

Notes for Guidance of Candidates for the Degree of Master of Medical Sciences

These notes should be read in conjunction with *the Regulations for the Degree of Master of Medical Sciences (MMedSc)*, and the *Regulations Governing the Format, Binding and Presentation of Dissertations for Higher Degrees by Coursework*.

1. Admission Requirements

To be eligible for admission to the Master of Medical Sciences (MMedSc) Course, a candidate shall:

- (a) possess the relevant necessary requirements which comply with the General Regulations G2;
- (b) hold a Bachelor's degree with honours or the degrees of MBBS of this University, or another qualification of equivalent standard from this University or from another university or comparable institution accepted for this purpose; and
- (c) satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination if required.

2. Qualifying Examination

- (a) A qualifying examination may be set to test the candidate's formal academic ability or his/her ability to follow the course of study prescribed, *e.g.* for applicants holding a degree without honours.
- (b) The teaching departments offering the Specialised Fields of Study will be responsible for deciding the date, format and requirements, *etc.* of the qualifying examinations and making the relevant arrangements.
- (c) A candidate who is required by the department concerned to satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination shall not be permitted to register until he/she has satisfied the examiners in the examination.

3. Period of Study

- (a) The programme shall begin in September each year.
- (b) The duration of study is 12 months for full-time, and 24 months for part-time candidates.
- (c) Any extra period allowed for revision or re-submission of the Dissertation shall not count towards the period of study.
- (d) Candidates engaging in full-time employment should normally be registered for part-time study only, unless special permission is granted by the Board of Studies of the MMedSc Course.

4. Fees

- (a) The details regarding Course fee payment are stipulated in G17 of the General Regulations.
- (b) A candidate becomes liable for fee payment immediately upon acceptance of the University's offer of admission and remains liable until his/her candidature is formally terminated - by completion of the requirements for the degree or by withdrawal from candidature.
- (c) Course fees will be paid in two instalments by full-time candidates and four instalments by part-time candidates within the period of study, with the first payment to be made before the start of the academic year.
- (d) Repeating, re-assessment and extension fees shall be paid in accordance with the University's Schedule of fees.

5. Leave of Absence

A candidate who wishes to be absent from Hong Kong and/or from the approved course of study and research shall be required to submit in writing an application for leave of absence, with the endorsement of the Head of the Department where the Specialised Field of Study is taken, to the Board of Studies.

6. Award of the Degree

To be eligible for the award of the degree a candidate shall:

- (a) comply with the General Regulations;
- (b) complete the coursework and examination requirements for the degree as stipulated in the *Regulations for the Degree of MMedSc*;
- (c) complete, to the satisfaction of the examiners, a dissertation as specified in the *Regulations*; and
- (d) satisfy the requirements under Overall Assessment as set out in this document.

7. Curriculum Requirements

To fulfil the curriculum requirements, a candidate shall follow the course of study listed below, with a minimum total of 400 hours of prescribed work, and satisfy the examiners in each course.

- (a) 4 Core Modules (20 hours each for a total of 80 hours), for which part-time candidates should complete within the first year of study. Part-time candidates who cannot attend all of the chosen Core Modules in the first year may apply in writing to the Board of Studies for deferment of a maximum of 2 Core Modules to their second year of study.
- (b) 6 Specialised Modules (120 hours) in a selected Specialised Field of Study, which should commence concurrently with the Core Modules. At least four Specialised Modules should be taken in the department in which the candidate is based, while the remaining two may be taken in another department provided they are relevant to the main Specialised Field of Study, subject to approval of the Supervisor and Board of Studies. The study of the 6 Specialised Modules will be spread over 2 years for part-time candidates.
- (c) Research on a selected project in the chosen Specialised Field of Study leading to a Dissertation, which requires at least 200 hours of prescribed work. The project will be guided by a Supervisor assigned by the Department where the student is based. The project should be spread over 2 years for part-time candidates.
- (d) All candidates are also required to take an Induction Course on Biomedical writing. There will be no examination for the Induction Course, but candidates must attend the teaching session(s) to satisfy the course requirement.
- (e) Candidates are expected to consult their departmental co-ordinators and/or Core Module Co-ordinators concerned about their selection of modules before commencement of the Course. Changes to the chosen 4 Core and 6 Specialised Modules will only be allowed before the end of September each year, subject to the approval of the Board of Studies.
- (f) Candidates are expected to attend at least 80% of the teaching sessions of each Core Module and Specialised Module.

8. Assessment for Core Modules

- (a) The in-course assessments, which contribute to not more than 40% of the final marks unless otherwise approved by the Board of Studies, will be carried out by the course tutors throughout the study period. The 2-hour written final examinations will be held at the end of each course, i.e. normally in February and May each year.
- (b) Results of Core Module examinations should be submitted to the Faculty Office by the Core Module Co-ordinators, for approval by the Board of Examiners and the Faculty Board, within one month of the completion of the examinations.
- (c) A candidate who fails to obtain at least a provisional pass mark of 40% for a Core Module may be required:
 - (i) to sit for a supplementary examination, which should take place by a specified date not less than one month after the publication of results; or
 - (ii) to repeat the module in the following academic year and to re-take the prescribed examination or examinations; or
 - (iii) to re-take the prescribed examination or examinations in the following academic year without repeating the module; or
 - (iv) to change his/her study plan and enrol in an alternative module for which additional fee for the module should be paid.
- (d) Part-time candidates may be allowed to take the supplementary examination for a Core Module in the second year of their study. However, in cases where a candidate has attended a supplementary examination in the first year of study (*i.e.* after his/her first attempt) and fails again in that supplementary examination (*i.e.* second attempt), he/she will not be allowed to re-present himself/herself for examination in the second year of study (*i.e.* third attempt), unless approval is given by the Board of Examiners.
- (e) If a part-time candidate takes the supplementary examination (*i.e.* second attempt) for a Core Module in the second year of study and fails again, the Board of Examiners will, after the results of his/her Specialised Field of Study and Dissertation are obtained, decide whether he/she will be required to repeat the Core Module, to take an alternative module, to re-present himself/herself for examination in the next academic year, or to discontinue his/her study.
- (f) For failures in supplementary examinations, the Core Module Co-ordinators should make a recommendation for consideration by the Board of Examiners, with reference to points (c) - (e) above, M25 of the *Regulations for the Degree of MMedSc* and G11 of the General Regulations.
- (g) A part-time candidate may be given the opportunity to improve his/her marks for the same module(s) in subsequent examinations held in the second year of study, provided at least a provisional pass (*i.e.* 40% to below 50%) has been obtained. A written application should be made to the Board of Studies before the start of the second year of study.

9. Assessment for Specialised Modules

- (a) There is no uniform timetabling and assessment method for the Specialised Fields of Study. Examinations for the Specialised Modules will be arranged and run by the teaching departments concerned.
- (b) Details of the examination arrangements for the Specialised Modules, including nominations for Internal Examiners, External Examiners (if applicable) and invigilators, and date, time and venue of the examinations, should be submitted by the Departments to the Board of Studies for approval by April 15 each year.

- (c) All examinations for the 6 Specialised Modules should be completed not later than the end of June each year, to give sufficient time for the relevant candidates to take supplementary examination.
- (d) The average of the marks of the 6 Specialised Modules will be taken to determine whether a candidate passes the Specialised Field of Study. Departments should forward the average marks of the candidates to the Faculty Office for onward submission to the Board of Examiners, within one month of the completion of the examinations.
- (e) However, in cases where a candidate takes 4 Specialised Modules in the home department and 2 in another department (as approved by the Board of Studies at the time of admission), marks for the individual modules should be submitted and the Faculty Office will calculate the average mark for submission to the Board of Examiners.
- (f) A candidate who fails to obtain at least a provisional pass of 40% in the average mark of the 6 Specialised Modules will be required to sit for a supplementary examination.
- (g) If a candidate fails again in the supplementary examination, the Board of Examiners will, after the result of his/her Dissertation examination is obtained, make a decision on the recommendation of the Head of Department concerned, as to whether he/she will be required to repeat the Specialised Modules, or to re-present himself/herself for examination in the next academic year, or to discontinue his/her study.

10. Dissertation

- (a) A candidate shall submit the Dissertation title, with the endorsement of the supervisor/Department Head concerned, to the Board of Studies for approval at least 3 months before the submission of the Dissertation, i.e. by May 31.
- (b) All Candidates must check their Dissertation using *Turnitin*. The purpose is to help students to identify potential plagiarism in their Dissertation and to refine the Dissertation to avoid plagiarism before formal submission. The workflow of the compulsory plagiarism check is available at <http://www.med.hku.hk/v1/media/workflow.pdf>. More information about *Turnitin* is also available at the web site of HKU Libraries (<http://lib.hku.hk/turnitin>).
- (c) The Dissertation and the Dissertation Submission Form to be signed by the supervisor to confirm that he/she has read the Dissertation and Turnitin report, and considered that the Dissertation is ready for examination, must be submitted to the Faculty Office for arrangement of examination not later than August 31, following the final examinations of the Specialised Modules.
- (d) Request for extension of the deadline for submission of the Dissertation will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Supervisors are requested to monitor the progress of the candidates closely to ensure that they will be able to submit their dissertations on time. If an extension is approved by the Board of Studies, the maximum period of extension to be granted will be 3 months normally and not more than 4 months for exceptional circumstances. The candidate should submit detailed justifications and a working plan together with the endorsement of the supervisor and Head of Department concerned, for consideration by the Board of Studies.
- (e) A candidate who is granted an extension of the deadline to submit his/her dissertation shall pay a fee at 5% of the total composition fee for each 3-month extension or part thereof. An additional 5% of the total composition fee shall be charged if a candidate is granted an extension of more than 3 months.

- (f) A candidate shall deliver to the Faculty Secretary two copies of the Dissertation in temporary binding, in accordance with the *Regulations governing the Format, Binding and Presentation of Dissertations for Higher Degrees by Coursework*. For general guidance in preparing the dissertation, reference may be made to the booklet, entitled “Preparing and Submitting Your Thesis: A Guide for MPhil and PhD Students”, published by the Graduate School of The University of Hong Kong.
- (g) One internal examiner who should not be the supervisor and one external examiner (who can also be the external examiner for the MBBS degree if appropriate) shall be nominated by the Department concerned for the Dissertation of each candidate. Nominations, together with a copy of the curriculum vitae of the proposed external examiner, should be submitted to the Board of Studies for approval by May 31 of the year (same as the deadline for submission of Dissertation titles).
- (h) The examiners shall give a total score and their comments on the Dissertation on the Examiner’s Report Form, and return the completed Form within one month of receipt direct to the Faculty Secretary.
- (i) The average of the marks given by the examiners for a Dissertation will normally be taken for submission to the Board of Examiners, except in cases where the substantive recommendations of the examiners are different.
- (j) In the event of a big discrepancy in the marks given by the internal and the external examiners for a Dissertation (i.e. one passing and one failure grade), the examiners will be invited to come up with an agreed mark for consideration by the Board of Examiners or a third examiner be nominated by the Board of Examiners to assess the Dissertation, and the Board will take into consideration the majority view of the specialist examiners in determining the result of the Dissertation examination.
- (k) Upon approval by the Board of Examiners for a candidate to pass the Dissertation, the candidate will be required to make corrections and amendments to the Dissertation as indicated by the examiners to the satisfaction of the supervisor within a maximum period of one month.
- (l) In accordance with M24(b) of the *Regulations for the Degree of MMedSc*, a candidate who has failed in the Dissertation examination (i.e. below the passing mark of 50%) but has passed the written papers and has satisfactorily completed the prescribed written and practical work, may be permitted by the Board of Examiners to revise the Dissertation and to re-present it for re-examination by the same examiners within a specified period of not more than 4 months after receipt of a notice that it is unsatisfactory.
- (m) A copy of the finalised Dissertation will be an accession to the Library, as provided under the *Regulations governing the Format, Binding and Presentation of Dissertations for Higher Degrees by Coursework*.
- (n) An oral examination is not mandatory.

11. Overall Assessment

- (a) A minimum provisional pass mark for Core Modules and Specialised Field of Study, as well as a pass mark for the Dissertation must be obtained as follows:

	<u>Each Core Module</u>	<u>Specialised Field of Study</u>
Provisional pass mark	40%	40%
	<u>Dissertation</u>	
Pass mark	50%	

- (b) A candidate must also satisfy the attendance requirement of the induction course.
- (c) Subject to 11(a) and (b) above, a candidate is deemed to have passed the MMedSc Course if he/she has obtained an overall weighted average mark of at least 50% from the combined scores of the 4 Core Modules, the Specialised Field of Study and the Dissertation, calculated on the basis of the ratio of 2:3:5.
- (d) The ratio of 2:3:5 is based on the number of prescribed hours which are allocated to the Core Modules (80 hours), Specialised Modules (120 hours) and Dissertation (200 hours) in the whole Course (*i.e.* $4/20 \times$ average Core Modules marks + $6/20 \times$ average mark for Specialised Modules + $10/20 \times$ average Dissertation mark [or agreed mark as appropriate] must be equal to or exceed 50%).
- (e) The Board of Examiners may consider the award of a distinction if a candidate has obtained an average mark of at least 65, 75 and 70 for the Core Modules, Specialised Field of Study and Dissertation respectively, and subject to the University's norm-referencing guideline, *i.e.* within the top 10% of the awardees.
- (f) Only the first attempt of any examination will be taken into account for the award of distinction.
- (g) A distinction should however not be awarded in case where a candidate has failed to submit the Dissertation or complete all the modules within the period of study and is granted an extension thereof.
- (h) A candidate who is unable because of his/her illness to be present for any part of an examination may be permitted to present himself/herself at the supplementary examination of the relevant module(s). The application shall be made in writing to the Board of Studies within two weeks of the first day of absence from the examination.
- (i) A candidate who has failed to satisfy the examiners in an examination may be required to discontinue his/her studies (under G12 of the General Regulations).
- (j) A candidate who has failed to satisfy the examiners and who is not required to discontinue may be required to repeat the whole or any part of the Course, as prescribed by the Board of Examiners, before re-presenting himself/herself for examination.

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