

Humanities Divisional Board

Approved by the Associate Head (Education) on 13 June 2025

Title of Programme/

Degrees of Master of Philosophy in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

Brief note about nature of change:

MPhil Buddhist Studies

- Amendment to assessment mode for two papers.
- Inclusion of thesis deadline.

Location of change

In *Examination Regulations 2024-25*

<https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/Regulation?code=domopitfoaamiddeaststud&srchYear=2024&srchTerm=1&year=2024&term=1>

Effective date

For students starting from MT 2025

For first examination from:

- Year 1 students **2025-26**
- Year 2 students **2026-27**

Detail of change

(...)

(xii) Buddhist Studies

^{1.154}A. *Qualifying examination*

^{1.155}Each candidate must pass a Qualifying Examination not later than the end of the Trinity term of the first year. The examination will consist of two papers:

- ^{1.156}(i) A written examination in the chosen primary Buddhist Language selected from a list published in the course handbook.

~~1.157~~ (ii) ~~A written examination on basic aspects of Buddhist thought and history.~~
Four essays, each of up to 3000 words in length, on basic aspects of Buddhist thought and history. Essay questions will be released at the start of Trinity term in Year 1 and submission will be due fourteen days from release.

~~1.158~~

1.159 B. *Final Examination*

1.160 All candidates must complete:

1.161 (i) an advanced language paper consisting of a translation from seen and unseen texts in the chosen primary Buddhist Language, to be assessed by a written examination.

1.162 (ii) a thesis of not more than 20,000 words on a subject approved by the Board. The thesis must be submitted by noon on Thursday of Week 4 of Trinity Term in Year 2.

~~1.163 (iii) a paper on Approaches to the study of Buddhism, to be assessed by written examination.~~ Approaches to the study of Buddhism, to be assessed by three essays, each of up to 3000 words in length. Essay questions will be released at the start of Trinity term in Year 2 and submission will be due fourteen days from release.

(...)

Explanatory Notes

This retains unseen examinations for core language components of the degree but allows students to write essays displaying their subject knowledge and analytical skills in greater depth for the core discursive components of the degree. Student feedback repeatedly indicates that they would rather have essays than exams for the discursive courses; exams tend to elicit rote learning rather than analytical exploration, and this has shown up in weaker students trying rote learning the lecture slides (and getting fail marks), rather than engaging in a discussion; students tend to be mature and English is not their first language, who are disadvantaged by timed exams.

The number of essays is the same as what is currently expected in a written examination.