

Guidelines on examinations

MPhil in Health, Medicine and Society

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1. Examiners and Assessors

As of October 2016, MPhil courses that are assessed by submission of coursework and a dissertation fall within a revised MPhil Degree framework under which candidates are assessed as a cohort, with a Board of Examiners appointed by the General Board to assess all candidates. This MPhil is known internally as the MPhil by Advanced Study.

The Board of Examiners for the MPhil in Health, Medicine and Society reports to the HPS Degree Committee (hereafter the Degree Committee). The Board comprises a Senior Examiner, an External Examiner and as many other Examiners as the Degree Committee feels appropriate to ensure robust oversight over the examination process.

The Degree Committee delegates authority for approval of topics and supervisors to the HMS Management Committee, and nomination of Assessors to the HMS Board of Examiners. Essay topics, supervisors and Assessor nominations must be reported to the next available meeting of the Degree Committee.

1.1. Senior Examiner

The Senior Examiner is appointed annually to act for a year at a time. The Senior Examiner normally changes each year and is someone who has had previous experience as an Examiner for this MPhil.

They are responsible for overseeing the examination process. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, chairing the Examiners' meetings, liaising with and approving the selection of work for the External Examiner, and providing guidance to and answer any queries raised by others.

The Senior Examiner writes a report on the year's examination process. The report is received and discussed along with the External Examiner's report at the first Degree Committee meeting of the following academic year. The Senior and External Examiners' reports are shared on the HPS department's website, with the exception of any passages that the Degree Committee agrees are confidential because they refer directly to specific individuals.

1.2. Examiners

The Senior Examiner is assisted by up to 6 other Examiners, who are appointed to act for a year at a time but may be reappointed annually.

Wherever possible, Boards of Examiners should include at least one Examiner who does not contribute to the teaching programmes associated with the examination. The Course Manager, or the person who has responsibility for providing feedback to candidates, may be appointed as an Examiner (but not Senior Examiner). No other Subject Manger may normally be appointed as an Examiner.

1.3. External Examiners

External Examiners are appointed by the General Board for one year at a time, but may be nominated for re-appointment for up to two additional years. Once they have completed their tenure, they may not be re-appointed until a period of five years has elapsed. If special circumstances can be demonstrated, the General Board may appoint an External Examiner for a fourth year, or re-appoint them before the five-year period has elapsed. The External Examiner answers directly to the Vice-Chancellor.

The Department will pay close attention to the General Board's guidance on the arrangements for External Examiners when considering the appointment or re-appointment of External Examiners.

The General Board advise that the most important factors to consider include:

- That those appointed should normally be persons of seniority and must certainly have appropriate experience and/or knowledge and the ability to command respect in the subject. In certain circumstances, it is appropriate that persons from outside the higher education system, e.g. from industry or the professions, be invited to act;
- That, when considering re-appointment, the External Examiner has acted appropriately in the past and has submitted the required report(s) to the Vice-Chancellor in good time;
- That the External Examiner can provide an independent and critical view of the examinations, by avoiding potential conflicts of interest (either professional or personal), through ensuring that the proposed External Examiner:
 - (a) does not hold an office in the University, or a Fellowship or some office or post in a College;
 - (b) does not teach any course of instruction which forms part of the teaching programme for the examination concerned;
 - (c) is not a former member of staff of the University, unless more than five years have passed since their departure;
 - (d) is not employed at an institution where members of Cambridge institutions in the same discipline are acting in similar capacities, (wherever possible);
 - (e) is not employed at the same institution as his or her immediate predecessors (where possible).

The appointment of an External Examiner from outside of the UK must first be approved by the Education Quality and Policy Office.

1.4. Assessors

Assessors are nominated by the Examiners to contribute to the marking of individual essays and dissertations. Two Assessors are appointed for each piece of work. The Examiners (except the External Examiner) may and usually will also act as Assessors for individual pieces of work.

When making nominations, Examiners should ensure that:

- Any Assessor who has not assessed for this degree before is paired with an experienced internal Assessor and is given the opportunity to attend a training session on marking examinable coursework, held on an as-needed basis.
- Assessor nominations reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the work being assessed, as appropriate.
- A wide range of experts are nominated, to distribute examining workloads. It is acceptable for one Assessor not to be a specialist in the topic to be examined.

1.5. Appointments

Examiners are nominated by the HPS Board and appointed by the General Board via the Educational Quality and Policy Office. Examiners must be appointed by the start of Michaelmas Term of the examination year.

Assessors are nominated by the Board of Examiners, under delegated authority from the Degree Committee. Assessor appointments do not need to be communicated to the General Board.

1.6. Meetings

There are 4 formal meetings of the Board of Examiners (hereafter Examiners' meetings) per year, in December, February, April and June, where Assessor reports are received and provisional marks agreed. There are additional informal meetings where Assessors are nominated for individual pieces of work (this may be done by email circulation at the Senior Examiner's discretion). All Internal Examiners attend all of the formal meetings. The External Examiner attends the third and fourth meetings. Assessors do not attend meetings, unless also Examiners.

At the final Examiners' meeting in June, final marks are approved and a provisional class list is signed. All Examiners must attend the final Examiners' meeting unless prevented by grave cause. In such cases, Examiners must receive formal dispensation from the Vice-Chancellor (through the Education Quality and Policy Office).

[Further information on requesting dispensation for non-attendance at the final Examiners' meeting](#)

1.7. Examiners 25-26

Senior Examiner: Dr Marta Halina

Examiners:

- Philosophy & Ethics of Medicine: Dr Marta Halina
- Medical Anthropology: Dr Sally Raudon
- History of Medicine: Dr Philippa Carter
- Medical Sociology: Dr Luke Hawksbee

External Examiner: Mark Jackson

Assessors: Appointed as necessary

2. Arrangements and timetable for examination

There are 4 formal meetings of the Board of Examiners (hereafter Examiners' meetings) per year, in December, February, April and June, where Assessor reports are received and provisional marks agreed. There are

Essay 1 (3,000 words, formative)

Event	Details	Deadline
Topics submitted	Essay 1 topics submitted	3 Nov 2025
Topics approved	Essay 1 topics approved by the HMS Management Committee	5 Nov 2025
Nomination of Assessors	Examiners nominate Assessors for essay 1. The HMS Administrator contacts all nominees to confirm they are willing to assess work.	17 Nov 2025
Circulation to Degree Committee	The list of topics and Assessors is circulated at the second DC meeting of Michaelmas Term. Any later adjustments (e.g. reallocation of supervisors or adjustment of topics) are made by DC Chair's action.	17 Nov 2025
Work submitted	Essay 1 submitted by noon.	21 Nov 2025
Work marked	Essay 1 marked in time for the first Examiners' meeting.	1 Dec 2025
1 st Examiners' meeting	The MPhil examiners agree provisional marks for essay 1. Following the meeting, the minutes, markbook, and Assessors' reports are submitted to the Degree Committee.	8 Dec 2025
Feedback	After the Examiners' meeting candidates are provided with their provisional mark for essay 1 and copies of the non-confidential parts of their Assessors'	

	reports. They may consult course managers and supervisors for further interpretation of these reports.	
External Examiner	Selected work is sent to the External Examiner after the Examiners' meeting and any moderation is conducted at the third Examiners' meeting.	

Essay 2 (5,000 words)

Event	Details	Deadline
Topics submitted	Essay 2 topics submitted.	1 Dec 2025
Topics approved	Essay 2 topics approved by the HMS Management Committee.	3 Dec 2025
Nomination of Assessors	Examiners nominate Assessors for essay 2 at the first Examiners' meeting. The HMS Administrator contacts all nominees to confirm they are willing to assess work.	15 Dec 2025
Circulation to Degree Committee	The list of topics and Assessors is circulated at the first DC meeting of Lent Term. Any later adjustments are made by DC Chair's action.	19 Jan 2026
Work submitted	Essay 2 submitted by noon.	30 Jan 2026
Work marked	Essay 2 marked in time for the second Examiners' meeting.	16 Feb 2026
2 nd Examiners' meeting	The MPhil examiners agree provisional marks for essay 2. Following the meeting, the minutes, markbook, and Assessors' reports are submitted to the Degree Committee.	23 Feb 2026
Feedback	After the Examiners' meeting candidates are provided with their provisional mark for essay 2 and copies of the non-confidential parts of their Assessors' reports. They may consult course managers and supervisors for further interpretation of these reports.	
External Examiner	Selected work is sent to the External Examiner after the Examiners' meeting and any moderation is conducted at the third Examiners' meeting.	

Essay 3 (5,000 words)

Event	Details	Deadline
Topics submitted	Essay 3 topics submitted.	16 Feb 2026
Topics approved	Essay 3 topics approved by the HMS Management Committee.	18 Feb 2026
Nomination of Assessors	Examiners nominate Assessors for essay 3 at the second Examiners' meeting. The HMS Administrator contacts all nominees to confirm they are willing to assess work.	2 Mar 2026
Circulation to Degree Committee	The list of topics and Assessors is circulated at the second DC meeting of Lent Term. Any later adjustments are made by DC Chair's action.	9 Mar 2026
Work submitted	Essay 3 submitted by noon.	20 Mar 2026
Work marked	Essay 3 marked.	13 Apr 2026
External Examiner	Selected work is sent to the External Examiner for moderation in advance of the third Examiners' meeting.	17 Apr 2026
3 rd Examiners' meeting	Provisional marks for essay 3 and an overall essay mark are determined. The Habib Prize is awarded for the best performance in essays 2 & 3. Comments on essays 1-3 are received from the External Examiner and any moderation work is carried out. Following the meeting, the minutes, markbook, and Assessors' reports are submitted to the Degree Committee.	27 Apr 2026
Feedback	After the Examiners' meeting, candidates are provided with their provisional mark for essay 3, provisional overall essay mark and copies of the non-confidential parts of their Assessors' reports. They may consult course managers and supervisors for further interpretation of these reports.	

Degree Committee approval	Essay marks are approved by the Degree Committee. In cases where a candidate's combined essay marks constitute a fail, the committee will decide, following advice of the examiners, whether or not the candidate should be permitted to submit a dissertation. If so, the candidate will be informed that the examiners are likely to require an oral examination in addition to written reports.	11 May 2026
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Dissertation (12,000 words)

Event	Details	Deadline
Topics submitted	Dissertation topics submitted.	16 Feb 2026
Topics approved	Dissertation topics approved by the HMS Management Committee.	18 Feb 2026
Nomination of Assessors	Examiners nominate Assessors for the dissertation at the third Examiners' meeting. The HMS Administrator contacts all nominees to ask whether they are willing to assess work.	27 April 2026
Circulation to Degree Committee	The list of topics and Assessors is circulated at the first DC meeting of Easter Term. Any later adjustments (e.g. reallocation of supervisors or adjustment of topics), are made by DC Chair's action.	13 May 2026
Work submitted	Dissertation submitted by noon.	1 Jun 2026
Work marked	Dissertations marked.	15 Jun 2026
External Examiner	Selected work is sent to the External Examiner for moderation in advance of the final Examiners' meeting.	18 Jun 2026
Final Examiners' meeting	Marks are agreed for each dissertation and an overall mark for the course is determined. The Forrester Prize is awarded for the best performance in the dissertation. Following the meeting, the minutes, markbook, and Assessors' reports are submitted to the Degree Committee.	24 Jun 2026
Feedback	After the Examiners' meeting, candidates are provided with their provisional mark for the dissertation, the provisional overall mark, and copies of the non-confidential parts of their Assessors' reports. They may consult course managers and supervisors for further interpretation of these reports.	
Degrees approved and confirmation of results	Degrees are approved at the final DC meeting of Easter Term. Approval of the Degrees of any candidates with extensions may be held over until the first DC meeting of the following Michaelmas Term.	29 Jun 2026

3. Form and standard of the examination

The scheme of examination for the one-year course of study in Health, Medicine and Society for the degree of Master of Philosophy consists of:

- Three essays, one of not more than 3,000 words and two each of not more than 5,000 words. The shorter essay does not contribute to the final mark; the two longer essays carry equal weight. The three essays, taken together, must show evidence of a broad knowledge of Health, Medicine and Society. They are not required to present original research to pass.
- A dissertation, of not more than 12,000 words. In order to pass, the dissertation must be clearly written, take account of previously published work on the subject, and represent a contribution to learning. It must show evidence of independent research.

3.1. Essay and dissertation topics

Essay topics are either chosen from a list of suggested topics for each taught module (modules listed in the course guide) or devised in consultation with a supervisor. Essay topics must be anchored in the content of the taught modules, and are subject to approval by the HMS Management Committee. No more than two essays may be chosen from any single module.

Dissertation topics are devised in consultation with a supervisor and are subject to approval by the HMS Management Committee. The dissertation may be written in the same area as one of the essays, but the dissertation and essay must address different questions, and the dissertation must show evidence of a substantial new research effort. Any use of the essay in the dissertation must be appropriately referenced, just like any other primary or secondary source, as if the essay had a different author.

Once a topic has been approved, candidates must seek permission from the Course Manager to change it. The supervisor must support the request through a coursework request form.

3.2. Submission of work

Candidates submit the essays and dissertation electronically via Moodle, with numbered pages and including references, bibliography and any appendices. All work is screened by Turnitin, which detects matches between the submitted work and other electronic sources. For all pieces of coursework, candidates must include a title page on which they declare the exact word count, the title, and the name of the supervisor. By submitting their work they are confirming that the work has not been submitted previously and that they have read and adhered to the University's plagiarism guidelines.

4. Criteria for passing the MPhil

The boundary for a pass is an overall mark of 60%.

Candidates are required to pass in each part of the examination separately, i.e., the essays, which together account for 40% of the overall mark, and the dissertation, which accounts for 60%, except in the following special circumstances:

- a) A candidate whose failure in the essays is marginal should be allowed to submit a dissertation, and a high performance in the dissertation may be taken into account by the Degree Committee.
- b) Where a candidate's failure in the dissertation is marginal, a high performance in the essays may be taken into consideration by the Degree Committee.

5. Mark Scheme

Formally the MPhil is a pass/fail degree. Official transcripts distinguish between a *pass* (60%) and a *pass with distinction* (70%).

Candidates are provided with internal transcripts detailing marks on individual pieces of work, using the following mark scheme:

- **80 and above:** Starred Distinction
- **70–79:** Distinction
- **65–69:** High Performance
- **60–64:** Pass
- **59 and below:** Fail

Mark 80+: Starred Distinction

An outstanding and memorable performance in which all the qualities deemed to constitute first-class work are present in a remarkable degree. The work should be well researched and substantially original, bearing in mind that originality has many dimensions: it may reside, for instance, in the thesis defended; or in the way a known thesis is presented and defended. Such work might well form the basis for publication. Potential for outstanding PhD work.

Mark 70–79: Distinction

Work which is of high calibre both in the range and in the command of the material and in the argument and analysis that it brings to bear. The examiners would expect some elements of originality – which may consist in putting together material in novel ways – although originality alone would not guarantee marks in this range. Work in this class will generally meet the following criteria: the argument may be sophisticated, incisive or demonstrate excellence in composition and clarity; there may be a wealth of relevant information, showing exceptional knowledge and understanding of the issues involved; the approach may be unorthodox in the best sense, suggesting new and worthwhile ways of considering material, and distinctive in character and scholarly voice. The submitted work may display evidence of extensive research imaginatively and convincingly deployed.

Mark 65–69: High Performance

Clearly proficient with a proper coverage of relevant material, and reasonably well-presented. Work in this category may be solid but unimaginative. Ambition of work is clearly visible but may not be carried through sufficiently. The analysis and argument are generally good. There is some evidence of good engagement with existing literature. It displays critical thinking, some sophistication in analysis, and a good deal of relevant knowledge. It is sufficiently clear and well-organised.

Mark 60–64: Pass

Work which is basically competent, and, in the case of dissertations, reasonably independent. Interesting and provocative ideas may not be carried through fully convincingly. The main thesis may be vague, too general, too unambitious or else over-ambitious. There may be gaps in the bibliography, deficiencies in the overall structure, weaknesses of analysis and argument, or lack of clarity.

Mark 0–59: Fail

- **57–59 (Marginal Fail):** Work in this category represents serious effort, but fails to meet MPhil standards in some important way: the depth and breadth of research, the quality of argumentation, or clarity, organisation and literary presentation.
- **50–56 (Clear Fail):** Work in this category contains something of value, but has significant deficiencies in more than one important respect: the depth and breadth of research, the quality of argumentation, or clarity, organisation and literary presentation.
- **0–49 (Low Fail):** Work in this category is significantly inadequate in the quality and quantity of content, and only contains material that is derivative, irrelevant, inaccurate, incoherent or superficial.

6. The examination process

Two Assessors are appointed to mark each piece of work. Normally, a different pair of Assessors will be nominated to examine each piece of a candidate's work and no Assessor will examine more than one essay and the dissertation of any individual candidate. For each piece of work submitted, at least one of the Assessors will normally be a member of core staff. The supervisor is disqualified from marking work they have supervised.

Once submitted, work is anonymised and made available to Assessors, together with a report form, a cover letter that provides guidance on the marking process, and a link to these guidelines.

Assessors provide an independent report, individual marks, and (where possible) an agreed mark for each piece of work, prior to the relevant Examiners' meeting. The timeframe for marking is normally 10-15 calendar days.

Report forms are designed to divide comments into those that the candidate can see, and will profit from, and those that are confidential. The comments that the candidate will see should not include explicit marks, classifications, or remarks about a candidate's ability to continue with further postgraduate research. Candidates will receive the open comments and the agreed mark, but not the names of the Assessors or the individual marks. The Board of Examiners will consider both confidential and non-confidential portions of the reports. Examiners should be aware that in the event of a Freedom of Information request, all comments must be provided, including those the Department has deemed confidential.

Further guidance on how to prepare the report can be found in [section 10](#) of this document. Once Assessors have arrived at their individual mark, they should communicate with their co-Assessor to attempt to agree a joint mark for the piece of work. Assessors should not try to arrive at a joint mark until both have drafted their independent reports with suggested marks. Where there is a discrepancy in the individual marks, Assessors are encouraged to discuss the work and, if possible, to agree upon a mark.

Once a joint mark has been agreed – or if it has become apparent that this is not possible – Assessors provide the HMS Administrator with the report forms. Assessors are asked to indicate on the form any work which they think should be referred to the External Examiner.

6.1. Disagreement between the two Assessors:

If the two Assessors do not agree in their recommendation, or if for any other reason the Degree Committee need further opinion, the Degree Committee may appoint additional Assessor(s), provided that not more than one additional Assessor may be appointed without leave of the Examinations and Assessment Committee. In such cases the External Examiner for the course may be asked to act as Assessor. Each additional Assessor must make an independent report on the dissertation, without having seen the marks or reports of the other Assessors. All three reports should be considered by the Board of Examiners.

7. Oral examination

If the candidate was awarded a *marginal fail* on their essays, or if the agreed mark for the dissertation is a *fail*, the examiners must arrange for the candidate to have an oral examination. The examiners may also arrange for an oral examination for other purposes, such as to clarify the relationship of the dissertation to essays, or elucidate questions concerning sources. Assessors may contact the Senior Examiner to request an oral examination, irrespective of mark, for any candidate.

The oral examination may relate to the dissertation and the general field of knowledge within which it falls, but may also encompass other assessed work.

Assessors may assist with any oral examination that is required for a candidate whose work they have marked, but at least one examiner must be involved.

The oral examination will normally be held within three weeks of the dissertation submission date, so that the reports can be considered by the final Degree Committee meeting of Easter Term. Therefore, a decision should be made about the requirement for an oral examination and the candidate informed as soon as is practical.

8. External Examiner

The External Examiner may conduct their responsibilities as they see fit. They are invited to discuss with other examiners, in particular the Senior Examiner, how best they may fulfil the function of monitoring the examination procedure.

Subject to the way in which the External Examiner decides to discharge their duties, once work has been marked by two Assessors, they may be sent a selection of work for moderation that meets any of the following criteria:

- Particularly high or low marks
- A marked discrepancy between Assessors' individual marks
- Assessors' marks cross a significant grade boundary and the agreed mark is on the lower side of that boundary
- Assessors cannot agree a mark
- Any other anomalous work

If the External Examiner wishes, they may also be sent a sample of average work for calibration purposes. They have a general invitation to read any piece of work, and will have access to all available individual and agreed marks and all Assessor reports. They are invited to share comments on work they have read.

Assessors should attempt to agree marks where possible. The External Examiner should be in a position to report on the soundness of the procedures used to reach a final agreed mark, by obtaining information on the method used to reconcile divergent marks. In exceptional circumstances, where marks cannot be reconciled, the External Examiner may be asked to provide their view.

Except in exceptional circumstances, the External Examiner will be present at the third and fourth Examiners' meetings in April and June, but does not attend the first or second meetings.

External Examiners are required to submit a written report to the Vice-Chancellor at the conclusion of their involvement with the examination, and may comment on any aspect of the examination, including the fairness of the assessment and the standards of the candidates for the part of the examination with which they are concerned. The University attaches great importance to the feedback given by External Examiners. The reports are forwarded to the Degree Committee for a response and are usually discussed at the first meeting of the Degree Committee in October of the new academic year. In addition the General Board Education Committee scrutinises all Examiners' reports and will ask the Education Quality and Policy Office to follow up any matters of concern with the Degree Committee.

9. Supervisors

MPhil coursework is normally supervised by senior members and associates of the departments. Candidates are encouraged to work with a range of supervisors, and the Management Committee will not normally approve the appointment of the same supervisor for more than two pieces of work by a candidate. Once a supervisor has been approved the candidate must seek permission for a change.

Supervisors, if also examiners, do not participate in the discussion of marks of their candidates. Supervisors who are members of the Degree Committee may vote on the award of degrees.

10. Advice for composing non-confidential reports on coursework

Reports are intended principally for the Board of Examiners (and thence the Degree Committee) and the addressee of each report is the Senior Examiner. They are only secondarily for the eyes of the candidates

themselves. However, as they are the only feedback that candidates receive on the final version of their submitted work, the comments in the reports should convey an accurate and balanced sense of the quality of the work. Assessors should note the following specific points:

- Comments should clearly indicate the merits as well as the demerits of the work, although critical points will often require more space to express.
- There should not be a mismatch between the tenor of the comments and the proposed mark or class.
- Comments should evaluate the work, not merely summarise what the candidate has done. A lengthy non-evaluative summary is not normally necessary.
- It is particularly useful to candidates if the reports on their early essays indicate general ways in which they can improve their work.

For the sake of consistency, the non-confidential part of the report should be between 200 and 500 words, except for reports on essay 1, which should be between 150 and 300 words. Comments should be sufficiently detailed to give the candidate and the co-assessor a good sense of how specific aspects of the work have been judged.

Sloppiness in spelling, grammar and style (especially when making critical comments on similar sloppiness in the submitted work) should be avoided.

Candidates have approximately 6 weeks to produce each piece of work. Assessors are asked to be realistic about what is achievable in this period of time, and to consider the work involved in researching and preparing the content of the work, as well as the results that research.

Assessors may find it helpful to consider the following points when drafting their reports:

- What is the main achievement of this work? Is there an original contribution? If so, what is it?
- Does the candidate show a good understanding of relevant material? Is the content of the work informative and insightful?
- Does the candidate advance effective arguments contributing towards well-articulated conclusions?
- Has the candidate used a sufficient number and range of appropriate sources? Are they effectively used and properly credited and cited?
- Does the work have a clear and effective structure? Is the writing clear, grammatical, and free of typographical and other errors? Is the style of the references and footnotes clear and consistent?
- Please distinguish between any comments on how to improve this work and comments that offer advice for future work.

11. Plagiarism and academic misconduct

Examiners and Assessors should familiarise themselves with the Department and University guidance on plagiarism and academic misconduct:

- [HPS guidance on plagiarism](#)
- [University guidance on plagiarism and academic misconduct](#)

Candidates upload examined work to Moodle, where it is screened by Turnitin UK. If Turnitin detects matches between submitted work and another source that is higher than 20%, the Senior Examiner will review the resulting originality report to judge whether the matches are innocent or appropriately referenced (which does not constitute plagiarism) or whether there has been excessive uncited use of

material from other sources (which may be considered poor academic practice or plagiarism depending on the extent and context of the matches).

Turnitin is only one method of checking the originality of submitted work. Examiners and Assessors may initiate other investigative procedures (e.g. searching Google) if they have unresolved queries about the originality of work, regardless of whether or not Turnitin has substantiated any concerns. If an Assessor suspects that work submitted for examination contains unattributed work from other sources, they should report the matter to the Senior Examiner.

If academic misconduct is suspected, Examiners will follow the procedures set out in the [staff guidance for suspected academic misconduct](#).

Information for assessors

Assessors must not mark down work in a punitive way on suspicion of wrongdoing, but instead provide an assessment of the academic merit of the work of the candidate; this will provide a basis for the final result and for any disciplinary actions by the University. If unacknowledged work is revealed, Assessors may then be asked to attempt to determine its full extent, excise the unacknowledged material and mark the work that remains, taking into account the poor scholarship. In some cases, this process may leave a document that does not meet the basic requirements of the examination.

12. Degree Committee meetings and approval of MPhil degree

The recommendations of the MPhil Assessors are submitted together with markbooks, reports and minutes of Examiners' meetings, to the next meeting of the Degree Committee. Where the appropriate conditions of achievement are met, the Degree Committee awards candidates the MPhil degree at the final meeting of the academic year in late June. The names of all those who have voted on the award of degrees is recorded in the Degree Committee minutes. Supervisors, Assessors and examiners who are members of the Degree Committee may vote on the award of degrees.

After the final meeting, recommendations are entered on CamSIS and award letters are generated for each candidate. Where results are not straightforward, the Secretary of the Degree Committee will communicate the recommendation along with the reasons for the recommendation to the Student Registry. Where there has been a delay to the submission of the dissertation, confirmation of the degree may be postponed until the next Degree Committee meeting in October of the new academic year.

13. Late submission of coursework

Candidates must submit their coursework via Moodle before 12 noon on the day of the deadline. The Examiners adhere strictly to the rule that permission to submit essays or dissertations late will only be granted by the Degree Committee or its nominated representative if a formal request is received, with the support of the candidate's College Tutor and reasons (medical or otherwise) documented. Where an extension is granted, the deadline is 12 noon on the new date.

The Senior Examiner will advise the Examiners of any unauthorized late submissions, and unless there are exceptional circumstances, these will normally be subject to a penalty, as follows:

Number of days late	Penalty
1 day	1 mark
2 days	1+2 = 3 marks
3 days	1+2+3 = 6 marks
4 days	10 marks

5 days	15 marks
6 days	21 marks
7 days	28 marks

Work submitted later than one week after the deadline, or not submitted, will receive a mark of zero.

14. Word Limits

The word limit is 3,000 for the formative essay, 5,000 words for essay two, 5,000 words for essay 3 and 12,000 words for the dissertation. This includes prefatory matter and footnotes (where used) but excludes the bibliography.

Figures may be included in the work and should contribute to the argument. They should be captioned only so as to specify the source; such captions are excluded from the word count. Formulae may be used where appropriate and are also excluded from the word count.

In order to ensure the equitable enforcement of the word limits, candidates must state the word count on the title page of their work. At the time of the deadline, the Administrator inspects each piece of work on behalf of the Senior Examiner, to confirm that the word limit has been adhered to. If it has not, the work is returned to the candidate, who is asked to revise it so that it does conform to the word limit. The rule governing penalties for late submission will be applied (i.e. if the revised work is submitted within one day, one mark will be deducted; within two days, three marks will be deducted, etc.).

14.1. Editions, translations and bibliographies

Normally material included in the word count should consist mainly of the candidate's own discussion and analysis. Exceptionally, when a critical edition or translation, an analytical bibliography, or a technical description of objects and their provenances is based on substantial original scholarship and is central to the argument of an essay or dissertation, permission may be obtained for its inclusion within the body of the essay or dissertation, hence contributing to the word count. Normally no more than one third of an essay or dissertation should consist of such material. Candidates should consult with their supervisor and apply to the Examiners for permission to include such material, when submitting the topic of the essay or dissertation in question.

14.2. Appendices

An essay or dissertation should be self-contained, including or citing all information needed for an Assessor to follow its argument. However, candidates may apply to the Examiners for permission to submit an appendix, which is excluded from the word count, with any piece of work. The main purpose of the appendix should be to assist the reader: it should not normally be central to any argument. Materials falling into this category may include primary source materials that are not readily accessible, translations, questionnaire responses, statistical tables, descriptions of objects and analytical bibliographies. Candidates should consult with their supervisor and apply to the Examiners for permission to include such material, when submitting the topic of the essay or dissertation in question.

15. Exam allowances

If a candidate has been hindered by illness or other grave cause in preparing for or taking any part of the examination for the degree, they should seek advice from their College Tutor, who may apply to the Examination Access and Mitigation Committee (EAMC) for an examination allowance.

An examination allowance allows candidates a chance to obtain their MPhil degree if the EAMC receives satisfactory evidence that their performance has been affected by serious mitigating circumstances. It cannot be used to change a mark.

Examination allowances may allow the candidate:

- To resubmit work at a later stage
- In restricted circumstances, to be approved for the MPhil degree without further examination.

Please note that examiners or Assessors should not themselves make any allowances for illness or other cause when assessing a candidate's work.

Candidates should seek advice at the time the problem arises and applications must be received by the EAMC within three months of the date that they are notified of the outcome of their degree (applications may also be made earlier in the year).

[EAMC: guidance and application for examination allowances \(MPhil by Advanced Study\)](#)

16. Resubmission of work

If the Degree Committee resolve that a candidate's work is of insufficient merit to entitle the candidate to the degree, the student concerned will not be eligible to take examinations again, except under exceptional circumstances as provided for in [section 15](#) above.

17. Problems, queries, complaints and appeals

Candidates should exhaust informal routes wherever possible, and use the correct procedure for the matter they wish to complain about. Queries should be directed through an appropriate third party, such as the College Tutor, Course Managers, HMS Administrator, or Secretary of the Degree Committee. Candidates may not make direct contact with an examiner, including the Senior Examiner.

Academic judgment

The University's complaint and appeal procedures do not cover complaints that relate to matters of academic judgment, and the procedures cannot interfere with the operation of academic judgment.

This position corresponds to that adopted by the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#) (OIA Rule 5.2).

Academic judgment is defined as a judgment made about a matter where the opinion of an academic expert is essential. It normally includes, but is not limited to judgements about: marks awarded, degree classification, research methodology, whether feedback is correct or adequate, and the content or outcomes of a course.

Complaints

Most problems or complaints can be resolved quickly and efficiently with the support, involvement or intervention of University or College staff. Candidates wishing to make a complaint, or to appeal against a decision already made, are therefore encouraged in the first instance to seek the advice of their College Tutor (since the College assumes pastoral and other responsibilities), or a departmental staff, such as the Course Managers or the HMS Administrator.

Where a candidate has cause to complain about circumstances relating to the conduct of their MPhil examination, they must follow the examination review procedure set out by the University.

Examination Review

An Examination Review can be requested on the following grounds:

- A procedural irregularity in the examination process has adversely impacted the candidate's
- examination results
- Demonstrable bias or the perception of bias within the examination process
- The withdrawal of academic provision, which has had a demonstrable impact on the examination itself, of which the Board of Examiners were not aware

An Examination Review must be requested within 28 days of the candidate receiving their formal results. For further information see [the University's Examination Review policies and procedures](#).

18. Feedback to candidates

During the course of their studies, candidates receive feedback in person from their supervisors, and from the Course Managers, as well as from termly online supervision reports. The first essay is examined prior to the end of the Michaelmas Term in order to provide candidates with early feedback on their performance so they can gauge the level of achievement required by the course. Essay 2 is examined at the beginning of February and feedback is given a couple of weeks later in mid-late February. Essay 3 is examined before Easter term and feedback is given on this together with a provisional overall mark for the essay component of the course at the beginning of Easter term.

After each Examiners' meeting, candidates are provided with their provisional marks and the non-confidential parts of the Assessor reports, and have the opportunity to discuss this feedback with Course Managers. Marks are subject to moderation up until the final Examiners' meeting, and are considered provisional until approved at the final Degree Committee meeting of the year in late June. At the end of the course candidates receive an internal statement of results with details of their individual marks, and official transcripts are available from CamSIS.

19. Prizes

At the third Examiners' meeting, the candidate with the best overall performance on the two formally examined essays is awarded the Benyamin Habib prize, which has a value of £200. The candidate is also invited to attend the annual Rausing Dinner.

The Forrester Prize will normally be awarded to a candidate who has submitted all elements of the assessment by the normal deadline. The value of the prize is £200.

Candidates with approved extensions, whose work is not assessed in time for the relevant Examiners' meeting, will not normally be considered for prizes.

20. Retention of work

The HPS department will retain copies of dissertations and essays and may make them available to future students unless the student makes a written request to the contrary to the Secretary of the Degree Committee.

21. Fees and expenses

Each examiner and Assessor who is not an officer of the University of Cambridge (other than an Associate Lecturer who receives no stipend from the University) will receive a fee.

External Examiners are paid fees and expenses, including the cost of overnight accommodation where appropriate.

Each examiner and Assessor should submit one claim form for the course at the end of the academic year.