

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

From: The MPhil Course Director, Dr Sarah Fine

Philosophy MPhil – 2022–23

ESSAYS AND DISSERTATION

These notes should be read in conjunction with the Essay and Dissertation guidance on the MPhil Course Information page <https://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/postgraduates/mphil>

MPhil candidates are examined on an 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 dissertation of not more than 12,000 words (including footnotes and appendices but excluding bibliography), all on topics which must first be approved by the Degree Committee.

i) Essays

The essays 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 be in the same area. However, the Degree Committee may decide to grant candidates specific permission to submit one essay in an area not listed above, provided it is in Philosophy.

ii) Dissertation

The topics of all MPhil dissertations must be in Philosophy, and be such that suitable Supervisors and Examiners are available; but they need not fall within the areas listed above. They may be related to candidates' essay topics, but the dissertation must not reproduce or paraphrase any significant part of either of the essays.

Procedural notes

Please note the following carefully (**and keep this letter for future reference**):

1. You must submit your proposed first essay title, via email, to the MPhil Course Director C/o Anna Simpson, Postgraduate Secretary (als58@cam.ac.uk), for approval by **noon on Friday 11th November 2022. No amendments can be granted to the title of your first essay.**

You must submit your proposed second essay title, via email, to the MPhil Course Director C/o Anna Simpson, Postgraduate Secretary (als58@cam.ac.uk), for approval **by noon on Friday 20th January 2022. The deadline for any amendments to this title is noon on Friday 24th February.**

You must submit your proposed dissertation title, via email, to the MPhil Course Director C/o **Anna Simpson, Postgraduate Secretary** (als58@cam.ac.uk), for approval **by noon on Monday 10th April 2022. The deadline for any amendments to this title is noon on Monday 8th May.**

Once the MPhil Course Director has approved your title, you will receive an email from the Postgraduate Secretary confirming that your title has been approved. If, however, the MPhil Course Director cannot approve your title, for example because there is some ambiguity, you will also receive communication from the Postgraduate Secretary asking you to reconsider and resubmit an amended title or titles.

2. Your dissertation must be not more than 12,000 words, including footnotes and appendices but excluding bibliography. Your first MPhil essay must be not more than 4000 words, including footnotes and appendices but excluding bibliography, and your second MPhil essay must be not more than 8000 words, including footnotes and appendices but excluding bibliography. Work which is too long may not be read in full by the Examiners. Please note that the word limit for both essays and dissertation will be strictly applied. Examiners may decline to read any material in excess of it. For both essays and the dissertation candidates are required to include a statement of the word length at the end of their piece of submitted work. The Postgraduate Secretary will verify the word count of essays and dissertations once they have been submitted via Moodle.

3. There is no formal limit on the amount of supervision a student may have on a dissertation or MPhil essays, the decision on how much to provide resting with supervisors. However, a typical, and reasonable, supervising schedule would be as follows:
 - i) a brief initial meeting with the supervisor for orientation, general advice, guidance on reading;
 - ii) two further supervisions for each essay (comments on and discussion of a first draft, with advice for possible improvements; and further comments on a revised draft, for each);
 - iii) three or four further supervisions for a dissertation.

The student would then submit the final version without further supervision.

Your work must be typed. Information on presentation of your essays or dissertation can be found here: <https://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/system/files/documents/grad-presentation-guide.pdf>

4. Your work **must** acknowledge all sources of information, including unpublished ideas and suggestions, e.g. from your supervisor.

5. For your two MPhil essays, **your name should not be referred to at all in the text of your essay**. This is to allow for anonymous marking. Please also save your essays just using the title of your essay (again no reference to your names). For your dissertation, it is usual for your examiners to conduct a viva with you, so marking will not be anonymous. Your name can therefore be included within the title

page of your dissertation. In the event of any change to the usual examining arrangements for dissertations, you will be informed of these changes in good time.

6. You must submit an electronic copy of your essays/dissertation via the University's Learning Platform, Moodle. This electronic copy will be submitted to Turnitin, a plagiarism detection system, via Moodle. Further instructions about electronic submission via Moodle will be sent to you by the Postgraduate Secretary.

7. You must submit an electronic copy of your first essay, (as a PDF/Word docx document), via Moodle, **by:**

FRIDAY 2nd DECEMBER 2022, 9am

You must submit an electronic copy of your second essay, (as a PDF/Word docx document), via Moodle, **by:**

FRIDAY 17th MARCH 2023, 9am

You must submit an electronic copy of your dissertation, (as a PDF/Word docx document), via Moodle, **by:**

MONDAY 19th JUNE 2023, 9am

When submitting your **dissertation**, please follow the instructions found here: <https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/graduate-exam-information/submitting-and-examination/mphilres> in regards to the text for your title page, and the declaration to be included.

Please also note that submission deadlines for essays and dissertation 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. If you have any concerns about meeting the stated deadlines, please contact the Postgraduate Secretary as soon as possible.**

9. In exceptional circumstances the Faculty recognises that it may be necessary for a student to change a title after the deadline for submission of essay titles/dissertation title. An application for a late change **must** be made to the Postgraduate Secretary for approval by the MPhil Course Director, giving reasons, and must be supported by your essay/dissertation supervisor.

10. **Important Notes**

1. It should be stressed that approval of titles is not a pure formality. Students who start work on their essays/dissertation before the titles have been approved do so entirely at their own risk. If in doubt, consult the MPhil Course Director (via the Postgraduate Secretary) early about the suitability of titles.

2. It is sometimes possible to arrange an extension to the submission deadline for either your essays, or dissertation, usually due to unforeseen medical circumstances. Further information about this possibility can be found here: <https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/graduate-study/your-student-status/extending-your-end-registration-date#Extensions%20for%20students%20on%20a%20one%20or%20two%20year%20programme>:

Short extensions, usually of up to two weeks, and applied for due to unforeseen medical circumstances, can be considered by the Faculty. Please contact the postgraduate secretary if you feel this applies to you.

Students with a known disability who require an extension to their essay or dissertation deadlines may be granted one if it is requested. Students should discuss what accommodations they require with the MPhil Course Director. Ordinarily, an extension will require that the student's Student Support Document from the [Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre](#) makes a recommendation to that effect. The Course Director may also seek further medical evidence. Extensions of up to two weeks can be granted by the Course Director. Requests for longer extensions will be considered by Degree Committee in light of the student's needs and the submitted medical evidence. The length of extensions may be constrained by the dates on which marks have to be approved. Students will be informed if an extension may lead to a delay in the date of their graduation

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