

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

From the Chair of Examiners for Part II: Prof Michael Potter MT 2020, Dr Arif Ahmed LT and ET 2021

Philosophy Tripos Part II – 2021

DISSERTATION AND EXTENDED ESSAYS – INFORMATION SHEET

The options

Every student in Part II is examined on *five* "units of assessment", and these must cover at least *four* different subject areas.

The default is for students to take four "syllabus papers" (i.e. four papers selected from Papers 1 to 11 inclusive and the papers borrowed from other Faculties) to be examined by traditional unseen examinations, plus Paper 12, the General Paper, another unseen examination.

However, *up to two* of these units of assessment can be replaced by assessed work. Students may:

- A) Submit two Extended Essays, in lieu of one syllabus paper, by the end of Lent Term; or
- B) Submit one longer Dissertation, in lieu of sitting the General Paper (Paper 12), by the second Friday of the Easter Term; or
- C) Do both A) and B).

These three options are set out in more detail below.

- A. *Replace a syllabus paper with Extended Essays.* As in Part IB, you can opt to be examined on the syllabus of one of the syllabus papers by offering two essays in lieu of an unseen examination. So, if you take option A you will sit three syllabus papers from Papers 1 to 11 and the borrowed papers from the Classical Tripos, and also sit Paper 12, each by a traditional unseen examination. And you must also nominate a fourth syllabus paper and submit two essays *on topics from two substantially different parts of the existing syllabus of the chosen paper*. In subsequently sitting Paper 12, you cannot answer on a subject that significantly overlaps with that of either of your submitted essays.
- B. *Replace the General paper with a Dissertation.* You can opt not to take the general paper, Paper 12, but instead write a dissertation. So if you take option B you will sit four syllabus papers, each by a traditional three hour examination. Since that already meets the "four broad areas of philosophy" requirement, *your dissertation can be on any philosophical topic at all*, whether or not it is on the syllabus of any of Papers 1 to 11 or the borrowed papers. There are only two constraints. First, if you are e.g. taking the political philosophy paper and write a dissertation on political philosophy, you are barred from answering an examination question that substantially overlaps with the topic of your dissertation (no recycling of the same material!). Second, if your proposed dissertation topic is rather esoteric, your Director of Studies will need to check with the Chair of Examiners that the dissertation can indeed be supervised and examined.

- C. *Replace a syllabus paper with two Extended Essays AND replace the General Paper (Paper 12) with a Dissertation.* If you wish to take this option the rules in A and B above apply for your extended essays and your dissertation. There must also be no overlap between your extended essays and your dissertation. On this option 40% of your Part II result will be comprised of coursework.

Procedural notes

If you intend to do a dissertation or submitted essays, please note the following carefully:

1. You must submit your proposed dissertation title or essay titles, on the special form provided by the Faculty Office, to the Chair of Examiners, c/o Clare Dickinson, by email to: philsec@hermes.cam.ac.uk for approval by **12 noon on Friday 20 November 2020, i.e. two weeks before the end of Michaelmas Full Term**, together with a statement of what papers you intend to offer. If you intend to submit extended essays, your application must also state which paper you intend the essays to replace. Your two essays must cover substantially different parts of the syllabus of the paper concerned. If a paper lists four or more main topics, then the two titles must come from different main topics. If a paper lists three or fewer topics, then the titles, can, in principle, come from the same topic. In this case, the titles must (at least) come from different sub-topics. (Meeting this constraint is not, however, immediately sufficient for approval; decisions on acceptability will be made on a case-by-case basis.)

Once the Chair of Examiners has approved your title(s), you will receive an email from the Faculty Office confirming that your title(s) has/have been approved. If, however, the Chair of Examiners cannot approve your title(s), for example because there is some ambiguity, you will also receive communication from the Faculty Office asking you to reconsider and resubmit an amended title or titles. Either way, all titles **MUST** be approved before the end of Michaelmas Full Term, i.e. **Friday 4 December 2020**.

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

2. Your dissertation must be not more than 8000 words, nor (without the permission of the Chair of Examiners) less than 6000 words, including footnotes and appendices but excluding bibliography. Your extended essays must each be not less than 3000 and not more than 4000 words, including footnotes and appendices but excluding bibliography, on a topic falling clearly within the syllabus of the subject paper concerned. Work which is too long may not be read in full by the Examiners.

3. There is no formal limit on the amount of supervision a student may have on a Part II dissertation or extended 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 extended 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.

4. Your work must be typed. Advice on presentation of your extended essays or dissertation is available on the Faculty website. All quotations must be clearly marked as such in the conventional manner, with the source stated. You must also acknowledge all sources of information, including unpublished ideas and suggestions, e.g. from your supervisor. It is your responsibility to be aware of the Faculty's plagiarism policy: <https://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/ugrads-exam-folder/Plagiarism/view>

5. The Faculty Office will inform you of your examination number which will be allocated to you electronically by the Student Registry. Your work must bear this number and not your name, to prevent the Examiners knowing your identity.

6. You must submit your extended essays electronically to the Faculty Office **before the end of Lent Term:**

FRIDAY 19 MARCH 2021, 12 NOON

You must submit your dissertation to the Faculty Office **by the second Friday of the Easter Term:**

FRIDAY 7 May 2021, 12 NOON

The submitted version of your extended essay or dissertation must be either in **docx** format or a **pdf** produced from LaTeX. This electronic copy will be submitted to Turnitin, a plagiarism detection system. Your supervisor will be asked to confirm that the essay is based on the drafts they have supervised and is, to the best of their knowledge, your own work. You will receive further information about the submission process nearer the time.

7. The Examiners may interview you about your work, so you may have to stay up or return to Cambridge after Tripos for that purpose.

8. Extended essays and a dissertation carry no more weight than other examination papers. So do not devote disproportionate time and effort to extended essays or a dissertation.

9. If you change your mind and do NOT intend to submit written work you MUST do the following **before the deadline for changes to the examinations entry (Friday March 19, 2021):**

- a) inform the Tutorial Office of your college that you wish to sit the examination for the corresponding paper;
- b) inform the Faculty Office of your decision not to hand in any written work.

Failure to do this may prevent you from being able to sit the written examination for the corresponding paper.

10. In exceptional circumstances the Faculty recognises that it may be necessary for a student to change a title after the deadline for submission of extended essay titles/dissertation title. An application for a late change **must** be made to the Faculty Office for approval by the Chair of Examiners, giving reasons, and must be supported by your Director of Studies. **The final deadline for making changes to extended essay and dissertation titles is one week before the end of Lent Term, Friday 12 March 2021. This deadline is absolutely final. Your essay will be marked in relation to the approved title. Students who submit an essay on a title other than the approved title may be awarded 0 marks, for complete irrelevance.**

October 2020