

GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR HIGHER DEGREES

The degrees of MA, MSc, and LL.M may be awarded **either** on the basis of a programme of taught courses and assessment by examination, or by examination and dissertation, **or** on the basis of a programme of supervised research assessed by means of a thesis only. For this third category, supervised research, please consult the separate regulations **General Regulations for Candidates Intending to Proceed by Thesis** contained in the *Research Degrees Handbook*.

GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR CANDIDATES INTENDING TO PROCEED BY EXAMINATION OR BY EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION [Taught Master's Degrees]

These General Regulations should be read in conjunction with the Special Regulations for the Master's degree programme concerned.

1. General

- 1.1 All Master's programmes are aligned with the national Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).
- 1.2 The Master of Arts/Master of Science/Master of Laws may be awarded on the basis of taught courses, or a combination of taught courses and a research element. [For the purpose of these regulations any reference to 'course' includes where appropriate a reference to any research element.]
- 1.3 The Master's degrees may be conferred on graduates of this University or on those of other universities or on such other persons as may be deemed acceptable by Senate. Candidates must have:
 - a) followed a prescribed programme of study and met the conditions specified in the relevant Regulations and in the syllabus for the programme; and
 - b) satisfied the Examiners appointed by Senate in the assessments and examinations; and
 - c) fulfilled any other requirements that may be prescribed by the Regulations.
- 1.4 Candidates may be required to attend an oral examination which shall form part of the assessment and examination for the degree.
- 1.5 There is no prescriptive balance between the elements comprised within a Master's programme. In some cases students may follow elements that are also provided to undergraduate students, but these must constitute no more than 30 units of the total programme. In these cases there will normally be separate tuition and/or separate assessment for postgraduate students. Each Master's programme shall describe the nature of the programme (e.g. conversion, taught, research, and the constituent components and assessment).
- 1.6 The minimum period of study for a Master's programme shall be nine months, consisting of a minimum of 180 units of which 150 must be at level 7 in the FHEQ. On successful completion the weighting and credits assigned to a course shall be equal to its unit value. In order to be eligible for the award of a degree a student must have studied the full syllabus as prescribed by the curricula and special regulations for the degree programme.

2. Admission

- 2.1 Formal offers of admission will be issued from the Admissions Office in the relevant School of Study.
- 2.2 The standard for admission to a Master's programme for applicants who have recently completed their undergraduate studies shall normally be a minimum of Second Class, Lower Division, or the equivalent, with a good command of the English language. In other cases applicants must satisfy the person responsible for admissions that they have the academic and linguistic ability to complete the programme of studies.
- 2.3 Students will not normally be permitted credit or exemption against a Master's degree on the basis of prior study or experience although exceptional cases may be considered by the relevant Dean on their merits on an individual basis.

3. Attendance

Unless otherwise specified in the special regulations for a programme, the whole of the prescribed period of study must be spent at the University of Buckingham. Students are required to attend punctually and regularly the tuition (lectures, seminars, laboratory work, tutorial periods, and supervisions) prescribed by the special regulations together with such other lectures or classes as may be directed, and be examined in them. If the Head of Department certifies that there has been a breach of this regulation then the student shall not be admitted to the examination, and the Head of Department may also recommend to the Chairman of the Board of Examiners that the student's membership of the University be terminated.

4. Academic Progress

4.1 The regulations concerning the deferral of examinations, non-attendance at examinations, examination performance affected by illness etc, and illegible scripts, contained in the **General Regulations for First Degrees** shall, so far as appropriate, apply to students governed by these regulations.

4.2 A candidate who fails an examination or assessment may be permitted by the Board of Examiners to present him or herself for re-examination or re-assessment on one subsequent occasion. The re-examination, which may cover only that part of the curriculum that the candidate has failed, may not be taken before a period of one term has elapsed since the initial examination.

5. Award and Classification

5.1 Degrees of Master may, at the discretion of the Board of Examiners, be awarded as a Pass, or with Merit, or with Distinction.

5.2 Individual courses shall be marked according to the following scale:

Distinction	70 or above
Merit	60–69
Pass	50–59
Fail	49 or less

5.3 In order to be awarded the degree, a candidate must normally pass every course comprised within the degree. A candidate who obtains a mark between 40–49 in not more than 30 units may be permitted to pass the degree as a whole by compensation where, in the opinion of the Board of Examiners, the candidate has demonstrated sufficient strength in the other courses comprised within the degree. Candidates who have passed by compensation are not normally eligible for the award of merit or distinction. Candidates who have passed by compensation, but have demonstrated exceptional strength in other components may be considered for merit or distinction if their performance in all components comprised within the degree are significantly better according to the following scale:

Distinction	75 or higher
Merit	65 or higher

5.4 No candidate who has gained sufficient credit and completed in full the prescribed programme of study for the Master's degree shall be permitted to enhance the classification of his degree by re-sitting examinations.

5.5 Candidates who satisfy the examiners on re-examination or re-assessment after initial failure will be credited with a bare pass only in that course for the purposes of progression or classification.

Where a candidate fails to satisfy the examiners on re-examination or re-assessment the higher mark achieved will be recorded for the purposes of progression or classification.

5.6 Exceptionally, where the circumstances under which a candidate has been examined or assessed are deemed to have been seriously disadvantageous, the Board of Examiners may rule that the candidate be permitted one further attempt at the examination and be credited with the actual mark obtained.

5.7 In order to be classified with a merit or a distinction, a candidate should normally have either:

- i. completed half or more of the courses by unit value in that category or better, and have completed the remaining units at a level not substantially below that category; or

ii. obtained a weighted mean mark which places the candidate within that category.

In addition, the candidate must have satisfied any additional requirements contained in the special regulations for the programme concerned.