



Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE



Postgraduate Handbook 2025-26



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The Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

Welcome to the Faculty of Asian and Middle Studies for your Postgraduate Degree. Our Faculty prides itself for being inclusive and supportive of all its students.

Faculty website and address

Website: <https://www.ames.cam.ac.uk/>

Address: Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
Sidgwick Avenue
Cambridge
CB3 9DA

The Faculty consists of two Departments: the Department of East Asian Studies (DEAS) and Department of Middle Eastern Studies (DMES),

The **Faculty Co-chairs** are Prof. Laura Moretti (DEAS) and Prof. Amira Bennison (DMES).

1.1. Your key points of contact during your postgraduate studies

As a Postgraduate student in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies you have a few key contacts who are the main sources of advice and support while you are here.

Below is an outline summary of the key contacts. Important specifics are set out in later sections of this Handbook.

Supervisor

Every MPhil and PhD student in the Faculty has an academic **Supervisor**. Usually, you will already have been in contact with your Supervisor during the admissions process.

Your Supervisor is your main contact for all academic matters relating to your course. They meet with you to discuss your dissertation research (MPhil or PhD). If you are taking an MPhil by Advanced Study your Supervisor will also oversee your choice of any optional taught papers. Supervisors and students will agree on meetings and other communications depending on their individual programme of study.

The **Diploma Course Coordinator** provides similar academic support for Advanced Diploma students.

PhD students also have an **Advisor**, who is also able to offer academic advice and support additional to that of the Supervisor.

College Tutor

Every Postgraduate student has a **College Postgraduate Tutor**. Your Tutor is your key contact for advice on non-academic matters that affect your academic progress, such as mental and physical health, accommodation, financial, and personal matters. Note that your College Postgraduate Tutor can

provide advice on non-academic matters that you do not want to discuss with your Supervisor, including problems with your Supervisor that cannot be resolved within the Faculty.

It is very important that you inform your Tutor as early possible about any problems that are affecting your academic work. Where at all possible you should also inform your Supervisor.

Postgraduate Coordinators and Director of Postgraduate Studies

The Faculty's Postgraduate Programmes are led by five **Postgraduate Coordinators**. The Graduate Coordinators (otherwise known as Course Directors) have overall responsibility for course content, delivery and assessment and will monitor and support your progress.

Advanced Diploma in Hebrew Studies Coordinator: Dr Aaron Hornkohl (adh44@cam.ac.uk)

Chinese Studies: Dr Ling Zhang (lz231@cam.ac.uk)

Japanese Studies: Dr Vicky Young (vy202@cam.ac.uk)

Korean Studies: Dr Nuri Kim (nk588@cam.ac.uk)

Middle Eastern Studies: Dr Assef Ashraf (aa2098@cam.ac.uk)

Prof. Andrew Marsham, is the **Director of Postgraduate Studies** (otherwise known as Director of Postgraduate Education). As such he is responsible for oversight of the postgraduate students and courses in the Faculty. To contact Prof. Andrew Marsham: adm56@cam.ac.uk; Faculty office 204.

Postgraduate Administrator

The **Postgraduate Programmes Administrator** oversees all the administrative aspects of your course for the Faculty and is also able to provide information about your course of studies.

Postgraduate Programmes Administrator: Ms Florence Lindeman

Email: gpa@ames.cam.ac.uk

Telephone: 01223 335108

University Services and Support

For information about studying at Cambridge and the services and support provided by the University, see the [University web pages for Cambridge Students](#).

Student Representatives

Four MPhil and PhD **Postgraduate Student Representatives** for East Asian Studies and Middle Eastern Studies are elected annually by the Faculty's postgraduate students. The Student Representatives are an important connection between Faculty staff and the postgraduate student body. They are also a useful source of information and support for students.

To contact your Student Representatives, email: phd-reps@ames.cam.ac.uk or mphil-reps@ames.cam.ac.uk. Elections take place in Michaelmas Term 2025.

1.2. Communications and IT

Your university email address (@cam.ac.uk) and the Cambridge Student Information System (CamSIS) are the two official channels of communication between you, the Faculty, your College, and the University.

Please make sure that you:

- [Get your Cambridge login and set up your @cam email](#). Update your email 'display name' to your full name via the [University Directory](#) where you can edit 'your page' details. If you have any questions on how to do this, please contact [Florence Lindeman](#).
- Familiarise yourself with the [Cambridge Student Information System \(CamSIS\)](#), which is the University of Cambridge centralised database student record system. You will need to use CamSIS to monitor your progress, change your status, update your record and submit reports.
- Please make sure to use ONLY your @cam email for any communication with the Faculty.
- Familiarise yourself with the [Information Services Acceptable Use Policy](#).

1.3. Your responsibilities as a Postgraduate Student

1.2.1. Codes of Practice

As a Postgraduate Student with us you have specific responsibilities which are set out in the relevant Code of Practice. Please read carefully:

MPhil by Advanced Studies: [Code of Practice](#) (2025-26), "B Your responsibilities as a student."

MPhil by Research: [Code of Practice](#) (2025-26), "B Your responsibilities as a research student."

PhD: [Code of Practice](#) (2025-26), "B Your responsibilities as a research student."

1.2.2. University guidance for new students

Read carefully also the [University guidance for new students](#), which includes information about arrival, registration, rules and legal compliance, and much more.

1.2.3. Residency rules and work away

Please be mindful that the University of Cambridge has precise [rules about residency](#). Read them carefully and make sure that you abide by them. Students whose research requires them to spend a period of time away from their Faculty or Department must apply formally for permission to [work away](#).

1.2.4. Change of status

In case your situation requires a change of status, you must follow the guidance that you find on the [dedicated webpage](#). This includes needing to intermit (pause your studies), for medical or non-medical reasons.

1.2.5 Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

Please refer to the [dedicated university webpages](#).

You can find [HERE](#) a definition of academic misconduct.

Students should be aware that any work submitted for assessment purposes may be submitted to Turnitin UK software for screening. The Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies uses Turnitin UK to screen student work. Screening is carried out only if concerns are raised about the originality of work.

All work screened will be reviewed by the Academic Integrity Officer to determine whether further action may be necessary. Full details about Turnitin UK and your rights and responsibilities can be found on [the University's website](#).

1.2.6 Generative AI

The Faculty has published guidance on the use of Generative AI. Please find this [HERE](#).

We expect you to familiarise yourself with the contents of the above links.

1.4. The Degree Committee

The **Degree Committee** is the Committee that has responsibility for your Postgraduate Programme and examination, and for the approval of your degree. It reports to the Faculty Board, which is the committee which governs the Faculty. The composition of the Degree Committee is as follows:

Degree Committee 2025-26	
Chair of the Degree Committee	Professor Vincenzo Vergiani
Secretary to the Degree Committee and Director of Postgraduate Studies	Professor Andrew Marsham
Members of the Degree Committee	Dr Ling Zhang Dr Assef Ashraf Dr Nuri Kim Dr Ben Kantor Professor Yaron Peleg Professor Amira Bennison Dr Vicky Young Professor William Hurst Professor Aaron Koller For any update on the composition of the Degree Committee please check: https://www.ames.cam.ac.uk/about-us/faculty-governance/degree-committee

The Postgraduate Programmes Administrator supports the administration of the Degree Committee:
 Postgraduate Programmes Administrator: Ms Florence Lindeman
 Email: gpa@ames.cam.ac.uk
 Telephone: 01223 335108

For more information about the Staff of our Faculty please refer to the [Faculty Webpage](#).

1.5. Student Representation

Faculty student representatives

MPhil and PhD Postgraduate Student Representatives for East Asian Studies and Middle Eastern Studies are elected annually by the Faculty's postgraduate students. The four representatives serve on the (unreserved) Faculty committees, including the Departmental Meetings and Faculty Board and can also help to coordinate student-led academic and social activities associated with the Faculty, including the Postgraduate Research Day.

Please keep in touch with the student representatives, who are an important connection between Faculty staff and the postgraduate student body. They are also a useful source of information and support for students.

To contact your student representatives, email: phd-reps@ames.cam.ac.uk or mphil-reps@ames.cam.ac.uk. Elections take place in Michaelmas Term 2025.

Student unions

All postgraduate students are enrolled as members of the [Cambridge University Student Union](#), which is another important source of advice and support. In addition, your college will have its own union or unions – usually, the college postgraduate union is the MCR (Middle Common Room).

Staff-student liaison meetings

Meetings between academic and administrative members of the Faculty and postgraduate students take place twice a year, in early Lent and mid Easter Term. All postgraduates are welcome to attend. Items for the agenda should be sent to the Postgraduate Administrator at least one week before the meeting takes place: gpa@ames.cam.ac.uk

1.6. The Faculty building and related matters

The Faculty building is open Monday to Friday throughout the year (except for the Christmas and Easter holidays) from 8.30am until 6.00pm during Full Term and until 5.00pm outside of term time.

Swipe-Card System – 24-hour Access

In normal circumstances:

A swipe-card operating system allows postgraduate students to access the building and the Faculty Library at any time. Your University Card will automatically be registered and enabled to allow you access to the building through the front or rear doors. 24-hour access to the Faculty Library will only be granted once you have completed the Library's induction. This applies to both MPhil and PhD students.

Postgraduate Workspace

There is a designated space for all postgraduate students with hot desks in the Faculty Library. Hot desks are not assigned to anyone in particular and work on a 'first come, first to sit' basis. A copier/printer for student use can be found in the Faculty Library. This space also has a wi-fi connection which students can access via their Raven account or via Eduroam. All postgraduate students receive £50 printing/year. This equates to 1000 copies of double-sided mono printing, but only 33 pages of A3 colour (and anything in between).

The Kitchen

The Kitchen is on the ground floor of the Faculty and it is for the use of all staff and students. There is a fridge, hot water tap machine, and microwave. Supplies in the Kitchen are not communal. All users are expected to clean up after themselves.

First Aid

Anyone requiring First Aid should contact the nominated person(s) for First Aid: Flo Lindeman, tel: (3)35106 or Freddie Semple, tel: (7)64641, in the Faculty Office. If requiring First Aid out of hours, please call 999. First Aid boxes are located on the reception desk, in the Common Room and on the second and third floors. These contain essential First Aid items like plasters and bandages. If there is an emergency and no one is available in the Faculty, there are other First Aiders on the Sidgwick Site whose details are displayed in the Faculty Office as well as near the back door of the Faculty building to the right of the Common Room. For guidance relating to COVID-19, please see the university's guidance on [Respiratory illness, including COVID-19](#).

Health and Safety

Please find our Faculty Health and Safety Policy [here](#). Please read this carefully. If you have any concerns about Health and Safety, please contact the Faculty Manager Mr Glenn Garner, who acts as the Faculty's Safety Officer.

His contact number is 01223 335113 and email: ames-admin@ames.cam.ac.uk

Fire Alarm

If the alarm sounds, you must use the nearest available exit to leave the building as quickly as possible and report to the person in charge of the assembly point. The assembly point area is on the paved area on the west side of Little Hall. Do not stop to collect personal belongings or to use the lift. Do not re-enter the building until advised that it is safe to do so.

1.7. Recording of Teaching

The University has published a [policy](#) on the recording of Teaching Materials/Lectures, and other Teaching, Learning and Assessment Activities. Please note, the consent of the instructor (verbal or written) is required before any recording of lectures takes place. Recording of seminars, language classes, and interactive lectures is not allowed as consent from all the students in the classroom would be required.

This policy does not affect the rights of disabled students to record a lecture, as a reasonable adjustment under their Student Support Document (SSD), provided that: (1) the instructor does not have a reasonable justification to not allow the recording of a lecture; (2) they comply with the rules and restrictions set down by the University and issued by the Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre (ADRC). Staff members who have chosen not to consent to the recording of their lecture(s)/teaching materials should still permit individual disabled students to make recordings if this is recommended in their SSD, unless there is a reasonable justification not to allow any recording. Seminars cannot be recorded for the reasons mentioned above.

Advanced Diploma in Hebrew Studies

1.1 Overview

The course provides instruction in Hebrew language for students with a first degree whose knowledge of the language is at an intermediate or lower intermediate level at the time of entry with the objective of bringing their knowledge up to an advanced level. The advanced level Hebrew is intended to prepare students for two possible pathways after the course: (i) an MPhil degree with a research component, with a view to advancing thereafter to a PhD another career requiring high level language and research skills (ii) a career in specialist Hebrew language teaching.

Learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

At the end of the course students will be expected to (i) read Classical Hebrew texts with good understanding of the grammatical structure of the language and its vocabulary (Module 1), (ii) read and speak Modern Hebrew with good fluency and understanding (Module 2), (iii) have a good scholarly knowledge of the history of the language or have extended their language skills to include a knowledge of Aramaic up to preliminary level (Module 3).

Skills and other attributes

- Understanding of scholarly bibliographical tools and digital resources;
- Knowledge of the production of medieval Hebrew manuscripts (based on visits to the Cairo Genizah collection in the University Library);
- Presentation skills.

1.2 Programme structure

The Graduate Diploma in Hebrew Studies is a taught graduate course. It consists of three taught modules, assessed by written and oral examinations at the end of the course. It begins 1 October and end 30 June.

Module 1 (MT, LT and ET)
Classical Hebrew language

Module 2 (MT, LT and ET)
Modern Hebrew language

Module 3 (LT and ET)
Special subject: (i) History of the Hebrew language OR (ii) Introductory Aramaic

1.3 Teaching methods

Teaching is delivered in small group classes, seminars and supervisions. There are 6 contact hours per week for the three modules, one of which would be a supervision. Assignments and class work includes written work, reading practice, oral and aural skills and presentations.

1.4 Examination

Assessment is by written examination and oral examination (for Modern Hebrew) during the examination period in June:

Module 1: one written examination paper, including translation and grammatical parsing questions

Module 2: one written examination paper, including translation and grammatical parsing questions, and an oral examination in Modern spoken Hebrew

Module 3: *Either* (i) will be assessed by essay questions or (ii) will be assessed by one written examination paper, including translation and grammatical parsing questions.

Each module is equally weighted and is worth 33.3% of the final grade.

The Final Examiners Meeting to approve the marks will take place at the end of September/start of October.

1.5 Marking Scheme for Advanced Diploma in Hebrew Studies

The scale of marks used in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies for all parts of the Advanced Diploma in Hebrew Studies are as follows:

0-49 Fail

50-100 Pass

The Advanced Diploma in Hebrew Studies uses the [Undergraduate Tripos marking scheme](#). However, please note that the pass mark is different, as above.

Those students who are enrolled in the Advanced Diploma in Hebrew Studies at the University of Cambridge and wish to continue to the MPhil programme at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies will be required to obtain at least 65 per cent overall in their Advanced Diploma and satisfy any pre-existing requirements also set by the Degree Committee, such as an English language requirement. The prospective MPhil supervisor may also set additional criteria when deemed necessary (e.g., a particular grade for a particular paper).

Admission is at the discretion of the Degree Committee, which judges each applicant on their own merits and in accordance with its own set of rules and regulations.



MPhil Courses

MPhil by Advanced Studies

1.1. Overview of the MPhil by Advanced Studies

The MPhil by Advanced Studies allows you to study three taught modules and write a research dissertation of not more than 15,000 words. Students are also encouraged to engage in various training courses and reading groups, as well as the department's research seminars, the research seminars of the Centre for Islamic Studies, and the numerous research events taking place across the wider university.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the MPhil programme, students will be expected to have:

- acquired the ability to read, interpret and translate primary sources;
- acquired a good knowledge of the general scholarship on their discipline;
- acquired an in-depth knowledge of the secondary literature relevant to the subject of their dissertation;
- developed the ability to formulate original research questions and to produce a well-constructed argument to answer them, in the form of an independent piece of research based on the use of primary and secondary sources; and
- acquired the skills to use library and internet resources independently.

More information can be found for individual pathways:

[Chinese Studies](#)

[Japanese Studies](#)

[Korean Studies](#)

[Classical Islamic History and Culture](#)

[Hebrew and Pre-Modern Jewish History and Culture](#)

[Modern Middle Eastern Studies](#)

[Muslim-Jewish Relations](#)

[Hebrew and Semitic Studies](#)

Please read carefully the [Code of Practice for Masters Students \(MPhil by Advanced Study\) \(2025-26\)](#). You are required to go through this with your supervisor and to submit a signed copy of the declaration on page 4 to the Postgraduate Programmes Administrator (gpa@ames.cam.ac.uk) by the end of the second week of Michaelmas Term.

1.2. Teaching

For the **taught element** of the course, you will take papers that involve lectures and seminars. Links to the lists of available papers in each pathway can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Alongside the taught element, you will engage with your research project under the guidance of your supervisor and in the form of supervisions.

Supervisor:

Each student is assigned a Principal Research Supervisor. Your supervisor is appointed by the Degree Committee. Your supervisor will be in a field that specialises in your area of interest. They will advise you on the choice of options and your dissertation topic. In particular, the dissertation topic must be discussed with the supervisor early in the academic year and it must be approved by the Degree Committee at its meeting in Lent Term. Your supervisor will provide guidance at all stages of the dissertation and comment on the final draft or a close approximation to it. You should maintain regular communication with your supervisor and feel free to ask for scholarly guidance.

Supervisions:

Depending on the nature of your project, and in full consultation with your supervisor, you can expect to receive a minimum of four hours supervision for your dissertation. The purpose of these supervisions is to assist with your research, arguments and structure, not to provide copy editing or proofreading.

For further information, please refer to the relevant [Code of Practice](#).

1.3. Examination

The scheme of examination for the one-year course of study in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies for the degree of Master of Philosophy shall consist of:

- (a) Three papers on topics relating to the student's chosen pathway. Each paper is assessed usually by an essay of not more than 5,000 words. Papers can also be assessed by examination, or equivalent alternative exercise approved by the Degree Committee. Available papers are specified by the Degree Committee not later than the end of the first quarter of the Michaelmas Term each year and all paper choices must be approved by the Degree Committee.
- (b) A dissertation of not more than 15,000 words, including footnotes and appendices but excluding bibliography, on a subject approved by the Degree Committee.
- (c) The examination may include, at the discretion of the Degree Committee, an oral examination on the dissertation and on the general field of knowledge within which it falls.

Additional notes on examination:

- The essays or alternative exercises and/or examinations make up 50% of the final mark, with the dissertation making up the other 50%.
- The oral examination is only conducted in exceptional circumstances if the examiners deem it to be necessary.
- Students must use some original language sources in their dissertations and essays.
- The rules for examination are stipulated in the [Statutes and Ordinances, Chapter VII](#).

1.4. Essays (MPhil AS)

1.4.1. Essay word count

MPhil essays should not be longer than 5,000 words.

All text written in English in the body of the text, footnotes and appendices count towards the word count of a maximum of 5,000 words. Quotations from primary sources in the original language do not count towards the total word count. These quotations need to be translated into English, and the translation will count toward the final word count. The bibliography is not part of the word count.

The word count limit given for assignments is strict. Anything above the word limit will not be considered by the examiner.

Please consult with your supervisor for citation and transliteration conventions.

1.4.2. Essay submission

Those students who are submitting essays as part of their degree must submit an electronic pdf copy of each essay to: gpa@ames.cam.ac.uk

You should attach a front cover sheet to your essay, which should include the following information:

- Course Name and Paper Code
- The Title of Your Essay
- Your Blind Grade Number
- The Word Count
- Date of Submission

The Postgraduate Administrator will send you your Blind Grade Number at the beginning of term.

You must also fill in and submit a 'Statement of Originality for Submitted Work' (Declaration Form) for each piece of work, which can be downloaded from the [Faculty Intranet](#).

We do not require a synopsis or abstract.

Please note that it is **not possible** to 'retract submission' or to send a revised copy of your essay directly to your examiners. Therefore you should **very carefully check** the file(s) you submit.

1.4.3. Essay deadline

Unless otherwise agreed the deadline for submission for all Essays and Alternative Exercises will be noon on **Monday 4 May 2026**. Electronic pdf copies of your Essay(s) and Alternative Exercise(s) and any other documents needed by the office must reach the Faculty Office by 12 noon on this date.

The penalty for lateness is 1 point per 24-hour period, or part thereof (including weekends and other times when the office is closed).

1.4.4. Requesting an extension

If you need to request an extension to the submission deadline for your essay, the request must be sent to the Postgraduate Programmes Administrator (gpa@ames.cam.ac.uk) as soon as possible, and usually two weeks before the deadline at the very latest.

Please note that students are expected to plan for some unexpected contingencies in preparing their coursework and so only the most disruptive and unexpected events will be considered in the last two weeks before the deadline.

Your request needs to be accompanied by:

- An explanation of the circumstances that are forcing you to ask for an extension.
- Requested submission date.
- A letter of support from your Supervisor.
- If your request is due to medical circumstances, please provide medical evidence.
- For other circumstances, please also provide relevant evidence and/or a letter from your College Tutor.

Your request will be assessed by the Degree Committee, and the decision will be communicated to you by the Postgraduate Programmes Administrator.

1.4.5. Plagiarism

Please refer to [section 1.2.5](#).

1.5. Dissertation (MPhil AS)

1.5.1. Dissertation word count (MPhil by Advanced Studies)

All text written in English in the body of the text, footnotes and appendices counts towards the word count of a maximum of **15,000 words**. Quotations from primary sources in the original language do not count towards the total word count. These quotations need to be translated into English, and the translation will count toward the final word count. The bibliography is not part of the word count.

The word count limit given for assignments is strict. Anything above the word limit will not be considered by the examiner.

Please consult with your supervisor for citation and transliteration conventions.

1.5.2. Dissertation submission (MPhil by Advanced Studies)

You must submit an electronic pdf copy of your dissertation to: gpa@ames.cam.ac.uk

You should attach a title page containing the following information:

- The Title of Your MPhil Thesis
- Your Blind Grade Number
- Your College
- Name of supervisor
- Word count
- The Date and a Declaration Stating:
'This Thesis is submitted for the Degree of Master of Philosophy'.
- A Declaration stating: This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration nor with AI assistance except where specifically indicated in the text.

The Postgraduate Administrator will send you your Blind Grade Number at the beginning of term.

All MPhil dissertations must include a brief abstract at the start of the thesis of no more than 400 words. This does not count towards the total word count.

You will also be required to complete one MPhil Certificate of Submission Form and one Statement of Originality Declaration Form. They can be downloaded from the [Faculty Intranet](#).

NB: Please ensure that you include the Declaration Form in the dissertation pdf file, but please send the MPhil Certificate of Submission Form as a separate document.

Please note that it is **not possible** to 'retract submission' or to send a revised copy of your dissertation directly to your examiners. Therefore you should **very carefully check** the file(s) you submit.

1.5.3. Dissertation deadline (MPhil by Advanced Studies)

The deadline for submission of the electronic pdf copies for all MPhil dissertations is **Monday 10th August 2026**. Electronic pdf copies of your dissertation (and any other documents needed by the office) must reach the Faculty Office by 12 noon on this date.

The penalty for lateness is 1 point per 24-hour period, or part thereof (including weekends and other times when the office is closed).

1.5.4. Requests for extensions

If you have serious difficulties meeting a deadline, such as an acute serious illness or a family emergency, you must notify as soon as possible: (1) your College Postgraduate Tutor, (2) your Supervisor, and (3) the Postgraduate Programmes Administrator. It is particularly important that you report any difficulties that are affecting your work to your College Postgraduate Tutor as soon as possible. Your College Postgraduate Tutor has the main responsibility for advising and assisting you in these circumstances.

Where the extension request is likely to affect your work being assessed before the Final Examiner Meeting you must complete it via your on-line [CamSIS Self-Service page](#). Note, however, that extensions are not granted for more than one month, and that prolonged breaks in study because of serious illness or a family emergency require an intermission. Please contact the Postgraduate Programmes Administrator at gpa@ames.cam.ac.uk if you have any questions.

If your requested extension date is less than 7 days and so will not affect your work being assessed before the Final Examiner meeting, please refer to the sub-section on 'Requesting an Extension' under 1.4 Essays and provide the information required.

Please read carefully the [University guidance on extending submission dates](#) and [how to submit your application](#). We would like to draw attention to the fact that documentary evidence for the reason for the extension is required.

1.5.5. Plagiarism

We take plagiarism very seriously and we invite you to read carefully the Faculty [Guidelines on Plagiarism](#). More details can be found on the [dedicated University page](#). Please also read the Faculty guidelines on the use of Generative AI [HERE](#).

1.5.6. Research Ethics Questionnaire

If your dissertation research requires you to undertake fieldwork involving interviews, questionnaires and participant observation, please complete and submit a [Research Ethics Assessment Questionnaire](#), with the approval of your supervisor. Questionnaires should be submitted to the Postgraduate Administrator at: gpa@ames.cam.ac.uk.

This questionnaire will be considered for approval by the Department. Complex and high-risk ethics issues in research projects will be forwarded to the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee for review. Please ensure that you submit a Research Ethics Assessment Questionnaire in good time to avoid delays to your research.

MPhil by Research

1.1. Overview of the MPhil by Research

The MPhil by Research is a one-year research course, for highly motivated students who wish to pursue an extended research project in a chosen topic. On this course postgraduates will work independently under the supervision of their Principal Supervisor to produce a research thesis of not more than 25,000 words.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the MPhil programme, students will be expected to have:

- acquired the ability to read, interpret and translate primary sources;
- acquired a good knowledge of the general scholarship on their discipline;
- acquired an in-depth knowledge of the secondary literature relevant to the subject of their thesis;
- developed the ability to formulate original research questions and to produce a well-constructed argument to answer them, in the form of an independent piece of research based on the use of primary and secondary sources;
- acquired the skills to use library and internet resources independently;
- strengthened the ability to pursue an extended research project independently;

More information can be found for individual pathways:

[Chinese Studies](#)

[Japanese Studies](#)

[Korean Studies](#)

[Middle Eastern Studies](#)

Please read carefully the [Code of Practice](#) (2025-26). You are required to go through this with your supervisor and to submit a signed copy of the declaration on page 4 to the Postgraduate Programmes Administrator (gpa@ames.cam.ac.uk) by the end of the second week of Michaelmas Term.

1.2. Learning

During your MPhil by Research you will work on your research project under the guidance of your Supervisor and in the form of supervisions. There is no taught component, but you are expected to attend the core module for your pathway. Please refer to [Appendix A](#) and the links therein to familiarize yourself with what is the core module in your chosen pathway.

Supervisor:

Each student is assigned a Principal Research Supervisor. Your supervisor is appointed by the Degree Committee. Your supervisor will be in a field that specialises in your area of interest. They will advise you on your thesis topic; the thesis topic must be discussed with the supervisor early in the academic year and it must be approved by the Degree Committee at its meeting in Lent Term. Your supervisor will provide guidance at all stages of the thesis and comment on the final draft or a close approximation to it. You should maintain regular communication with your supervisor and feel free to ask for scholarly guidance.

Supervisions:

Students will be offered a minimum of 10 hours to support thesis research and writing. The final number of hours will be agreed upon with the supervisor depending on students' need and progress.

For further information, please refer to the relevant [Code of Practice](#) (2025-26).

1.3. Examination

([from Chapter VII of the Statutes and Ordinances](#))

The scheme of examination for the one-year course of study in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (Research) for the degree of Master of Philosophy shall consist of a thesis of not more than 25,000 words in length, including footnotes and appendices but excluding bibliography, on a subject approved by the Degree Committee for the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies falling within the pathways specified at the end of this regulation. The examination shall include an oral examination on the thesis and on the general field of knowledge within which it falls (refer to '[Oral Examination](#)' section under Marking for MPhil Courses).

Additional notes on examination:

- Students must use some original language sources in their thesis.
- After the viva, the examiners report their recommendations to the Degree Committee. Students are awarded a Pass or Fail.

1.4. Thesis (MPhil by Research)

1.4.1. Thesis word count (MPhil by Research)

All text written in English in the body of the text, footnotes and appendices count towards the word count of a maximum of **25,000 words**. Quotations from primary sources in the original language do not count towards the total word count. These quotations need to be translated into English and the translation will count toward the final word count. The bibliography is not part of the word count.

The word count limit given for assignments is strict. Anything above the word limit will not be considered by the examiner. MPhil by Research students can request that they be allowed to submit an appendix as part of their thesis submission. The maximum wordcount of the appendix is 25% of the maximum wordcount, i.e. 6,250 words. Requests will be considered case-by-case by the Degree Committee. The examiner would not be obliged to take the appendix into account. Therefore, appendixes cannot contain any new argument.

Please consult with your supervisor for citation and transliteration conventions.

1.4.2. Submission of thesis (MPhil by Research)

Please submit an electronic pdf copy of your thesis to gpa@ames.cam.ac.uk.

You should attach a title page containing the following information:

- The Title of Your MPhil Thesis
- Your Name (as it appears on your passport)
- Your College
- Name of supervisor
- Word count
- The Date and a Declaration Stating:
'This Thesis is submitted for the Degree of Master of Philosophy'.
- A Declaration stating: This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration nor with AI assistance except where specifically indicated in the text.

All MPhil theses must include a brief abstract at the start of the thesis of no more than 400 words. This does not count towards the total word count.

You will also be required to complete and include with your thesis an MPhil Certificate of Submission Form and a Declaration Form. They can be downloaded from the [Faculty Intranet](#).

1.4.3. Deadline for thesis submission (MPhil by Research)

The deadline for submission of electronic pdf copies for all MPhil theses is **Monday 10th August 2026**. Electronic pdf copies of your thesis (and any other documents needed by the office) must reach the Faculty Office by 12 noon on this date.

1.4.4. Requests for extensions

If you have serious difficulties meeting a deadline, such as an acute serious illness or a family emergency, you must notify as soon as possible: (1) your College Postgraduate Tutor, (2) your Supervisor, and (3) the Postgraduate Programmes Administrator. It is particularly important that you report any difficulties that are affecting your work to your College Postgraduate Tutor as soon as possible. Your College Postgraduate Tutor has the main responsibility for advising and assisting you in these circumstances.

Where the extension request is likely to affect your work being assessed before the September Degree Committee Meeting, you must complete it via your on-line [CamSIS Self-Service page](#). Note, however, that extensions are not granted for more than one month, and that prolonged breaks in study because of serious illness or a family emergency require an intermission.

Please read carefully the [University guidance on extending submission dates](#) and [how to submit your application](#). We would like to draw attention to the fact that documentary evidence for the reason for the extension is required.

If your requested extension date is less than 7 days and so will not affect your work being assessed before the Final Examiner meeting, please refer to the sub-section on 'Requesting an Extension' under 1.4 Essays and provide the information required.

1.4.5. Plagiarism

We take plagiarism very seriously and we invite you to read carefully the Faculty [Guidelines on Plagiarism](#). More details can be found on the [dedicated University page](#). Please also refer to [section 1.2.5](#).

Please also read the Faculty guidelines on the use of Generative AI [HERE](#).

1.5.6. Research Ethics Questionnaire

If your dissertation research requires you to undertake fieldwork involving interviews, questionnaires and participant observation, please complete and submit a [Research Ethics Assessment Questionnaire](#), with the approval of your supervisor. Questionnaires should be submitted to the Postgraduate Administrator at: gpa@ames.cam.ac.uk.

This questionnaire will be considered for approval by the Department. Complex and high-risk ethics issues in research projects will be forwarded to the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee for review. Please ensure that you submit this in good time to avoid delays to your research.

Marking for MPhil Courses

1.1. Marking Scheme for MPhil by Advanced Study essays and dissertations

The scale of marks used in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies for all parts of the 1-Year MPhil in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies degree(s) are as follows:

0-59	Fail
60-100	Pass
75+	Distinction

In order to pass, the written examination papers, essays or alternative exercises must be clearly written and must, depending on the nature of the examination show evidence of the candidate's linguistic skills, command of the relevant literature and ability to sustain a cogent argument. The dissertation must be clearly written, must take account of previously published work on the subject and must represent a contribution to learning.

The following marking criteria are applied when marking, with equivalent criteria in the case of translations and other forms of written work:

0-59 No clearly articulated line of argument: evidence presented but unexamined; major sources not represented and confusing use of sources; inadequate research tools and uncertain or distorted grasp of issues; poor overall coverage and understanding of the topic; work poorly put together; presence of irrelevant and/or extraneous material.

60-66 Some knowledge of the subject but little evidence of independent thinking; unimaginative use of evidence and some useful sources not utilised; some attempt at a logical and focussed argument; largely reliant upon secondary material; a very modest contribution to learning.

67-74 Comprehensive knowledge of the subject with evidence of independent thinking; appropriate assessment of the evidence used; critical approach to the opinions of others; logical and focussed argument.

75+ Demonstrates extensive knowledge and excellent conceptual understanding with well-balanced independent evaluation of the evidence and the opinions of others; original and imaginative treatment with evidence of insight and scholarship; confident and appropriate use of research tools. This mark carries the award of a Distinction.

A mark of 59 or less is a Fail.

1.2. Weighting

For students doing an [MPhil by Advanced Studies](#), the examination consists of two parts of equal weight: (1) the three written papers (or alternative exercises) and (2) the dissertation. Candidates are required to pass in each part separately. However, in the case of a candidate whose failure in the written papers is marginal (57-59%) but who achieves a high performance (67 or more) in the dissertation, the Degree Committee *may* take this into account when determining its recommendation

to the Student Registry. Similarly, in the case of a marginal failure (57-59%) in the dissertation, the Degree Committee *may* take into account a high performance (65 or more) in written papers.

An oral examination is only conducted for the MPhil AS [only in exceptional circumstances if the examiners deem it necessary](#).

For students doing an [MPhil by Research](#), the dissertation is worth 100% of their degree.

1.3. Oral examination (*viva voce*) (MPhil by Research)

Students taking their [MPhil in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies by Research](#), will be required to have an oral examination (*viva voce*) on the thesis and on the general field of knowledge in which it falls. The viva will allow the examiners to explore specific aspects of the thesis, including questions about any further research they might wish to undertake; candidates may also be required to demonstrate a practical application of their ability to handle literary or other material used in research. The oral examination is usually conducted by the two examiners for the thesis and should last about an hour. The examiners will produce reports for your thesis and oral examination.

The possible outcomes of the oral examination (and therefore of your thesis) are as follows:

- Pass (with no corrections)
- Pass (with minor corrections - up to 3 weeks for revisions)
- Pass (with major corrections - up to 6 weeks for revisions)
- Revision and resubmission of the MPhil thesis.
- Fail

If the outcome is for revision and resubmission of the MPhil thesis, you will have to have a completely new examination. This will also mean that you will have another viva examination. This will have a deadline of 10 weeks within which you have to resubmit your thesis. You will then go through the examiners' reports very carefully with your supervisor who will advise and help you address the recommendations. The process that follows resubmission is the same as the one outlined for the submission.

1.4. Hearing about outcomes

Students taking the MPhil by Advanced Study will receive provisional marks in late June after their essays and alternative exercises have been assessed. All students will receive their final agreed marks following the Degree Committee meeting at the end of September. Marks can only be released **after this meeting** and not before. You will receive your examiners' reports for essays/exams following the June meeting, and your examiners' reports for your dissertation after the September meeting.

Students taking the MPhil by Research will receive communication about the results of the oral examination after the Degree Committee has reviewed the examiners' comments and has made a decision on how to proceed. Normally you will be notified after the Degree Committee meeting at the end of September.

Please note that you may hear about your marks and results of oral examination later than indicated above in cases where you have been granted an extension or extensions.

1.5. Proceeding from MPhil to PhD

MPhil by Advanced Study students who are made a conditional offer to continue to the PhD programme at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies will usually be required to obtain at least 67 per cent overall in their MPhil by Advanced Studies degree.

The standard offer condition for MPhil by Research students who are made a conditional offer to continue to the PhD programme at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies is a Pass or above in your current course at the University of Cambridge.

Applicants for the PhD to whom offers are made also need to satisfy any additional requirements set by the Degree Committee.

The Degree Committee will consider applications to continue to the PhD on their individual merits. Admission to the PhD will *not* automatically be granted on the basis of MPhil examination results alone.

All students must apply to continue in the official way by completing the relevant application form on the Graduate Admissions Office [Applicant Portal](#). Students are advised to contact their prospective supervisor as soon as possible and to familiarise themselves with all the deadlines. Please note that funding deadlines are often as early as the beginning of December.

Please note that final marks are not approved until the Degree Committee meeting on 29th September. If you require a visa, you may not be able to start your PhD on 6th October 2026. You have until the division of Michaelmas Term (9 November 2026) to obtain your visa and enrol in the course. We will not release marks early, even for visa concerns.



PhD Programmes

1.1. Overview of the PhD programmes

The PhD is a 3-4 year programme of independent research at the end of which the student is expected to produce an original thesis which is a substantial scholarly contribution to the field of study. The programme consists of individual supervisions and guided research. Students are given guidance in areas specific to their subject and in advanced research methods. Students usually start their PhD course at the beginning of Michaelmas term (beginning of October of any academic year), but they may also start in Lent or in Easter term. At the end of the PhD students are expected to submit an 80,000-word thesis after completing three (or at most four) years of research.

Please read carefully the [Code of Practice for Research Students](#) (2026-25). You are required to go through this with your supervisor and to submit a signed copy of the declaration on page 4 to the Postgraduate Programmes Administrator (gpa@ames.cam.ac.uk) by the end of the second week of Michaelmas Term.

1.2. Learning

The bulk of your learning experience in a PhD revolves around your independent work on your research project under the guidance of your Supervisor (or Principal Research Supervisor).

1.2.1 Your Supervisory Team

Supervisor (PhD):

Each student is assigned a PhD Principal Research Supervisor. Your supervisor is officially appointed by the Degree Committee. Your supervisor will be in a field that specialises in your area of interest. Students may have expressed a preference for a particular supervisor on their application form, and whenever possible the Degree Committee will take that into consideration. Under special circumstances the Degree Committee may recommend a different supervisor, and the student will be informed of its decision.

About the role of your Supervisor please read carefully the [Code of Practice](#) (2025-26).

Supervisions (PhD):

Supervision is a very individual teaching method. Students are therefore encouraged to contact their supervisors and discuss how regularly they will meet; how contact will be maintained; whether the supervisor or student should initiate contacts; what kinds of work should be submitted and when. Supervisors should also advise students on suitable seminars to attend, skills courses and other activities. PhD students can expect at least two supervisions per term with their supervisor. The final number of hours will be agreed upon with the supervisor depending on students' need and progress.

Academic Adviser:

Each student is also assigned an Academic Advisor. Your Advisor might not be in the same Faculty/Department, but will be in a broadly similar research area. They will be able to bring sufficient expertise to your supervisory team to act as a source of advice on matters relating to your research and research environment; and to provide supervisory cover if appropriate in the absence of your Supervisor. Your Advisor may make him or herself available to read your work and discuss your progress.

About the role of your Advisor please read carefully the [Code of Practice](#) (2025-26).

1.2.2 Fieldwork

Most students conduct fieldwork as part of their research in their second and/or third year. There is an opportunity to apply for funding for fieldwork, and a call for applications will normally be sent out in September/October of each year, with another call the following March, funds permitting.

When undertaking fieldwork you will need to request [leave to work away](#) from Cambridge via your CamSIS self-service. You will be required to upload a [risk assessment form](#) as part of your request. Please note that you will need to apply for Leave to Work Away for all research trips of two weeks or more, regardless of when they take place.

1.2.3 Terms of Residence

The University year consists of three terms. Term dates are published on the University's website ([University of Cambridge Term Dates](#)). **Research students are expected also to be in attendance and actively working on their research between terms**, except during periods of holiday agreed with their supervisor, not normally exceeding 8 weeks in a 12-month period.

You must read the [University Guidance on keeping your terms of residence](#). Although the minimum residence requirement is three terms, full-time students are expected to be in Cambridge throughout their studies unless they have valid academic reasons for [working away from Cambridge](#) for any of the remaining terms. For more details please read carefully the dedicated [University page](#).

1.3. Your PhD year by year

1.3.1. First year PHD

1.3.1.2. *Researcher development*

The Degree Committee requires that, during the first year, PhD students attend at least three seminars, workshops or courses a term (MT and LT), in addition to the academic guidance offered by their supervisors. This can be in the form of postgraduate papers offered at MPhil level, lecture series, activities offered by the [Researcher Development Programme](#), etc. You should agree with your supervisor a programme of training to develop your research skills.

Students are required to keep a log of their Researcher Development activities in their [Doctoral Student Researcher Development Logbook](#).

1.3.1.3. *PhD Progress Examination*

PhD students admitted to Asian and Middle Eastern Studies are not at first registered for a specific degree. They are simply admitted to undertake research in their general area of interest. During the **third term** of their first year or within 30 weeks of starting they are required to pass a PhD Progress Examination. Part-time students are expected to submit their first-year progress exam in their 5th term (or 7th at the very latest). The purpose of the Progress Examination is to assess the work they have completed so far and to assess the prospects for the successful completion of their research. Once they have passed this examination, they are then registered for the PhD degree.

The PhD Progress Examination in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies usually consists of a Critical Essay and a General Statement about progress to date and the likely course of future research. In certain circumstances, however, it may be appropriate for the PhD Progress Examination to take a different form and to include, for example, a test in a language that is deemed to be essential for the

successful completion of the candidate's research. Both parts of the PhD Progress Examination should be submitted by the beginning of the third term of research; an oral examination may be held at the examiners' discretion.

The Critical Essay

The student, in consultation with his or her supervisor, must choose the subject of the essay, and the Degree Committee must then approve the title. The essay will naturally be closely related to the subject of the student's research (typically it might take the form of a chapter or part of a chapter of the future thesis), and it should demonstrate the skills that will be expected of the student during their research. The skills required will vary from subject to subject, but in most cases students will be expected to demonstrate the following areas of competence:

- the careful and critical use of primary source material
- revising or expanding the arguments contained in secondary sources
- weighing up the arguments of secondary authorities and testing them against each other
- relating the subject of research to the broader context into which it falls.

In sum, the essay should demonstrate that the candidate has both the necessary skills for successfully completing the proposed research and that the chosen subject of research is amenable to scholarly treatment. The essay should be fully annotated and be accompanied by full bibliographic references and by translations of primary source materials where necessary.

Length of the Critical Essay:

All text written in English in the body of the text, footnotes and appendices count towards the word count of a maximum of **10,000 words**. Quotations from primary sources in the original language do not count towards the total word count. These quotations need to be translated into English and the translation will count toward the final word count. The bibliography is not part of the word count.

The General Statement

The General Statement should describe the scope of the student's research in terms that are intelligible to non-specialists, since it will be seen by members of the Degree Committee before deciding whether or not the candidate should be registered for the PhD Degree. The general statement is essentially a thesis prospectus.

The General Statement should consist of the following three elements:

1. A clear description of the subject of research, its importance and any problems that it poses. If any particular methods, methodological approaches or techniques are being used, they should be explained and their use justified. It is important too that the Degree Committee be given some idea of how the student proposes to organise and write up their material.
2. An account of the sources being used for the research and where they are to be found. The Degree Committee will also want to see a full bibliography of secondary material relevant to the subject of research (note that this bibliography falls outside of the word count).
3. A description of what the student has achieved so far and the progress that has been made. The Degree Committee will expect students to give a realistic assessment of their work and to explain how it relates to the thesis the student is proposing to write.

Length of the General Statement:

The General Statement should be *no more than* **3,000 words** exclusive of the full bibliography.

Research Ethics Assessment Questionnaire

If your research requires you to undertake fieldwork involving interviews, questionnaires and participant observation, please complete and submit a Research Ethics Assessment Questionnaire along with your Critical Essay and General Statement. The questionnaire can be found on the [Faculty Intranet](#). This will be considered by your examiners as part of the assessment.

Your Critical Essay, General Statement and your Research Ethics Questionnaire should be submitted by the following deadlines:

1st Year Progress Examination Submission Dates

Term Started PhD	Date of 1 st Year Progress Submission
MT2025	4 th May 2026 noon
LT2025	3 rd August 2026 noon
ET2025	9 th November 2026 noon

Please note that part-time students will be contacted directly by the postgraduate administrator with their submission date.

Please submit both a pdf version of your submission and a '[Statement of Originality for Submitted Work](#)' (Declaration Form) to the Postgraduate Programme Administrator at gpa@ames.cam.ac.uk by the deadline.

The PhD progress examination is assessed by two examiners, usually although not always both internal. One internal examiner may be the student's Advisor. The two examiners will assess the written work and send reports to be approved by the Degree Committee. The possible outcomes are as follows:

- The work presented is sufficient to recommend that the student be registered for the PhD.
- Recommendation that the student rewrites and resubmits the essay, the statement, or both if one or both of the examiners recommends this in their reports.
- Recommendation of registration for a lower degree, such as an MLitt.
- Failure and termination of study at the University.

The outcomes will be communicated to the student by the Postgraduate Administrator following the Degree Committee meeting where the examiners' reports are reviewed.

If resubmission is recommended, the work should be resubmitted **within three months** unless the student, with the supervisor's approval, presents a good case for a further extension. The resubmission should be on the original project, not a new one.

Students who fail to satisfy the examiners after a resubmission will be recommended for registration for a lower degree or failed.

1.3.1.4. Requests for extensions

If you have serious difficulties meeting a deadline, such as an acute serious illness or a family emergency, you must notify as soon as possible: (1) your College Graduate Tutor, (2) your Supervisor, and (3) the Postgraduate Programmes Administrator. It is particularly important that you report any difficulties that are affecting your work to your College Postgraduate Tutor as soon as possible because your College Postgraduate Tutor has the main responsibility for advising and assisting you in these circumstances.

Your extension request needs to be sent as soon as possible to the Postgraduate Programmes Administrator: Ms Florence Lindeman. Email: gpa@ames.cam.ac.uk

Your request needs to be accompanied by:

- An explanation of the circumstances that are forcing you to ask for an extension.
- Requested submission date.
- A letter of support from your Supervisor.
- If your request is due to medical circumstances, please provide medical evidence.

Your request will be assessed by the Degree Committee, and the decision will be communicated to you by the Postgraduate Programmes Administrator.

1.3.2. Second Year PhD

By the end of the second year (sixth term of PhD study), students undergo a Second Year Progress Report Assessment. Part-time students are required to submit their 2nd year report in the 10th term of their degree. The purpose of the assessment is to encourage timely and efficient submission of the thesis. Students submit a 1,500+ word report and a schedule of their final year's work.

The report should clearly outline the research that the student has done in their second year. Depending on the nature of the student's research, this includes indicating what sources have been read, what fieldwork has been undertaken, and what kind of interviews have been conducted. The report should also highlight the findings the student has been able to obtain through this research. The schedule should give a timeline of where the student is in their studies with dates and details of each task up until they are due to finally submit their PhD thesis.

The report and schedule will usually be assessed by one academic, appointed by the Degree Committee. The assessor writes a report for review by the Degree Committee. The report will be made available to the students by the Postgraduate Administrator following the Degree Committee where the assessor's report is reviewed.

The schedule might look as follows:

Task	Details of Task	Planned Completion Deadline
1 Complete final draft of chapter two of thesis	Review recommendations from supervisor	End of November 2026
2. Complete chapter three of thesis.	Write up chapter three of thesis and ensure that list of primary and secondary sources are listed in bibliography. Submit work to supervisor for approval.	End of March 2026
3. Attend Archives in The British Library.	Ensure that I have gathered and compiled a complete list of sources from The British Library.	End of June 2026
4. Give Conference Paper at FAMES Symposium.	Ensure that conference paper is completed and ready for FAMES Symposium.	End of July 2026
Etc.		

A draft chapter can also be submitted if the student is asked to do so by their supervisor or by the academic assessing their work.

Your progress report should be submitted by the following deadlines:

2nd Year Progress Report Submission

Term Started PhD	Date of 2 nd Year Progress Report Submission
MT2024	20 th July 2026 noon
LT2024	19 th October 2026 noon
ET2024	25 th January 2027 noon

Please submit a pdf version of your submission and a '[Statement of Originality for Submitted Work](#)' (Declaration Form) to the Postgraduate Programmes Administrator at gpa@ames.cam.ac.uk by the deadline.

1.3.3. Third- and fourth-year PhD

Students are normally expected to submit their PhD thesis after three years of work. They have an additional fourth year if it is needed to finish writing up and submit.

1.3.3.1. Submission and approval of title

The submission date is set by the Student Registry on enrolment to the course. There is no formal process by which the final title is approved, if it changes from that which is used for the first-year

progress exam. We have not found this necessary, so long as the supervisor is aware and happy about any changes.

1.3.3.2. Appointment of examiners

At least two months before you propose to submit your thesis, you should ask your supervisor to appoint your examiners. Normally, you will have two examiners, one 'internal' who is familiar with the Cambridge system, the other 'external', although this may vary depending on your subject. You should expect to be consulted by your supervisor about examiners, but the examiners will be contacted by and nominated by your supervisor (via an [online nomination form](#)) and appointed by the Degree Committee. All PhD students must have their examiners approved by the Degree Committee **at least one month** before submitting their work to the Board. Once you have jointly agreed upon the examiners, your supervisor will submit their names to the Degree Committee for formal approval. If you are not happy with the examiners chosen for your viva, you will need to make a formal case in writing to the Degree Committee stating why you are not happy with the examiners chosen. Please note that the Degree Committee has the authority to either agree to a change of examiners or to agree that the examiners remain as chosen by your supervisor.

1.3.3.3. PhD thesis

Word count

The thesis for the PhD degree is not to exceed 80,000 words exclusive of footnotes, appendices and bibliography but subject to an overall word limit of 100,000 words exclusive of bibliography. Quotations from primary sources in the original language do not count towards the total word count. These quotations need to be translated into English and the translation will count toward the final word count. Students may apply to include appendices that are exempted from the word count. To be eligible for exemption, appendices must be of a non-discursive nature such as lists of linguistic examples, transcriptions of excerpts from works, interviews, inscriptions, archival documents, and critical editions. Applications are considered on a case-by-case basis and are subject to the approval of the Degree Committee.

For the MLitt degree, the thesis is not to exceed 60,000 words inclusive of footnotes but exclusive of bibliography and appendices.

If you wish to exceed the word limit for any other reason, you will need to apply for permission from the DC, making an academic case with your supervisor's written approval. [See further here the university web pages on applying for permission](#). Please note that permission to extend the word limit is rarely granted.

Submission

All you need to know about submitting your PhD thesis can be found on the [dedicated webpage](#). Please read this information carefully. Please submit a pdf copy of your thesis to the Faculty, by sending it to the Postgraduate Programmes Administrator (gpa@ames.cam.ac.uk).

The Student Registry will be informed of your submission and update your CamSIS profile accordingly. If you have not heard from the Degree Committee within six weeks of submitting your thesis, do contact them. Any questions about your thesis at this stage should be directed to the Degree Committee.

Deadlines

The deadline for submission is indicated on your CamSIS page.

Request of an extension for the submission of the PhD thesis:

The Faculty discourages PhD students to go beyond four years for the submission of the PhD thesis. If you need an extension, please read carefully the [University guidance](#) on this matter. Note that applications for extensions should only be submitted if you know that you need additional time and not 'just in case' you do.

Plagiarism

Please refer to [section 1.2.5](#).

Please also read the Faculty guidelines on the use of Generative AI [HERE](#).

1.3.3.4. The Oral Examination (viva voce or viva) and its possible outcomes

All information about the oral examination can be found on the [dedicated University webpage](#).

The *viva* should normally be held within three months from the date on which you submitted your thesis; you will be contacted by the internal examiner or invigilator to make arrangements for a date, time and location.

By default your oral examination will take place in-person in the Faculty or in the College room of the internal examiner. You have the option of choosing an online viva instead. A guide to conducting vivas via video conference can be found [here](#). Please express your preference to your supervisor, so that they can inform potential examiners if travel to Cambridge would be required. If an examiner is unable or unwilling to examine in the preferred format, you can either proceed as proposed by the examiners if willing, or delay the exam until their preference can be met. Appointment of an alternative examiner may be required if you and your examiner(s) cannot agree.

If both examiners are external, an independent Chair will be appointed to ensure that the process is conducted fairly. The *viva* should take between one and three hours and will allow the examiners to explore any questions they might have about your work and about your abilities in the general field of knowledge and will help them to make a decision as to whether your work merits the PhD degree.

After your viva, the examiners write a joint report with their recommendation for the Degree Committee's consideration. The Degree Committee submit their decision to the Student Registry, who will contact you with your official results. Note that the examiners are only making a recommendation – the result of the examination is not confirmed until it has been approved by the Degree Committee. One of the following outcomes is possible:

- Unconditional approval - subject to submission of a hard-bound copy for the library
- Conditional approval - subject to minor or major corrections
- Revision and resubmission of the work for a fresh examination
- Revision and resubmission of the work for a fresh examination or acceptance of the MSc/MLitt without further examination (but possibly subject to corrections)
- Not to be allowed to revise the thesis, but offered the MSc/MLitt without further revision or examination (but possibly subject to corrections)
- Outright failure

What happens if corrections (minor or major) are needed?

Note that a PhD examination is a pass/fail examination. A pass without corrections is not a 'grade' and a pass with some corrections is the most common outcome of a PhD examination. When corrections are required, you will be given a list of corrections needed and your examiners' reports. The Degree Committee normally suggests the time frame within which you will have to resubmit your thesis, which is usually either three or six months. Your supervisor will advise you about addressing the recommendations. The process that follows resubmission is the same as above. It is in your best interests to make the corrections to your thesis as soon as you receive notification of them. You will be told who will be checking your corrections, which may be either or both of your examiners. You will not receive the examiners reports until after the Degree Committee has received and approved them.

It is up to you to check with your examiner(s), (as applicable) which way they would like you to submit your corrected thesis to them: an attachment by email may suffice.

When you submit your corrections to your examiner(s), please ensure that you copy in the Student Registry (recordsandexams@admin.cam.ac.uk).

Once your examiner(s) have checked through your corrections and are happy, you need to ask them to send an email to the Postgraduate Programmes Administrator (gpa@ames.cam.ac.uk) confirming that all corrections have now been made to your thesis to their satisfaction and that they recommend that you be approved for the PhD Degree.

Appendices

Appendix A

Papers available to students of the MPhil by Advanced Studies

Students who are enrolled in the [MPhil by Advanced Studies](#) **must** choose three papers after discussing and agreeing them with their supervisor.

Once you have agreed with your supervisor which papers you would like to take, you must contact the Course Convenor to be accepted onto the course and added to the course Moodle.

Research students ([MPhil by Research](#) and [PhD](#) first year) are required to audit the core paper in the respective Department and Course:

- Middle Eastern Studies: MESM 1 Theory and Method in Middle Eastern Studies.
- Chinese Studies: EAM1 Asia in Theory.
- Japanese Studies: JM1 Researcher Development Seminar.
- Korean Studies: choose between JM1 Researcher Development Seminar and EAM1 Asia in Theory.

Research students ([MPhil by Research](#) and [PhD](#) first year) are also welcome to audit other papers. Please discuss options with your supervisor.

Please note that papers are usually only offered if there are at least two takers. Papers offered vary according to the staff available each academic year and the interests of students. Additional papers may be introduced. Please consult your supervisor to discuss the options available.

More information and details about all the papers available to enrolled students for 2025-26 can be accessed via student section on [the Faculty Intranet](#).

Appendix B

Key Dates

1.1. [Term dates at Cambridge](#)

1.2. Degree Committee Dates (2025-26)

Michaelmas Term
21 October 2025
2 December 2025

Lent Term
27 January 2026
3 March 2026

Easter Term
12 May 2026
9 June 2026
29 September 2026 – MPhil Final Examiners Meeting

1.3. Key dates for your academic year 2025-26

DATE	
7 th October 2025	Start of Michaelmas Term
Michaelmas Term 2025	MPhil Student Arrangement Process: Supervisors agree paper enrolment for MPhil students.
8 th October	Induction sessions for subject groups
9 th October	Classes Begin
10 th October	Funding Application Deadline (Gates US only)
21 st October	Degree Committee
2 nd December	Degree Committee
5 th December	End of Michaelmas Term
2 nd December	Funding Application Deadline (All)
20 th January 2026	Start of Lent Term 2026
Lent Term 2026	MPhil Student Arrangement Process: Supervisors agree MPhil essay titles and approach and nominate potential examiners/assessors.
28 th January	Degree Committee
3 rd March	Degree Committee
20 th March	End of Lent Term
Easter Term 2026	MPhil Student Arrangement Process: Supervisors agree MPhil dissertation titles and approach and nominate potential examiners/assessors
28 th April	Start of Easter Term 2026
4 th May	1. Submission Date for all essays and alternative exercises – MPhil (Advanced Study) * Unless otherwise stated. 2. 1 st Year PhD Progress Exam due in for MT 2025 starters
12 th May	Degree Committee
9 th June	Degree Committee

19 th June	End of Easter Term
20 th July	2nd Year PhD Progress Report due in for MT 2024 Starters
3 rd August	1 st Year PhD Progress Exam due in for LT 2026 starters
10 th August	Submission date for all MPhil Dissertations
mid-August to mid-September	Marking period for MPhil dissertations (including viva, if applicable)
29 th September	Degree Committee & Approval of MPhil Degrees
6 th October	Start of Michaelmas Term 2026
19 th October	2nd Year PhD Progress Report due in for LT 2025 Starters
9 th November	1 st Year PhD Progress Exam due in for ET 2026 starters
25 th January 2027	2nd Year PhD Progress Report due in for ET 2025 starters

Appendix C

Resources and Useful Links

(in categories)

Administrative

[Cambridge Students](#)

[CamSIS](#)

[Student Complaints](#)

[Student Registry](#)

AMES Affiliated Institutions and Research Groups:

[Ancient India and Iran Trust](#)

[Cambridge Endangered Languages and Cultures Group](#)

[Cambridge Central Asia Forum](#)

[Cambridge Forum for Jewish Studies](#)

[Cambridge Language Sciences](#)

[Cambridge Shahnama Centre, Pembroke College](#)

[Centre of Islamic Studies](#)

[Centre of South Asian Studies](#)

[Mongolia and Inner Asian Studies Unit MIASU](#)

[Needham Research Institute](#)

[Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit](#)

Funding

[Graduate Funding \(AMES\)](#)

Libraries

[Faculty Library](#)

[University Library](#)

Academic Writing Skills

[CamGuides for Masters Students](#)

[Cambridge Language Centre Guide to Academic Writing](#)

[Interactive English Learning Objectives](#)

[Harvard Writing Centre Resources](#)

[Developing Academic English – free course with the Open University](#)

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

[Dedicated University Webpage](#)

Generative AI

[Guidance for FAMES students on the use of Generative AI](#)

[Artificial Intelligence – Academic Misconduct](#)

[Generative AI and Assessment](#)

Professional development

[Academic Development and Training for International Students](#)

[Cambridge Students](#)

[Careers Service](#)

[Language Centre](#)

[PPD Personal and Professional Development](#)
[Researcher Development Programme](#)
[University of Cambridge Museums](#)

Services to students (welfare):

[Breaking the Silence – Preventing harassment and sexual misconduct](#)
[Cambridge Students](#)
[Communicable Diseases](#)
[Student Advice Service](#)
[Student Wellbeing](#)
[The Cambridge Green Challenge](#)
[University Counselling Service](#)
[Varsity](#)

Students' Feedback and Engagement

[Student Barometer and Feedback](#)
[Students' Elections](#)

Key Faculty Links

[Faculty Intranet](#)
[Faculty Student Support and Wellbeing](#)
[Faculty Travel Funding Information](#)
[Faculty Travel Information](#)
[Faculty guidance for students who need to intermit](#)