

PG Examination and Assessment 2020/21: changes to the assessment framework and measures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19

Advanced Study MPhil courses:

- Theoretical and Applied Linguistics By Advanced Study (TAL)
- European, Latin American and Comparative Literatures and Cultures By Advanced Study (ELAC)
- Film and Screen Studies By Advanced Study (FSS)

For the above three courses, the following has been agreed:

1. A one week blanket extension is to be given for submission of the dissertation.
2. Students may choose to include an [impact statement](#) with their dissertation detailing how the lockdown has been detrimental to their research through, for example, limiting their access to study materials and key texts. Statements should not reference personal circumstances or mental health issues, but should only refer to the impact of lockdown on their ability to source relevant materials. Examiners will be asked to take account of the impact of disruption on access to study materials and key texts or available data when assessing the dissertation.
3. A reintroduction of the assessment forms that were used for dissertations last year under the pandemic. Assessment rubrics were adjusted slightly to ensure students were not marked down due to the lack of available resources. This seemed to work well last year as a mitigation. All of this year's students will have designed their project under lockdown, and have been encouraged to create projects in such a way that they can be carried out successfully with materials that are available under these conditions. It is not therefore not felt necessary to make any more substantial changes to the coursework requirements or assessment.
4. In order to ensure cohort equity, the Examining Board will compare the finals results of the 2020/21 cohort to those of the cohorts of 2018/19, 2017/18, and 2016/17. The Board *may* consider adjusting class boundaries for the 2020/21 cohort downward if it is obvious that fewer students are achieving the higher classes than did so in these earlier years.

In addition to the above, the following three points are proposed for ELAC and FSS MPhils by Advanced Study:

5. For the Lent term module essays, a one week blanket extension is to be given.
6. Students may choose to include an impact statement for their Lent term essays, in a similar manner to that outlined above for the dissertation.

7. Slight revision to the Lent term essay assessment rubric to allow students who are not able to conduct extensive research in their field during the lockdown to earn good marks based on module essays that focus on primary sources. This is important because students are experiencing different levels of disruption to their research. In some fields, the scholarship is easily available in electronic form or through the Scan & Deliver service, while in other fields that is not the case. Some students have returned to Cambridge and can borrow books from the libraries, while others have not returned and have no access to these print materials. Our modifications to the assessment rubric for the module essays are designed to level the playing field between students while still allowing those who can carry out extensive research into the scholarship to do so.

For the TAL MPhil by Advanced Study, students submitted their essays early in the Lent term and no changes to assessment were made or deemed necessary, as the large majority of work was done before the UK lockdown occurred. These students are currently working on their dissertations and are preparing for their Oral Presentation.

1. The **TAL Oral Presentations** are still to be held on the proposed date towards the end of Lent term, but that, as last year, students are asked to present online. Responding to the requests from students at the Student-Staff Liaison Committee, unlike last year, students will present in front of a virtual audience as well as two attending examiners.

By Thesis MPhil courses:

- Theoretical and Applied Linguistics By Thesis (TAL)
- European, Latin American and Comparative Literatures and Cultures By Thesis (ELAC)
- Film and Screen Studies By Thesis (FSS)

For the above three courses, the following has been agreed:

1. A one week blanket extension is to be given for submission of the thesis.
2. Students may include an impact statement to be taken into account by the examiners.