge

It is possible to apply for leave to work away from Cambridge for a maximum of 3 terms at a time. Some PhD students find this is useful if they wish to work with a supervisor who is external to the University of Cambridge for some of their PhD study. More information on the process of how to apply for leave to work away can be found here:

<http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/graduate-study/your-student-status/work-away-cambridge>

To support students working away from Cambridge, it is recommended that students apply to the University for free travel insurance: <https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/insurance/travel/students/bgs/index.html>

The Faculty has a small allocation of funding for fieldwork, that students can apply for via the Graduate Office. As part of this application process, students will also be required to complete a risk assessment: <https://www.safety.admin.cam.ac.uk/risk-assessment>

Monitoring progress

Your supervisor is required to report termly to the Student Registry and the Degree Committee on your progress. In addition, there are the following reviews:

Fifth Term Review. This review takes place in the fifth term for a student who is registered for the PhD or MLitt. For this review you need to email the following documents to your supervisor, shadow supervisor, and Graduate Secretary by the last day of Lent full term*:

- a statement (1,000 words) of your plan of research.
- a piece of recent written work (6,000-10,000 words) on some topic within this plan; and
- an account of research you have already completed (1,000 words)

These submissions must be properly written up: rough drafts are not acceptable. The review will take place shortly after the end

of Lent Term, normally with the supervisor and shadow supervisor, who will report in writing to the first meeting of the Degree Committee in the Easter Term.

In the unlikely event that your work does not show sufficient progress you will be given the opportunity to submit an improved set of work by last day of Easter full term*. A further interview will then take place with the supervisor and shadow supervisor writing independent reports for the Degree Committee in late June/early July*.

Seventh Term Review. This review takes place in the seventh term for a student who is registered for the PhD. For this review you are required to email the same three documents as are described above, again demonstrating ongoing progress, to your supervisor and shadow supervisor by the last day of Michaelmas full term*.

The review will take place shortly after the end of Michaelmas Term, normally with the supervisor and shadow supervisor, who will report in writing to the first meeting of the Degree Committee in the Easter Lent Term.

If the supervisor and shadow supervisor are not happy with a student's progress they may recommend to the Degree Committee that a student's registration be changed from PhD to MLitt. They may also recommend that candidates who are not making satisfactory progress towards completing their theses be removed from the Student Registry's Register of Graduate Students. The student will be fully consulted before any such recommendation is made. Note also that students who have been removed from the Student Registry's Register for this reason (or because they have failed to submit on time), but who manage to complete their theses on their own, may apply to be reinstated on the Register in order to submit their theses for examination.

Although this monitoring may sound onerous, experience shows that most often the reviews function as useful markers of progress, and as good opportunities to take stock and to talk about useful ways forward, in a forum slightly different from that of a normal supervision.

Completion of theses

Length

PhD (MLitt) theses in philosophy must be not less than 50,000 (30,000) and not more than 80,000 (60,000) words, including appendices and references. Permission to submit longer or shorter theses must be sought in advance from the Degree Committee (but is unlikely to be granted).

Standard

The University's regulations require that to qualify for the award of the PhD degree, a thesis has to be in English (apart from quotations and technical formulae), to be clearly written, to take due account of previously published work on the subject, and to represent a significant contribution to learning (for example through the discovery of new knowledge, the connection of previously unrelated facts, the development of new theory, or the revision of older views). The Degree Committee of Philosophy, in its advice to examiners, adds as an informal gloss on this that an acceptable thesis should contain some material of sufficient originality to merit publication and this material should be adequate to form the basis of, for example, at least two articles (together amounting to 15,000 - 20,000 words) or of a short monograph.

To qualify for the award of the MLitt degree, a thesis must be clearly written, take due account of previously published work on the subject, and represent a useful contribution to learning.

Candidates may get an idea of the standards expected of PhD and MLitt theses in philosophy by reading the copies of successful theses deposited in the University Library.

Examination

The detailed procedure for submitting PhD and MLitt theses for examination, which candidates should follow carefully, is at:

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/students/studentregistry/exams/submission/phd/preparing.html>

In what follows only a few salient points are picked out.

Candidates should apply for the appointment of examiners, through the Philosophy Graduate Secretary, when—but only when—their theses are nearly complete. (In particular, if they are going to submit their theses during the Long Vacation they should apply in good time for the late June/early July meeting of the Degree Committee*.) The application, which can be made by e-mail to the Graduate Secretary, should include the exact title of the thesis, the anticipated date of submission, and a one page summary of the thesis, to guide the Degree Committee in appointing suitable examiners.

Theses are examined independently by two examiners, one of whom will normally be from outside Cambridge. Candidates are required to submit two copies of their theses, suitably typed and hard bound, one for each examiner. As of 1st October 2017, students are also required to submit an electronic copy of their PhD thesis to the University's repository, Apollo. Students can choose to make their thesis open

access or restrict access to the thesis for 6-month periods up to a total period of 2 years, after which the thesis will be made available unless there are new circumstances such as an agreement with a publisher that requires further restrictions. The upload of the thesis will be done through an upload form at: <https://upload.repository.cam.ac.uk> Once the award of the degree is approved, they should submit one hard bound copy to be deposited in the University Library. More information on the submission of electronic these can be found on the Office of Scholarly Communication website:

<http://osc.cam.ac.uk/theses>

It is important that thesis examiners actually receive theses when they expect to do so; otherwise their other commitments may seriously delay the examination. In giving submission dates, candidates should therefore take care to be realistic, and not underestimate the time it takes to complete writing up, make final corrections, check references and proofs, and get their theses printed and bound.

Examiners write independent reports on theses for the Degree Committee and the Student Registry, making recommendations, which may or may not be conditional on the results of the oral examination. Because it often takes a considerable time for examiners to get round to, and to complete, this assessment, candidates must expect to wait (or return) for their oral examination up to two months or even longer after submitting their theses. Examiners may allow candidates who have had to return, e.g., to America or Australasia, the option of answering written questions in lieu of an oral examination, or conducting the oral examination by video conference; but they are under no obligation to do so, and candidates must not assume that they will.

An examiner who thinks that a PhD or MLitt thesis fails to reach the required standard, but could do so with suitable revision, may recommend allowing the candidate to submit a revised thesis. This can only happen once; a thesis which has already been resubmitted once cannot be submitted again.

An examiner who thinks that a PhD thesis fails to reach the standard required for that degree, but does reach the standard required for the MLitt, may recommend approving the candidate for that degree. A PhD examiner who thinks both of the above may recommend giving the candidate the alternative of submitting a revised thesis or of taking the MLitt (but not both).

If the examiners' recommendations agree, the Degree Committee and the Student Registry will normally accept them, unless the examination has been improperly conducted in some way, in which case new examiners may have to be appointed. If the original examiners' recommendations disagree, the Degree Committee may resolve the

disagreement by appointing a third examiner.

Plagiarism

The University's statement on plagiarism can be found at:

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/plagiarism/students/statement.html>

Questionnaires

We ask PhD & MLitt students to provide their feedback at regular intervals throughout their course, in the form of a questionnaire sent from the Graduate Office. Usually there is one questionnaire sent at the time of each review. Feedback from students is important in helping us to improve the course, and we ask that all students complete all questionnaires.

Supervision

Supervisors

Graduate students in the Faculty organise and prepare their work for assessment with the help of supervisors, who are appointed by the Degree Committee. Students are expected on most occasions to produce written work for supervisors to comment on and not to meet only for general discussion. Students themselves are responsible for making sure that they meet their supervisor regularly. They should not expect to be chased if they do not come forward with work, but they should feel free to contact their supervisor for help or advice at any time.

Students' interests and research topics often change as they progress and this may make it advisable for them to change their supervisors or to work away from Cambridge for a time. This is a perfectly normal situation and candidates should not hesitate to ask for a new supervisor if they need one. The best way is usually to discuss and agree the change informally with both present and prospective supervisors, before putting the request formally to the Director of Graduate Studies (MPhil Course Director in the case of MPhil students). If candidates need independent advice about making such a change they should consult the Director of Graduate Studies or other members of the Degree Committee.

Graduate students should take the initiative in discussing their work with each other, in attending (and reading papers to) seminars and in consulting members of the Faculty other than their supervisors.

MPhil candidates

MPhil candidates have an Advisor, who is responsible for helping the student choose essay and thesis topics, as well as a supervisor for each of their three pieces of written work. In most cases the Advisor will be the supervisor for at least one piece of work, but MPhil students are encouraged to take the opportunity to work with several supervisors. MPhil students should meet with their essay or thesis supervisors roughly fortnightly during Full Term, and with their Advisor as necessary.

PhD/MLitt candidates

PhD/MLitt candidates have a principal Supervisor with whom they are expected to do most of their work; they also have a shadow Supervisor who will be able to give them additional advice and whom they should feel free to consult. Along with the principal Supervisor, the shadow Supervisor will take part in the various reviews of the

candidate's work. Students working for the PhD or MLitt should meet their Supervisors at least once a month during Full Term.

Undergraduate supervising

Much supervising of Philosophy undergraduates is done by University Lecturers and College Fellows, but graduate students who are registered for the PhD may offer to undertake supervisions, i.e. small group teaching of undergraduates, after their first year. Undergraduate supervision is arranged by College Directors of Studies in Philosophy, and paid for by the Colleges at standard, piecework rates (currently around £28 per hour). Students may undertake up to six hours per week for the twenty teaching weeks of the year.

Graduate students who wish to do some undergraduate supervising should discuss the possibility with their own supervisors and attend the training sessions that are provided by the Faculty. The Faculty Office keeps a register of research students who would like to supervise, which is circulated to Directors of Studies. The Faculty provides the Teaching and Transferable Skills course, which includes a session on supervising at the beginning of Michaelmas, for new supervisors in Philosophy. [The Centre for Personal and Professional Development](#) also offers courses on supervising undergraduates. Help with supervision topics, and suggested reading for them, may be obtained from experienced undergraduate supervisors and from the Secretary of the Faculty Board. The Faculty also produces a Guide to College Supervisions, which is circulated to Directors of Studies and all graduates. Further copies can be obtained from the Faculty Office.

Graduate students also have the opportunity to lead discussion groups for first and second year students and to assist in the running of first year logic classes. Those who are near completing their PhD may be invited by the Faculty to give a short course of lectures on the subject of their research. All of these forms of teaching provide excellent experience and useful entries on CVs; and all are paid. In addition, the Faculty runs a student-led mentoring scheme.

Lectures, Seminars and Meetings

The Faculty uses the University's central online timetabling system, available at:

www.timetable.cam.ac.uk

This system allows students to select the courses they want to attend and create their own calendar-based timetables. Please familiarise yourself with this system as soon as possible.

Lecture list

All graduate students, and especially MPhil candidates, are expected to take part in relevant graduate seminars listed by the Faculty Board of Philosophy.

Graduate students are also encouraged to attend undergraduate lectures, especially those listed for Part II of the Philosophy Tripos, as well as graduate seminars listed by Classics, Divinity, English, History, History and Philosophy of Science (listed under Natural Sciences Part II [General]) and Politics, Psychology, Sociology and International Studies. Early in Michaelmas Term, MPhil students should discuss, with their Advisor, which lectures it would be appropriate to attend.

Lectures and seminars start on the first Thursday of each Full Term, and run for eight weeks in the Michaelmas and Lent Terms, and for four weeks in the Easter Term. Most Philosophy lectures and seminars are given at Sidgwick Avenue, the exact location being shown on the day on the board in front of the Lecture Block.

Seminars

To encourage MPhil students to discuss their work with each other, and to learn essential presentation and discussion skills, the Faculty runs a weekly seminar for MPhil students only. All MPhil students are required to attend this seminar every week.

Graduate students are strongly advised to take part in other graduate seminars, details of which are given in the Lecture List or circulated by e-mail. They are also encouraged to keep up the long-standing practice of running seminars themselves on special topics. Arrangements for these may be made through the Faculty Office.

Details of other regular seminars appear in the Lecture List whilst details of occasional seminars are circulated by e-mail.

Other Meetings

Graduate students are strongly encouraged to join the Cambridge University *Moral Sciences Club*, which meets weekly in Full Term to discuss papers, typically given by visiting philosophers. Similar meetings are organised in other Faculties (e.g. the 'D' Society for the philosophy of religion). There are also informal discussion groups such as the *Amoral Sciences Club*. Details of all these meetings are circulated by e-mail on the CamPhilEvents mailing list: go to <http://bit.ly/CamPhilEvents> and make sure to sign up.

There are also a number of philosophy meetings in London which are open to graduate students and which can be attended quite easily from Cambridge. Notable here are meetings of the *Aristotelian Society*, for which a special student membership rate is available.

It is a very good idea indeed for students to go to such events. They increase your exposure to philosophy; they increase your understanding of its practice; they interrupt the relatively lonely life of writing in private; and they increase your profile as you gain confidence to raise questions and take part in discussion. All these are important elements in launching a career. And quite apart from that, they are often great fun.

Faculty Resources and Support for Students

Library system

At Cambridge you have access to one of the world's leading University library systems, with a rich collection of printed and online materials, a wide range of services and knowledgeable staff to assist you.

There are more than 100 libraries across the University. Information about each library can be found here:

http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/libraries_directory/libraries_directory.cgi

Your University card gives you membership of nearly all the libraries in the University (the main exception being College libraries). University libraries also provide an extensive range of e-journals, databases and e-books across all subject areas.

The [Casimir Lewy Library](#) is a specialist Faculty library supporting the research and learning of philosophy and related subjects. Please see the Library website for information and links to resources for philosophy: It also provides public workstations, printing, scanning and photocopying facilities.

The Graduate Office and the Faculty Office

Both offices are situated near the entrance to the Philosophy Faculty suite on the third floor of the Raised Faculty Building. The Graduate Office is the administrative base for matters concerning our graduate students, whilst the Faculty Office takes care of undergraduate matters. Both are 'manned' by friendly administrative staff, who will do their best to assist with a wide range of needs and queries. Do ask if you have a problem.

E-mail and noticeboards

You will be issued with a Cambridge e-mail address shortly after your arrival. Most correspondence is conducted electronically and you will need to log-on regularly to keep abreast of Faculty life. The Faculty has an e-mail list for the use of its graduate students and research fellows, whereby students may inform each other of events in the philosophy world.

Some notices and much Faculty business is posted on the noticeboards outside the Faculty Office, whilst in the Graduate Study Centre there is a noticeboard where information of particular interest to graduate students is displayed.

The Graduate Study Centre

The Philosophy Graduate Study Centre provides a dedicated working space within the Faculty for the use of our graduate students to promote contact among students and their teachers and to facilitate the exchange of ideas. It includes an open-plan working area with full computing facilities, a common room and seminar room. The Study Centre also provides accommodation for visiting scholars, who come to Cambridge from all over the world.

Graduate training

The Faculty has developed a comprehensive training programme for its graduates, which runs alongside courses and advice offered by the School of Arts and Humanities, the Centre for Personal and Professional Development and the Careers Service. An Induction Meeting introduces new graduate students to each other, to the administration of the Faculty and to the philosophical opportunities in Cambridge. Please consult the Faculty's Graduate Training brochure for details of the various small group sessions that are organised to introduce the Library and computing facilities. Incoming graduate students should make a point of attending the 'Research tools in Philosophy' presentation at the beginning of Michaelmas Term*.

Two workshops are run for MPhil students. The first, which takes place early in Michaelmas term* discusses time-management, the effective generation and development of ideas and arguments, the process of writing and presenting MPhil essays, and bibliography. The second discusses all aspects of planning and giving presentations, ranging from the design of presentation aids to speaking on the day. Please see Graduate Calendar for the exact date.

PhD students contribute significantly to our teaching programme, both through supervision of undergraduates, organised through individual Colleges, and through short lecture courses, which they are invited to offer to undergraduates, usually in their last year of research. A series of tailor-made workshops is devoted to teaching and transferable skills. Topics discussed include effective small group teaching and supervising, presentation skills, dealing with different kinds of learning strategies, evaluating one's practice as a teacher and supporting students with special needs. The University's Centre for Personal and Professional Development also runs courses on supervising and lecturing.

Teaching and research are not independent activities. Effective teaching requires clear and illuminating presentation of complex ideas, which is also important for excellent research, and for publication. Students aiming for an academic career will need to publish their research, if not before they finish their PhD then very soon after. General advice on publishing is available from the Director of

Graduate Studies. A section in the Faculty Library is dedicated to all these aspects of a graduate's training. To complement this the School of Arts and Humanities runs a series of workshops on writing and publishing skills, plus annual workshops enabling PhD students to take stock at the beginning of each year.

The University Careers Service is on hand to give advice and information about careers throughout a graduate student's time at Cambridge and afterwards. Notes on the construction of CVs, application forms and letters are available for consultation in the Graduate Office, along with sample CVs from recent and current Research Fellows. The Faculty can also provide advice on career prospects and can organise practice presentations and interviews at the relevant times.

Language learning

The University Language Centre offers weekly lessons, specifically geared to philosophers, in German and French as well as general instruction in other languages. The Classics Faculty provides courses in Greek:

<http://www.langcen.cam.ac.uk/lc/culp/culp-specialist-courses.html>

Computing facilities

Naturally the first stop for computing facilities will be the Graduate Study Centre. Printer credit for the computers in the Centre is allocated to students by the Faculty at the start of term, but should you run out of credit additional credit can be purchased online. Most Colleges provide word processing facilities for their students; and all graduate students may use the facilities of the University Computing Service.

Funding

Scheme for refund of conference expenses

There are limited funds available to the Faculty to enable graduate students to attend conferences.

Details of further conference funding opportunities can be found by clicking on the 'Research Funding Opportunities' tab on the Philosophy Research web page (Raven password required).

Financial support, fees and expenses

For general information about funding, please consult the Faculty's Graduate Studies Prospectus, available on the Faculty website.

Matthew Buncombe Prize

This prize was established in 1994 by relatives and friends of Dr Matthew Buncombe (1958-93), who studied philosophy at Trinity College, received his PhD in 1988 and subsequently taught at Keele and Oxford Universities. The prize, of about £300, will be awarded every year for the best overall performance in the MPhil examination. It may be divided between two candidates and will not be awarded if there is no candidate of sufficient calibre.

Gregg Bury Prize

This may be awarded for a dissertation on a subject in the Philosophy of Religion. The value is £300.

Further grants and awards from colleges

Many colleges offer bursaries and scholarships for sums of several hundred pounds per annum, and also book grants, help in attending conferences and the like. Conditions of eligibility and application procedures vary widely.

Postdoctoral research fellowships

Every year the British Academy and various Cambridge and Oxford Colleges advertise Research Fellowships in a range of subjects, including philosophy, for which PhD students may apply if they have completed or nearly completed their theses and wish to undertake postdoctoral research. Most of these Research Fellowships are advertised in the Reporter:

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/>

For details of other post-doctoral funding opportunities, please see 'Research Funding opportunities' on the Philosophy Research webpage.