University of Cambridge: Programme Specifications

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this programme specification. At the time of publication, the programme specification has been approved by the relevant teaching Faculty or Department. It is, however, natural for courses to develop and change over time and we reserve the right, without notice, to withdraw, update or amend this programme specification at any time.

MPHIL in CONTEMPORARY CHINESE STUDIES

1	**Awarding Body**	University of Cambridge
2.	**Teaching Institution**	University of Cambridge
3.	**Accreditation Details**	n/a
4.	**Name of Final Award**	Master of Philosophy
5.	**Programme Title**	Contemporary Chinese Studies
6.	**UCAS Code**	n/a
7.	**Benchmark Statement(s)**	n/a
8.	**Qualifications Framework Level**	M
9a.	**Date of Revision**	March 2008
9b.	**Last Reviewed**	March 2008

Educational Aims of the Programme

To provide a conversion course for high-quality graduates with a first degree in a relevant subject, but with very little or no prior knowledge of the Chinese language; to train students across various fields of expertise relating to contemporary Chinese society by teaching them the Chinese language and offering content courses in disciplinary areas including Chinese economics and management, anthropology and culture, politics and society, etc.

By:

- providing intensive teaching in modern standard Chinese in both the written and spoken forms, teaching in Chinese culture and training in broad disciplinary areas with respect to contemporary China;
- requiring students to attend classes and submit written papers as required by the Faculty Degree Committee;
- providing students with direct experience of Chinese language, culture and society by requiring them to spend 7 months (September to March) in their second year in China affiliated to Peking University where they take classes specially designed for and integrated into the MPhil programme;
- providing training in the use of the range of bibliographic and other research tools, including electronic resources, specific to their research area;
- providing teaching and learning opportunities, including participation in seminars, individual supervision and guided research.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

By the end of the course students should have acquired good competence in Modern Standard Chinese in reading, comprehension, writing and speaking, including a knowledge of the specialist vocabulary pertaining to their disciplinary areas; acquired a basic familiarity

with Chinese history and culture; attained and developed a specialist knowledge of their disciplinary areas as it relates to China and show command of the relevant literature. They should have consolidated their grasp of the conceptual and methodological skills of the relevant academic discipline and be able to evaluate the utility of these skills in the study of modern and contemporary China. They should have completed supervised research on a specific topic; they should be able to proceed to work in specialist positions concerned with China or to further research.

Teaching and learning

These areas are developed through personal study, classes, one-to-one supervisions, opportunities to participate in research culture e.g. through seminars, and the research and writing of the dissertation.

Assessment

Assessment is by three examination papers, two essay assignments approved by the Degree Committee of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (responsible for graduate matters) AND a dissertation of 12,000 words maximum AND an oral examination in Chinese.

Skills and other attributes

By the end of the course students should have acquired the ability to communicate fairly fluently and appropriately in modern Chinese and to be able to exploit a broad range of written or spoken materials, with particular reference to their academic discipline. These skills are developed formatively through language classes, specialist subject classes and one-to-one supervisions, some of them taken during the study period abroad. Two written examinations in Chinese language and an oral examination form the basis for summative assessment.

Students should be able to demonstrate methodological, bibliographic and other specialist research skills; they should have produced a piece of research (the dissertation), which is a contribution to learning, on an aspect of contemporary China from the perspective of their academic discipline. These skills are developed through personal study and individual supervision for the dissertation and essays, which form the basis for (summative) assessment.

Students should have developed knowledge and understanding of contemporary Chinese culture and society and demonstrate intercultural awareness and the ability to articulately mediate between and critically assess diverse points of view. These skills are developed through personal study, classroom and one-to-one training on aspects of Chinese history and society, through the experience of the study period abroad and through the process of dissertation research. The cogency and focus of the dissertation, essays and other written exercises form the basis of assessment.

Programme Structure

Year 1

October: Entry; First class or high 2(i) degree or equivalent required.

Classes or supervisions run from October to June (Michaelmas, Lent and Easter Terms), during which intensive language training and courses in disciplinary subjects are provided.

Two essay assignments must be submitted by the beginning of Easter term.

May/June: Students take one written examination (short essays in response to given questions) and language tests

Students are encouraged to undertake language work and/or engage in fieldwork in China over the summer after their first year to prepare their dissertation.

Year 2

September to March: period of study in China (Peking University).

Mid April: Return to Cambridge; classes on the Chinese language continue.

June: Students take two written examinations in modern Chinese and specialist Chinese, and an oral examination in Chinese. Marks are conveyed to students in July.

Students spend the summer completing the writing of the MPhil dissertation, which must be submitted by August 31.

Results are made known in October.

Requirements for the Award of the Degree

The scheme of examination for the two-year MPhil in Chinese Studies consists of

a) three written papers and two essay assignments. Each essay assignment consists of one essay of 6,000 words. The titles of the essays are approved by the Degree Committee.

b) a dissertation of not more than 12,000 words including footnotes and appendices but excluding bibliography on a subject approved by the Degree Committee.

c) A Chinese oral examination.

The scale of marks is as follows: 0-59 Fail; 60-100 Pass. For assessment purposes the scheme of examination is divided into two parts:

(i) The written papers, essay assignments and oral (70% of the overall marks)

(ii) The dissertation (30% of the overall marks)

In order to pass the MPhil a candidate must pass both parts separately.

Indicators of Quality

The two-year MPhil degree in Chinese Studies was set up in response to the HEFCE Review of Chinese Studies in 1999 and the first cohort of students entered in October 2000. It has not yet been subject to external review. The Faculty's provision for the one-year MPhil Degree in Oriental Studies was included in the QAA subject review in 1997. The Faculty won an overall score of 23 out of 24, winning the top grade of four for the following aspects of provision: Curriculum design, content and organization; Teaching, learning and assessment; Student progression and achievement; Student support and guidance; and learning resources. At the last RAE the Faculty was awarded a 5* in the area of Asian Studies and 5 in the area of Middle Eastern and African Studies.

Learning Support

All students are members of a College as well as the Faculty and have access to learning support from both College and University. In addition to support from the Coordinator of the two-year Chinese MPhil, each student has a supervisor from within his/her academic discipline who gives advice on planning the year's work. Students are encouraged to participate in a number of seminars within the Faculty and to attend other, more general, lectures.

During the study period abroad at Peking University, students are encouraged to maintain email contact with teaching staff in Cambridge and are also assigned academic mentors at the host institution from whom they may seek guidance. A member of the teaching staff from Cambridge also makes a pastoral visit to students.

Progress is monitored in the course of teaching and learning and through the submission of essays and other alternative exercises. The College Tutor for Graduates will play a role in induction, support and guidance. A handbook for the two-year MPhil in Contemporary Chinese Studies is provided.

In addition to the teaching library in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, the University Library holds a Chinese collection of some 100,000 titles with extensive holdings in history, local and national; biography; geography; law; and literature. Although it is particularly strong in holdings relating to early and pre-modern Chinese history, twentieth century and contemporary Chinese materials are being built up and materials specially purchased for this course. Some 900 serials are taken. The library is open-shelf and easy access to its stacks is a great advantage to research students. Students also have access to the libraries in the Judge Institute of Management Studies, Faculty of Social and Political Science and Department of Social Anthropology.

Evaluating and improving the quality and standards of learning

External examining: External examiners are appointed for the marking of the dissertations and, in some cases, also of the written papers and essay assignments. In addition, an external cohort examiner is appointed, who monitors the overall conduct of the M.Phil. examination and reports to the Vice-Chancellor of the University. Action in response to the report includes, where appropriate, revisions or adjustments to the programme and its delivery.

Course approval: The Faculty is required to obtain the approval of the Board of Graduate Studies and the General Board's Education Committee before any significant changes to courses are made.

General Board Internal Review: All the Faculty's activities, including the MPhil, are regularly reviewed by the University's General Board: the last review took place in 2006.

MPhil students are given the opportunity to fill in a formal questionnaire evaluating the course.

Employment and careers

The course is conceived as a means of allowing high-calibre graduates to acquire Chinese language skills and a grounding in contemporary Chinese studies. As such it offers possibilities for employment in business, the professions, academic institutions, diplomacy and consultancy.

Some MPhil graduates carry on to read for a PhD. In Cambridge continuation is dependent on achieving an overall result ≥ 65% in the MPhil, and the approval of the Degree Committee.