

MSc/MSt Archaeological Science
Examining Conventions
Academic Year 2017-18

1. Introduction

Examination conventions are the formal record of the specific assessment standards for the course or courses to which they apply. They set out how examined work will be marked and how the resulting marks will be used to arrive at a final result and classification of an award.

The supervisory body responsible for approving the examination conventions is the Social Sciences Board's Teaching Audit Committee.

2. Rubrics for individual papers

MSc

1. Three 2-hour written exams in the second week of Trinity Term of the academic year of admission, on each of the three elements of the course. Three questions are to be answered for each exam. An option from Archaeology or Classical Archaeology may be substituted for one of the three elements of the MSc, in which case only two written exams will be taken.

2. A pre-set essay of not more than 10,000 words. The subject and length of each essay must be approved by the Chair of Examiners for Archaeological Science before the end of 6th week of Hilary Term. Candidates must upload their dissertation to the Assignments section of the course WebLearn site no later than noon on the Monday of first week of Trinity Term. Essays must bear the candidate's examination number but not his or her name, and must include a statement of the number of words.

3. In lieu of one of the three papers described in the Schedule, candidates may, with the permission of the School of Archaeology's Graduate Studies Committee, take one of the options from the MSt in Archaeology or MSt in Classical Archaeology (Schedule B only). Candidates taking such an option would be examined on one pre-set essay of approximately 5000 words on a topic in Archaeological Science in lieu of the requirements laid out in (2) above.

4. A dissertation of no more than 20,000 words (excluding bibliography and/or catalogue, but including notes and appendices), on a research area selected in consultation with the supervisor and approved by the Chair of Examiners for Archaeological Science. Titles must be submitted to the Chair of Examiners for Archaeological Science before the end of 6th week of Hilary Term. Candidates must upload their dissertation to the Assignments section of the course WebLearn site no later than noon on the Friday four weeks and two days before the start of the following Michaelmas Term. The examiners will retain one copy of the dissertation of each candidate for the departmental library.

5. The examiners may require to see the records of practical work carried out during the course.

6. Candidates must present themselves for an oral examination if required by the examiners. This may be on the candidate's written paper, essay or dissertation, or all three.

MSt

1. Three 2-hour written exams in the second week of Trinity Term of the academic year of admission, on each of the three elements of the course. Three questions are to be answered for each exam. An option from Archaeology or Classical Archaeology may be substituted for one of the three elements of the MSc, in which case only two written exams will be taken.
2. A pre-set essay of not more than 10,000 words. The subject and length of each essay must be approved by the Chair of Examiners for Archaeological Science before the end of 6th week of Hilary Term. Candidates must upload their essay to the Assignments section of the course WebLearn site by noon on the Monday of first week of Trinity Term. Essays must be printed, must bear the candidate's examination number but not his or her name, and must include a statement of the number of words. Any illustrations must be included in both copies.
3. In lieu of one of the three papers described in the Schedule, candidates may, with the permission of the School of Archaeology's Graduate Studies Committee, take one of the options from the MSt in Archaeology or MSt in Classical Archaeology (Schedule B only). Candidates taking such an option would be examined on one pre-set essay of approximately 5000 words on a topic in Archaeological Science in lieu of the requirements laid out in (2) above.
4. A report of approximately 5,000 words, on a practical project selected in consultation with the supervisor and approved by the Chair of Examiners for Archaeological Science. The title of the report must be submitted to the Chair of Examiners for Archaeological Science before the end of 6th week of Hilary Term. Candidates must upload the report of their practical project to the Assignments section of the course WebLearn site no later than noon on the Friday of ninth week of the Trinity Term in the year in which the examination is taken.
5. The examiners may require to see the records of practical work carried out during the course.
6. Candidates must present themselves for an oral examination if required by the examiners. This may be on the candidate's written paper, essay or report, or all three.

3. Marking conventions

3.1 University scale for standardised expression of agreed final marks

Agreed final marks for individual papers will be expressed using the following scale:

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

3.2 Qualitative criteria for different types of assessment

The general criteria in section 4.1 apply equally to dissertations and theses, but for the larger theses (M.Phil. thesis and M.Sc. dissertation) the following aspects can be assessed, in terms of marks, as: over 79: exceptional; 70-79: excellent; 60-69: good; 50-59: satisfactory; 40-49: less than satisfactory; under 40: poor.

- The delineation of the aims, assessment of methods, and appreciation of limitations, of the thesis.
- The placing into a scholarly context of the central concerns and outcomes of the thesis.
- The choices of material, of methodology and, where appropriate, of experimental approaches, and methods of data analysis.

- The competence of execution, including, where appropriate, experimental work and statistical or other analysis of the results.
- The quality of interpretation in terms of intelligence, knowledge of relevant context, originality and subtlety.
- The ability to present a large-scale project and its outcomes as a whole, and to summarise these succinctly and accurately.

3.3 Verification and reconciliation of marks

All pre-submitted items of work and all exam scripts are double-blind marked according to the marking criteria for the degrees published in the **Notes of Guidance of Graduate Students in Archaeology (Postgraduate Taught Courses) 2017-18**. The two examiners discuss their grades after independently marking them, and agree a mark, usually following the lead of the person more knowledgeable on the topic at hand. Where a mark cannot be agreed and the difference crosses a grade boundary, a third marker may be brought in, and/or the case will be highlighted for the external examiner.

3.4 Scaling N/A

3.5 Short-weight convention and departure from rubric

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

3.6 Penalties for late or non-submission

Under normal circumstances the following penalties will be applied by the Examiners:
For the late submission of work: the subtraction of one mark per day to a maximum of 5 marks per week. After 14 days the work will be classed as not submitted. Such non-submission will result in the failure of the whole exam.

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

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

4. Progression rules and classification conventions

4.1 Qualitative descriptors of Distinction, Pass, Fail

Over 79	Outstanding work, including all the qualities listed below, but showing complete command of the subject, originality, evidence of extensive reading, and a developed understanding of the overall context of the problem or question.
79-70	Excellent work, with an unequivocal grasp of current major issues in the field, a depth of knowledge of the concepts and material involved. Knowledge, argument and methodology are reviewed critically, with insight and independence of thought. Arguments should show sophisticated reasoning and be clear, well focused and cogent. Thoroughness, insight, wide reading and understanding, clarity of thought and expression, critical ability and originality are all present.

60-69	Work shows consistency, fluency and critical ability in discussing and evaluating evidence and draws upon theories from a variety of sources, with the whole organised into a structured argument. An understanding and assimilation of the relevant literature is demonstrated, and there is a relation of concepts and ideas from different part of the teaching, showing some degree of independence of thought.
50-59	Work shows knowledge and understanding, but there may be little development of ideas and methodology. There are some omissions, shortcomings, or errors of fact, and limited deployment of evidence to support ideas or argument. There is reference to the literature, though not extensive, and there may be limited evidence of critical ability. Candidates must show that they have grasped the fundamental concepts and procedures in the field, and the work is adequately executed, although there may be some lack of clarity and focus.
40-49	Work shows a limited degree of knowledge and understanding of the essential literature for the course. Examination answers contain some relevant material but may demonstrate significant inaccuracies, be insufficiently focused on the question, or simply general and diffuse. Dissertations demonstrate some familiarity with the relevant literature, but may show significant deficiencies in organisation and discussion of ideas, while arguments may be inadequately supported or hard to follow. Practical work shows some ability but aspects of data collection and processing may be problematic.
Under 40	Work that shows little understanding of and/or is barely relevant to the question, shows minimal evidence of reading, contains largely erroneous or irrelevant material, and is very short and/or unfocused; may be poorly expressed and organised.

4.2 Final outcome rules

MSc

The final marks received on the course are broken down as follows:

- Where all three main modules are taken, each written exam carries 15% of the mark, the 10,000 word essay 15%, and the dissertation 40%.
- Where another option is taken in lieu of a main module, each written exam carries 15% of the mark, the numerical average of the two pre-set essays for the third option carries 20%, the 5,000 word pre-set essay carries 10%, and the dissertation 40%.

Candidates whose average mark across the course is 50 or above will be awarded a pass. Candidates whose average mark across the course is 70 or above will be awarded a Distinction.

Candidates who have initially failed any element of the examination will not be eligible for the award of a Distinction upon resitting that element.

MSt

The final marks received on the course are broken down as follows:

- Where all three main modules are taken, each written exam carries 20% of the mark, the 10,000 word essay 20%, and the practical report 20%.
- Where another option is taken in lieu of a main module, each written exam carries 20% of the mark, the numerical average of the two pre-set essays for the third option carries 30%, the 5,000 word pre-set essay carries 10%, and the dissertation 20%.

Candidates whose average mark across the course is 50 or above will be awarded a pass. Candidates whose average mark across the course is 70 or above will be awarded a Distinction.

Candidates who have initially failed any element of the examination will not be eligible for the award of a Distinction upon resitting that element.

4.3 Progression rules

In the case of failure in just one part of the examination (written papers, extended essay, dissertation), the candidate will be permitted to retake that part of the examination on one further occasion, not later than one year after the initial attempt. Written papers would be retaken the following year. If the candidate passes all parts of the examination except the dissertation, the dissertation may be considered as a practical report as defined in the schedule for the MSt and, if of a sufficiently high standard, the candidate may be granted permission to supplicate for the degree of MSt.

An average mark of at least 65 on the written exam and essay is normally expected for those wishing to continue directly on to the DPhil course in Archaeological Science.

4.4 Use of vivas

All MSc and MSt students must be available for *viva voce* examination if required by the examiners.

4.5 Resits

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

In the case of failure in just one part of the final examination, the candidate will be permitted to retake that part of the examination on one further occasion, not later than one year after the initial attempt. Written papers would be retaken the following year. A candidate who is not judged to have reached the standard required for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Archaeology but whose examinations fulfil the requirements of the MSt in Archaeology may be granted permission to supplicate for the degree of MSt in Archaeology.

5. Factors affecting performance

Where a candidate or candidates have made a submission, under Part 13 of the Regulations for Conduct of University Examinations, that unforeseen factors may have had an impact on their performance in an examination, a subset of the board will meet to discuss the individual applications and band the seriousness of each application on a scale of 1-3 with 1 indicating minor impact, 2 indicating moderate impact, and 3 indicating very serious impact. When reaching this decision, examiners will take into consideration the severity and relevance of the circumstances, and the strength of the evidence. Examiners will also note whether all or a subset of papers were affected, being aware that it is possible for circumstances to have different levels of impact on different papers. The banding information will be used at the final board of examiners meeting to adjudicate on the merits of candidates. Further information on the procedure is provided in the *Policy and Guidance for examiners, Annex B* and information for students is provided at www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/guidance.

6. Details of examiners

The external examiner for the MSc Archaeological Science for the 2017-18 academic year is Dr Tamsin O'Connell (University of Cambridge). The internal examiners are Dr Rick Schulting (Chair), Professor Chris Ramsey and Dr Nathaniel Erb-Satullo.