Department of Psychosocial Studies
School of Social Science, History and Philosophy

HANDBOOK FOR MPhil/PhD
Psychosocial Studies

RESEARCH STUDENTS  2016-17
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MPHIL/PHD STUDY IN DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOSOCIAL STUDIES

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Psychosocial Studies is a leading department in this interdisciplinary field that brings together social, cultural and psychosocial researchers. The Department has developed a distinctive approach to research and teaching that draws on a range of critical frameworks including psychoanalytic theory, social theory, feminist and queer theory, cultural and post-colonial studies and qualitative psychosocial methodologies. In our research we aim to connect discussions of our precarious and increasingly interconnected collective fates with our most intimate personal and psychic life.

This research degree offers an exciting research environment in which to pursue psychosocial research, as well as supervisory expertise across a number of disciplines, including psychoanalytic theory, social theory, philosophy, social-anthropology, literature, postcolonial studies, gender and sexuality studies, and media and cultural studies. Our programme aims to provide an excellent forum for students to carry out theoretical or applied research in the broad area of psychosocial studies, focusing particularly on innovative interdisciplinary work. We actively promote interactive graduate life, with multiple resources for fostering a rich post-graduate community at Birkbeck.

All our MPhil/PhD programmes provide an excellent forum for students to develop and enhance their specialist and other more general theoretical and research skills. Our courses lead to a University of London PhD, and are subject to the Birkbeck College regulations for admission and examination.

1.1 Supervisors and their research interests:

**Dr Lisa Baraitser**

Psychoanalytic and psychosocial theory; feminist theory; motherhood and the maternal, philosophies of ethics, affect, temporality, materiality and event.

**Professor Claire Callender**

Higher education policy; Student finances and funding; Part-time undergraduates; Widening participation.

**Professor Stephen Frosh**

Psychoanalysis, psychotherapy and cultural processes; critical psychology; contemporary identities; psychosocial research methods.
Dr Ben Gidley

Urban ethnography, lived experience of diversity, comparative urbanism, diasporic belonging; antisemitism, particularly in relation to other forms of racialisation; Anglo-Jewish history and sociology, Jewish/non-Jewish relations; urban social movements; fascism and anti-fascism; South and East London.

Viviane Green

Problems and possibilities of integrating accounts of emotional development; clinical issues linked to the transmission of intergenerational trauma; a multi perspectives approach in understanding the growth of the capacity for empathy and its links to pathology.

Dr Elizabeth Hoult

Resilient adult learning, resilience in disadvantaged groups, use of literary texts and techniques in Sociology research, application of the philosophy of Hélène Cixous to Education and Sociology, the practice and place of autobiographical writing in academic research.

Dr Amber Jacobs

Psychoanalysis – post Freudian tradition, psychoanalytic feminist theory and feminist philosophy, post-Lacanian theorists; Ancient Greek myth and tragedy (feminist interpretations and political uses of) and contemporary recycling of myth in literature, culture and theory; writing and sexual difference; theories of and constructions of the maternal; visual culture.

Dr Gail Lewis

Gender and Racialisation, Black Feminism, Psychodynamics of Organisation, Psychoanalysis, Social Policy and Welfare Practices, Multiculture

Dr Brendan McGeever

Brendan McGeever is a Lecturer in the Department of Psychosocial Studies. Brendan’s work focuses on racism, antisemitism and anti-racism historically up to the present day. He is particularly interested in the relationship between racialization and antisemitism, and exploring the extent to which these two areas of research can be brought together within the wider sociology of racism and ethnicity studies. He also has a specialist interest in the study of the former Soviet Union and the history of Marxism and Marxist theory. Brendan welcomes the opportunity to supervise students who wish to carry out research in the following areas: racism and racialization; antisemitism; nationalism; class; Marxism; the former Soviet Union; contemporary Russia.
Dr Yasmeen Narayan

Caribbean creolisation, histories of ‘race’ and racism, nationalisms, racialisation and psychoanalysis, postcoloniality, sexualisation, ‘beauty’, contemporary black popular culture, cultural politics and ethnography.

Dr Margarita Palacios

Politics, culture and psychoanalytic theory; social theory and continental philosophy; studies on violence and 'otherness'; language, power and knowledge; cultural sociology and social change; Latin America.

Dr Silvia Posocco

Transnational Gender and Sexuality Studies and Theories; Social Anthropology, Social Theory and Cultural Analysis; Violence and Conflict; State and the Law; Secrecy, Sociality, Subjectivity; Transnational Adoption Circuits, Documents and Archives; Ethnography; Latin America, Guatemala, London.

Professor Lynne Segal

Gender studies, including feminist scholarship, psychoanalytic dialogue and critical theory, addressing issues of sexual difference, the shifting dynamics of gender, masculinity and its discontents, sexualities and culture, political identifications and cultural belongings.

Dr Bruna Seu

Psycho-social inquiry into moral apathy in response to human rights abuses; psychoanalytic and social psychological contributions to the understanding of oppression, race, discrimination, identity and helping behaviour; social constructions of femininity and gender; discourse analysis and social constructionism.

Dr Laurence Spurling

Assessment in psychotherapy; Borderline personality disorder; Interpersonal psychotherapy; Psychodynamic counselling/psychotherapy; Regression; The clinical case study.

1.2 Further information

For more information about the Department and staff research interests, please visit our website: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/psychosocial/our-staff/full-time-academic-staff

For further details of the PhD programme please contact:
Andrea Kezer Tel.: 020 7079 0775 E-mail: a.kezer@bbk.ac.uk
2. ADMISSION

Applicants must meet the following entry requirements in order to be considered for a place:

- A good undergraduate degree (high 2:1 or 1st), and a Masters degree in a subject relevant to their proposed research (preferably at Distinction level).
- A clearly worked out research proposal, which identifies the context, questions and methods of their project in a way that demonstrates an understanding of key literature and debates in that field.
- Applicants must be certain that they will have sufficient time and financial support to be able to devote enough time to their research (on average 35 hours per week full-time, 18 hours per week part-time).
- For students wanting to undertake empirical research, it is advantageous to have previously undertaken relevant research methods training, although training in quantitative and qualitative methods can be provided in the College through the period of your research.

The academic potential of individual candidates is assessed by admissions staff using their academic judgement, in line with the College Terms and Conditions of Enrolment and the College Research Student Admissions Policy. Offers of admission are based on an assessment of the candidate’s likely success in completing a research degree within four years (full-time) or seven-years (part-time). The Department will also consider, on the basis of the applicant’s proposal, whether there are sufficient resources in place to support the student’s specific research project, in accordance with the College’s Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes. Applicants may be required to demonstrate their proficiency in the English language via an IELTS or similar test, achieving a grade of 6.5 or above. In addition to the candidate’s academic record, other relevant data considered include the research proposal; academic references; professional qualifications; and relevant work experience.

All applications are treated on an equal and fair basis and decision-making is made in accordance with Birkbeck College policy on equal opportunities. Consideration of applications from students who declare a disability is based on the same criteria and principles as for other applicants. Implementation of the Research Student Admissions Policy is sensitive to the different experiences of disabled applicants, and takes into account their response to the opportunities and challenges they have encountered, on the understanding that these may be individual to the applicant. Applicants with a disability are encouraged to disclose this to the College, to enable any necessary adjustments to be planned in support of their education. Failure to do so may impact on the ability to make any necessary reasonable adjustments.
Process for considering forms and assessing candidates

Initial consideration is based on information supplied in the applicant’s application, including the research proposal. Departments may also request additional information to be supplied. The application is considered by one member of staff (in consultation with other staff, where appropriate). If the application clearly does not meet the criteria for admission, or in cases where the Department does not have the right supervisory expertise or other resources, the applicant will be informed that their application has been rejected.

Applicants who proceed to the second stage of selection will be interviewed, either in person or by other arrangements (such as by telephone, skype or other appropriate internet-based technology). Interviews will normally be conducted by at least two members of the Department.

Applicants may also be asked to provide supplementary written material, such as an example of their work or a set written task. This written material will be used to assess a candidate’s suitability for PGR study. It may also be used to distinguish between applicants with similar profiles or to give further information on which to base a decision (for example, an applicant presenting non-standard qualifications).

Candidates will be contacted by Departments within two weeks of their interview to inform them of the outcome. On occasion, conditional offers may be made and applicants will be notified what any conditions of admission are as part of the offer, in line with the College Research Student Admissions Policy.

3. FACILITIES

MPhil and PhD students spend much of their time pursuing independent study and research. Students therefore need to get used to taking responsibility for their own research, initiating and following up ideas, evaluating their progress, planning ahead and sticking to targets and schedules of writing.

While this intellectual autonomy offers its own intrinsic rewards, many resources are offered by PS to encourage a rich post-graduate life that prevents isolation. This includes regular workshops, many visiting speakers, and numerous collaborative projects both within London, and at national and international levels. In particular, research students are expected to attend the monthly doctoral research seminar, and the Department’s regular research seminars for staff and students. Members of PS are also attached to various broader research centres, including the Birkbeck Institute for Social Research (BISR), the Birkbeck Institute of Humanities (BIH) and Birkbeck Gender and Sexuality (BiGS), Birkbeck Institute for Film (BIFF). Via its workshops, seminars and research centres PS can maintain and develop both its existing social science base of research and also encompass the ‘humanities orientation’ of the existing Faculty of Arts. The BISR (headed by Professor Roseneil) also offers support and encouragement for students applying for research grant applications.

The College is able to provide excellent library and computing facilities. Students can have access to both Birkbeck (Malet Street) and Senate House (University of London) libraries, as well as to a wide range of electronically stored databases. In addition to
high standard computing and specialist testing facilities, students also have access to the Department’s printing and photocopying facilities.

Our academic staff provide excellent supervisory support, working closely with research students to create an intellectually challenging and nurturing atmosphere.

4. FUNDING

There are a small number of College and Department Studentships available each year to both full and part-time students, funds permitting. Funding opportunities for overseas students are also available. Help with meeting living and tuition costs is also occasionally available by means of teaching studentships. See also our list of additional funding bodies.

Postgraduate Funding Links (general)
www.bbk.ac.uk/reg/finance/res_finance
www.bbk.ac.uk/reg/finance/res_finance/res_academic
www.bbk.ac.uk/finance/res_finance/res_hardship/college_awards

5. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF MPHIL AND PHD STUDY

Details of what is required to be awarded an MPhil or PhD are in the College regulations, and students are advised to familiarise themselves with these (http://www.bbk.ac.uk/registry/policies/research-policies/research-degree-regs.pdf) and with the College Code of Practice (www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules/pg_code). Initial registration in all cases is for an MPhil, with an upgrade process after one year of full-time or two years or part-time study leading (where successful) to retrospective registration for the PhD.

5.1 The Award of an MPhil Degree

The scope of the thesis shall be what might reasonably be expected after two or at most three years of full-time study, and the length would not normally exceed 60,000 words. It should be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument. It should be either a record of original work or of an ordered and critical exposition of existing knowledge and should provide evidence that the field has been surveyed thoroughly.

5.2. The award of a PhD

The scope of the thesis shall be what might reasonably be expected after three or at most four years of full-time study, and the length would not normally exceed 100,000 words. The work should form a distinct contribution to the knowledge of the subject
and afford evidence of originality by the discovery of new facts and/or by the exercise of independent critical power.

PhD graduates:

- Will be able to make informed judgments on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- Will be able to conduct, understand and use research techniques relevant to their specific discipline;
- Will have the qualities and skills needed in circumstances requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable professional environments.

6. SUPERVISION: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Allocation of supervisors

Research students in Psychosocial Studies are allocated one principal supervisor, and in all cases a second supervisor is also involved.

Responsibilities are as follows:

6.2 Principal supervisor’s responsibilities

1. To provide guidance about the:
   (a) nature of the research being undertaken and the quality and quantity of work required
   (b) planning of the research programme including the timetabling of research and writing activities and deadlines
   (c) taught classes which should be attended
   (d) research techniques necessary to undertake the research and relevant ethical considerations.

2. To agree, at the start of the student’s registration, a programme of research training based on an assessment of the student’s training needs.

3. To meet formally with the student normally twice a term (part time students) and three times per term (full time students). To be available to the student at other times for informal discussions.
4. To request that written work (e.g., drafts of chapters) be submitted according to the agreed timetable and to ensure that constructive criticism and feedback on written work is provided within a reasonable period.

5. To encourage the student to participate in research activities (e.g., attend Research Seminars, present papers at conferences) and to make use of external resources and expertise (e.g. contacts with other research groups, specific researchers).

6. To discuss the annual report with the student (see Section 7).

7. To keep the Director of Doctoral Research aware of any current or potential problems or difficulties.

8. To advise the student on the ‘readiness’ of the work for upgrading to PhD and for final submission; to read and comment on a draft of the thesis before final submission.

9. To ensure that the programme of research is completed within the usual maximum time limits (this is Three-four years full-time, six years part-time for PhD students).

6.3 Second supervisor’s responsibilities (or responsibilities of supervisory team)

1. To develop an awareness and understanding of the research being undertaken by the student.

2. To be available to the student for informal meetings and discussions (particularly during times when the principal supervisor is unavailable).

3. To read the annual report prepared by the student and the principal supervisor’s comments and, where it is felt necessary or requested, provide comments to the principal supervisor and/or the student.

4. To ensure that advice and suggestions given are done in the context of the advice and suggestions already provided by the principal supervisor.

5. To act as a mentor for the principal supervisor where the principal supervisor is relatively inexperienced.

7. STUDENT’S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To establish, through discussion with the principal supervisor, the nature of the guidance required and preferred ways of working (e.g., numbers and types of meetings).

2. To keep the supervisor informed of work in progress and to meet with the supervisor at least twice a term, unless otherwise agreed.

3. To take the initiative in raising current and anticipated difficulties and problems with the principal supervisor.
4. To take an active part in the research life of the Department and College (attend Research Seminars, make research presentations, share information, and take part in research group activities).

5. To participate in external research activities (e.g. present papers at conferences) and to make use of external resources and expertise (e.g. contacts with other research groups, specific researchers).

6. To attend any research training programme agreed with the principal supervisor.

7. To abide by relevant professional code of ethics in conducting research.

8. To complete the annual report.

9. To keep the Director of Doctoral Research aware of any current or potential problems or difficulties.

10. To ensure that the programme of research is completed within the usual maximum time limits (this is three-four years full-time, six years part-time for PhD students).

Student-staff exchange meetings
Student-Staff Exchange Meetings (SSEMs) offer an opportunity for students to talk frankly about their experience at Birkbeck and to raise any issues of concern directly with members of the teaching staff.

The meetings take place once a term and are open to all students who wish to attend. All elected class representatives are expected to attend.

Points raised in the SSEM are discussed at the departmental meeting and responded to in turn. Its decisions are recorded, and summarised in the Report on the Student-Staff Exchange Committee and discussed in the following SSEM.
8. RESEARCH TRAINING, SEMINARS AND ETHICS

8.1 Research Training, Seminars and Conferences

Research students at Birkbeck will be offered appropriate research training, according to their specific needs, and will also be expected to take part in generic research methods training, offered by the Department.

I. During their doctoral studies students are expected to attend our Doctoral Seminar run by Professor Lynne Segal. Dates for this academic year are the following:

Professor Lynne Segal Monthly Doctoral Seminar
(Wednesdays 6.00pm-8.00pm)
Psychosocial Studies Doctoral Seminar

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<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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<tr>
<td>12th October 2016</td>
<td>30 Russell Square, Room B01</td>
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<tr>
<td>9th November 2016</td>
<td>30 Russell Square, Room B01</td>
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<td>14th December 2016</td>
<td>30 Russell Square, Room B01</td>
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<td>11th January 2017</td>
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<td>15th February 2017</td>
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<td>15th March 2017</td>
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<td>10th May 2017</td>
<td>30 Russell Square, Room B01</td>
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<td>7th June 2017</td>
<td>30 Russell Square, Room B01</td>
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II. First year Research students have to attend the Independent Research methods Module run in our Department team taught by several staff members and convened by Bruna Seu. Dates for this academic year are the following:

**INDEPENDENT RESEARCH METHODS**

**2016-17 Term 1** Thursday: 6.00-9.00pm  
**Venue**: TBC

Week 1: (6.10.16): **Introduction to psychosocial Research** (Bruna Seu)  
Week 2: (13.10.16): **Working with documents and archives** (Brendan McGeever)  
Week 3: (20.10.16): **Ethnography** (Ben Gidley)  
Week 4: (27.10.16): **READING WEEK**  
Week 5: (3.11.16): **Analysing discourse** (Bruna Seu)  
Week 6: (10.11.16): **Psychoanalysis and empirical research** (Gail Lewis)  
Week 7: (17.11.16): **Biographical Narrative Interview Method - BNiM**  
(Mariya Stoilova)  
Week 8: (24.11.16): **How to do psychosocial research** (Bruna Seu)  
Week 9: (1.12.16): **Working with numbers** (Claire Callender)  
Week 10: (8.12.16): **Working with cultural texts** (TBC)  
Week 11: (15.12.16): **Using visual and sensory methods** (Amber Jacobs)

III. Departmental Doctoral Conference:

As part of our research training students are expected to present their research in our Doctoral Conference that takes place during summer term. In particular first year students about to submit upgrade documents and students about to submit their dissertation in the final year of their studies, are expected to present their research.

IV. Other Resources:

Besides these Departmental initiatives, doctoral students are encouraged to attend training in research methodologies organized by the Birkbeck Institute for Social Research (BISR). The Department’s provision and that of the BISR is complemented by the work of the Birkbeck Interdisciplinary Gender Studies, the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities, the Centre for Law and the Humanities, and the London Critical
Theory Summer School. Overall, with its long and successful experience in the supervision of both full-time and part-time research students, Birkbeck remains an outstanding choice for doctoral research.

We will be in contact with you should any of this information change. Students are also encouraged to participate in the academic activities of the Department and College.

These include staff seminars and lectures. In particular, the events put on by the Birkbeck Institute for Social Research (www.bbk.ac.uk/bISR) and the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities (www.bbk.ac.uk/bIH) and Birkbeck Institute of Gender and Sexuality (www.bbk.ac.uk/ce/research/bIGS) are highly relevant to the work of the Department.

Attending and speaking at conferences are increasingly seen as essential activities for research students. As well as conferences organised locally by the Department, the College and its institutes, you will probably want to attend others in your own specialisation. We will circulate details of conferences that are sent to PS. Journals also carry advertisements for conferences in their field.

The School of Social Sciences, History and Philosophy has a limited fund available for help with expenses: if you are giving a paper at a conference you can apply to the Director of Graduate Studies for help, subject to certain conditions. Applications must be made before the date of the conference.

A PS postgraduate research students’ conference will be held by the Department in 2016, which all students are expected to attend, be it as a speaker or as a discussant.

Finally, we our Department holds a Research Seminar twice a term where staff members or guests speakers present their research. Doctoral students are expected to attend these sessions as well and actively contribute in the discussions.

8.2 Ethics

The Department’s current Research Ethics Policy and the appropriate forms can be found on the Department intranet at www.bbk.ac.uk/sps/our_courses/ethics_committee.

This policy applies to postgraduate students conducting research with human participants as the basis for an original thesis. For each study conducted the student should complete an Ethics Proposal Form, available from the intranet site.

Some guidance on the ethical issues that need to be considered can be found in the Department Research Ethics Policy. The current arrangements for ethical approval are as follows. The ethics proposal should be approved by the student’s supervisor, and submitted on Turnitin via the departmental ethics committee Moodle. All ethics proposals will be reviewed by two members of the Ethics Committee. Where possible the time taken to review proposals will be three weeks. Proposals may not be considered out of term time. The Committee may recommend changes before signing
off proposals and may require resubmission, which will then require another round of review.

Ethics proposals have to be submitted together with upgrade documents in order for the students to get feedback from the upgrade panel prior to the formal submission to the Ethics Committee.
9. ANNUAL REPORT

Research students are required to complete an Annual Report once a year in conjunction with their supervisor. Usually, the report is expected to be submitted in July each year.

The report form provides an opportunity for students to review their own work during the year and to evaluate the supervision and training offered by the faculty. It is also an opportunity for the student in conjunction with the supervisor to clarify expectations for the coming year and to decide on areas of need.

10. UPGRADE AND TRANSFER FROM MPHIL TO PHD

10.1 Timing and procedure

Students are required to apply for upgrades after one year for full time students and 1.5 years for part time students.

Upgrades are held twice annually:

- October – Full time students
- February – Part time students

Students who are not ready upgrade within this time frame are required to submit a mitigating circumstances form.

If the dissertation involves empirical research the documents for upgrade should include:

1) an overall rationale for the study

2) If the research involves human participants, students need to submit completed ethics forms together with the upgrade documents in order to receive feedback from the panel prior to the formal submission of ethics proposal to the Ethics Committee.

3) a full account of background literature

4) a description of the proposed methodology

5) a comprehensive overview of the proposed research

6) a time-table for completion attached.

If the dissertation is primarily theoretical, documents for upgrade should include:

1) an introduction and overview of the topic
2) a full account of background literature

3) one or two completed chapters

4) chapter headings for the whole thesis, and no less than half a page on each chapter

5) bibliography and references

6) a time-table for completion.

Altogether this would probably be between 10,000 - 15,000 words.

An application for conversion from MPhil to PhD should show that:

- there is a clearly stated aim to conduct a piece of research that will form a distinct, original contribution to knowledge of the subject
- there is evidence of knowledge and understanding of the principal theories and approaches used by earlier research in the subject concerned, upon which the proposed research seeks to build; the research proposed is a suitably sized project for the time period in which it must be completed - neither too superficial nor too ambitious to complete within the normal period of study; the proposed method(s) are appropriate to the stated aims of the research; the proposed method(s) are practicable.

Students will submit their thesis upgrade documents to their supervisors in the first instance in order to get feedback before the panel takes place.

The upgrade panel consists of a chair and two readers chosen by the Director of Postgraduate Studies from the Psychosocial Studies staff team. Each student will attend an upgrade panel, where they spend 15 minutes presenting their work, which is then discussed by the panel, which gives substantial feedback to the student, including a decision on whether to upgrade or not.

Students may re-submit material within six months if they have not been successful at their upgrade.

10.2 Appeals

Students who fail to attend their original review can submit a mitigating circumstances claim if they believe that their research was detrimentally affected by unforeseen circumstances (in the period leading up to the review), which were out of their control and could not have been prevented. Students should use the standard mitigating circumstances claim form (http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules), which offers further advice on what factors may be considered beyond the reasonable control of the student. The form should be supported by independent documentary evidence. All the materials need to be submitted to the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee (RDC) no later than one week after the review would have been taken place.

Mitigating circumstances claims are reviewed by a specially-constituted RDC panel, which will make one of two decisions:
1) Accept the claim. In this case the panel sets a new date for the original review, to be conducted in line with the regular PGR review procedures.

2) Reject the claim. In this case, the student is invited once more for review, to be scheduled within 6 months of the date the original review would have taken place. During this review, the examiners can upgrade the student to PhD status; or approve the student for continuation to the degree of MPhil; or terminate his/her studies. Failure to submit to the review for a second time will result in automatic de-registration (unless a mitigating circumstances claim is submitted and accepted).

10.3 Criteria and Requirements for MPhil and PhD

Some students, for a variety of reasons, may wish to complete an MPhil, rather than proceed to PhD study. Some of the main London University requirements for an MPhil are set out below:

The London University regulations state the criteria for the award of an MPhil to include the following:

The scope of the thesis shall be what might reasonably be expected after two or at most three years of full-time study. The thesis shall:

- not exceed 60,000 words,
- be either a record of original work or of an ordered and critical exposition of existing knowledge and shall provide evidence that the field has been surveyed thoroughly;
- be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument;
- give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describe the method of research and its findings and include a discussion on those findings

(For the full list of criteria, see University of London Regulations).
PhD

The key principle for conversion from MPhil to PhD is that there should be sufficient evidence to indicate that the work can be completed within the normal period of study (usually four further years of part-time work or two to three years of full time work), and of the standard required for a PhD, as set out in the University of London regulations.

The London University regulations state the criteria for the award of a PhD to include the following.

The work should:

- not exceed 100,000 words; (Including footnotes, excluding bibliography and appendices; http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/administration/assessment/phd_dissertations/word_length
- form a distinct contribution to the knowledge of the subject and afford evidence of originality by the discovery of new facts and/or by the exercise of independent critical power;
- give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describe the method of research and its findings, and include a discussion on those findings, and indicate in what respects they appear to the candidate to advance the study of the subject;
- be of a standard to merit publication in whole or in part or in a revised form (for example, as a monograph or as a number of articles in learned journals).

(For the full list of criteria, see University of London Regulations).

11. SUBMISSION OF THESIS

11.1 Procedures and requirements for written submission

The details for what is required in the final thesis should be discussed with the supervisor. Forms for submitting the thesis for examination must be obtained from the Department six months before the submission. Three bound copies of the dissertation must subsequently be submitted to the Examinations Office. It should be typed or word-processed on A4 pages, double-spaced and with generous margins. Only one side of the paper should be used. The thesis should have a single, continuous pagination. Further information on the specific requirements of the University of London for the submission of Doctoral and MPhil Theses can be found at http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules/resregs.pdf.
11.2 Referencing and plagiarism

Analytical points and all materials used throughout the thesis must be extensively referenced and documented. Students will also be required to provide a complete bibliography of all works and materials they have consulted, together with citations of the exact source of quotations and other specific points taken from books, articles and web sites used.

Students should at all costs avoid PLAGIARISM, i.e. the presentation of another author’s ideas or words as if they were their own. If an author is quoted, the quotation should be placed in inverted commas and a reference given for it. Plagiarism and any other form of intellectual dishonesty can result in students failing the degree.

Students are advised to discuss the choice of most appropriate referencing system with their supervisor. Advice on referencing is given in Appendix 2.

11.3 Assessment

The College will arrange for the thesis to be read and examined by two examiners, one within the University of London and one external to the University who are specialists in the field of study.

Students will be called for a viva voce examination of their thesis where they will defend its arguments orally to the two examiners. Advice from the supervisor on the suitability of the thesis for examination is crucial, and it is unwise to submit a thesis that the supervisor considers insufficiently prepared. At the end of the viva voce examination the examiners will inform the student of whether the thesis has met the requirements of a doctoral or MPhil degree without the need for revision or whether it needs further revision before it will be eligible.

12. SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, DYSLEXIA AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

At Birkbeck there are students with a wide range of disabilities, specific learning difficulties, medical conditions and mental health conditions (hereinafter referred to as disabled students). Many of them have benefited from the advice and support provided by the College’s Wellbeing Centre. The Wellbeing Centre is located in G26 on the Ground floor of the Malet Street building.

All enquiries should come to the Wellbeing Centre (tel. 0207 631 6316), who will determine the appropriate referral to specialists in the Disability and Dyslexia Service and Mental Health Service. They can provide advice and support on travel and parking, physical access, the Disabled Students’ Allowance, specialist equipment, personal support, examination arrangements, etc.

On enrolment you need to complete a Study Support Plan (SSP), which will set out the reasonable adjustments that we will make with physical access, lectures, seminars,
assessments and exams. After you complete this and provide disability evidence, we confirm the adjustments you require and then your department, examinations office, etc. will be informed that your SSP is available and adjustments can be made. You should contact the Wellbeing Service if any of your adjustments are not in place.

12.1 Access at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's main buildings have wheelchair access, accessible lifts and toilets, our reception desks and teaching venues have induction loops for people with hearing impairments, and we have large print and tactile signage. Accessible parking, lockers, specialist seating in lectures and seminars and portable induction loops can all be arranged by the Disability & Dyslexia Service.

12.2 The Disabled Students’ Allowance

UK and EU (with migrant worker status) disabled students on undergraduate and postgraduate courses are eligible to apply for the Disabled Students’ Allowance (DSA). The DSA provides specialist equipment including computers with assistive technology and training, personal help (e.g., study skills tutors, mentors and BSL interpreters) and additional travel costs for students who have to use taxis. It provides thousands of pounds worth of support and all the evidence shows that students who receive it are more likely to complete their courses successfully. The Wellbeing Centre can provide further information on the DSA and can assist you in applying to Student Finance England for this support. From September 2016, new students will receive their note-taking support from the University rather than the DSA.

12.3 Support in your Department

Your Department is responsible for making reasonable adjustments in learning and teaching and assessment, including permission to record lectures, specialist seating, extensions on coursework, etc. Whilst we anticipate that this support will be provided by the Programme Director, tutors and Programme Administrator in the Department, they will also have a Disability Lead. If you experience any difficulties or require additional support from the Department then they may also be able to assist you. They may be contacted through the Programme Administrator.

12.4 Support in IT Services and Library Services

There is a comprehensive range of specialist equipment for students with disabilities in IT Services. This includes an Assistive Technology Room, which may be booked by disabled students. We have software packages for dyslexic students (e.g. Claroread and Mind view), screen reading and character enhancing software for students with visual impairments available in our computer laboratories, specialist scanning software, large monitors, ergonomic mice and keyboards, specialist orthopaedic chairs, etc. We have an Assistive Technology Officer, who can be contacted via IT Services.
The Library has an Assistive Technology Centre, where there is also a range of specialist equipment, including an electronic magnifier for visually impaired students, as well as specialist orthopaedic chairs and writing slopes. The Disability and Dyslexia Service Office refers all students with disabilities to the Library Access Support service, who provide a comprehensive range of services for students with disabilities and dyslexia.

12.5 Examinations and Assessments

Many disabled students can receive support in examinations, including additional time, use of a computer, etc. In exceptional circumstances, students may be offered an alternative form of assessment.

12.6 Specific Learning Difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia)

Mature students who experienced problems at school are often unaware that these problems may result from their being dyslexic. Whilst dyslexia cannot be cured, you can learn strategies to make studying significantly easier. If you think you may be dyslexic you can take an online screening test in the computer laboratories – the instructions for the screening test are available on the Disability Office website. If appropriate, you will be referred to an Educational Psychologist for a dyslexia assessment. Some students can receive assistance in meeting the cost of this assessment, either from their employer or from Birkbeck.

12.7 Further information

For further information, please call the Wellbeing Centre on 020 7631 6316 or email disability@bbk.ac.uk.
13. USEFUL WEBSITES

Birkbeck Graduate Research School: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/bgrs/

Bloomsbury Postgraduate Skills Network: http://courses.grad.ucl.ac.uk/bloomsbury/

Birkbeck Institute for Social Research: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/bisr/

BISR Graduate seminar: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/bisr/postgraduate/graduate-seminar

Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/bih/

Birkbeck Institute for Gender and Sexuality: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/ce/research/bigs

Disability and dyslexia support:
http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/disability

Birkbeck College Students’ Union: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/su/

University of London Students’ Union: http://www.studentcentral.london/

ESRC National Centre for Research Methods: http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/
APPENDIX 1.
ANNUAL REPORT FORM.

Name of student:

Registration (MPhil/PhD)

Status: (FT/PT):

Initial Registration date:

Report for year:

Supervisor(s):

Title of thesis:

To be completed by supervisor

1. Were there any problems in maintaining a reasonable amount of contact time? (If yes, give details)

2. Has the student submitted sufficient written work during this year, adhering to an agreed timescale? (If no, give details)

3. Has the quality of work been adequate in terms of:

   a) written English

   b) depth of treatment of issues
If no, give details. Have these concerns been discussed with the student?

4. Does the student show an ability to test ideas against those of others? (If no, give details)

5. Has sufficient reading been done during the last 12 months? If no, has this been discussed with the student?

6. Is information being collected in a rigorous manner?

7. Is analysis being conducted in a rigorous manner?

8. Is there a possibility that this work will produce publishable articles? If yes, has this been discussed with the student?

9. Any further comments

To be completed by student

Participation in the last 12 months

1. Attendance at lectures/seminars/conferences/Masters modules:

2. Details of any seminar or other presentation by you:

3. Was the research training offered appropriate?
4. What other training would you like to attend?

Supervision sessions

Please list supervisor-student contacts/sessions during the last 12 months. This could include face to face, email, telephone etc.

Contact Mode

Was supervision satisfactory? If not, give details.

Signature of student_________________________ Date________________

Action Plan

To be completed jointly by supervisor and student:

Agreed plan of action for the next 12 months:

1. Work on thesis

2. Training

3. Conference and seminar attendance, publication plans

Signature of student_________________________ Date________________

Signature of supervisor_________________________ Date________________
APPENDIX 2

ADVICE ON REFERENCING

Students may choose to give their citations and references in notes, either at the foot of the page or the end of the essay/dissertation, or to incorporate them in brackets in the text using what is called the Harvard system. Students are advised to discuss the choice of most appropriate referencing system with their supervisor.

Whatever system you use, be consistent, give full details, and do not repeat information already given.

The most useful system is the Harvard system or adaptations from that. This cites authors and year of publication in the text, and gives full details in a list of references at the end of the text.

The difference between references and bibliography is that references are titles that are all referred to in the text, whereas the bibliography can include sources consulted but not referred to. You may have a bibliography after your list of references, but this is not always necessary.

Examples:

1) Book:

2) Article in a journal:

3) Chapter in a book:

As you can see from this, the convention is to highlight book titles and journal names. Individual chapters or articles are not underlined.

The important point to bear in mind is to give information about: author, title, year of publication, place and publisher. For journal articles it is important to give information about volume and issue number of journal and range of page numbers. For chapters in edited books, it is also important to give page numbers.

4) Web sites
References to material found on web sites should give the name of the web site, the full http address, and the date last accessed.

Example:


The text

By listing references at the end of the essay, the main body of the text only needs to mention author and year. With this information the reader can look up the details in the list of references.

Quotations: If a writer is quoted directly, you must indicate so, and in addition to giving the author and year, you should give the exact page number from where the quotation is taken.

Examples:

1) 'It has been argued that the earth is flat (Hudson 1988).'</n
2) '...This point has been argued by Hudson (1988), who claimed that the earth is flat.'

In the second example Hudson is part of the sentence, and all you need to give is the year.

3) In the debate about whether the earth is round, Hudson argues, 'I think it is clear that the earth is flat and at the centre of the universe' (Hudson 1988, p.45)

This is an example of a direct quote, and therefore the page number is indicated.

Use of secondary sources:

Please note that literature listed under 'references' or 'bibliography' is meant to be sources which you have read yourself, and not sources referred to by others. If you want to list such secondary sources, you must indicate so in your list of references, e.g. Achenbaum, A. (1978), Old Age in the New Land, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, cited in C.Victor (1994), Old Age in Modern Society. You should strive towards using primary sources as far as possible.