

# SCHOOL OF ANTHROPOLOGY & MUSEUM ETHNOGRAPHY



**Examination Conventions:  
MSc in Cognitive & Evolutionary Anthropology  
2021 - 2022**

## Examination Conventions: MSc in Cognitive & Evolutionary Anthropology (CEA)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This document details the examination conventions for the MSc degree in Cognitive & Evolutionary Anthropology (CEA) in the School of Anthropology & Museum Ethnography (SAME) for the 2021-22 academic year.

These conventions have been approved by the Teaching Committee of the School of Anthropology & Museum Ethnography and by the supervisory body, the Quality Assurance Committee of the Social Sciences Division.

Examination conventions are the formal record of the specific assessment standards for the courses to which they apply. They set out how examined work will be marked and how the resulting marks will be used to arrive at a final result and classification of an award.

### 2. RUBRICS FOR INDIVIDUAL PAPERS

Further details of the constitution of individual papers are outlined in the [Course Handbook](#). The examined elements of the papers and relevant deadlines are given below.

The MSc in Cognitive & Evolutionary Anthropology is examined by the following means:

#### PART I

##### ***Paper 1: Quantitative Methods***

Examination for Paper 1 is on the basis of a take-home examination provided by the course convener not later than the Friday of 8<sup>th</sup> Week of Michaelmas Term, which must be submitted by 12 noon on the Thursday of 0<sup>th</sup> Week of Hilary Term via the University approved online assessment platform.

The examination has three parts:

- (i) a series of short questions (theory) (worth a total of 30 points), and
- (ii) a series of short questions (applications) (worth a total of 30 points), and
- (iii) analysis of data (worth 40 points).

In order to pass this component, candidates must score at least 50 points in total, with a mark of not less than 15 for each of parts (i) and (ii) and not less than 20 for part (iii).

##### ***Paper 2: Principles of Evolution and Behaviour***

Paper 2 will be examined by two 2,500-word essays chosen from a choice of nine questions. The questions will be released on 16 May and will be due at noon on 23 May 2022 via the University approved online assessment platform.

##### ***Paper 3: Evolution and Human Behaviour***

Paper 3 will be examined by two 2,500-word essays chosen from a choice of nine questions. The questions will be released on 23 May and will be due at noon on 30 May 2022 via the University approved online assessment platform.

##### ***Paper 4: Mind and Culture***

Paper 4 will be examined by two 2,500-word essays chosen from a choice of nine questions. The questions will be released on 30 May and will be due by noon on 6 June 2022 via the University approved online assessment platform.

## PART II

### **Thesis**

A research thesis of up to 15,000 words, submitted anonymously via the University approved online assessment platform by 12 noon on the last Wednesday of August, on a subject selected in consultation with the supervisor. The dissertation must be accompanied by confirmation that it is the candidate's own work, and submitted in electronic file format.

The proposed title of the dissertation together with a paragraph describing its scope and the supervisor's written endorsement, must be submitted to the Chair of Examiners by Thursday of the 5<sup>th</sup> week of Trinity Term.

The word limit is deemed to apply to the text and footnotes or endnotes, but not to the bibliography, any appendices or glossaries, or to the front matter (abstract of up to 250 words, title page, contents page etc.).

## **3. MARKING CONVENTIONS**

### **3.1 University scale for standardised expression of agreed final marks**

Agreed final marks for individual papers will be expressed using the following scale:

|        |             |
|--------|-------------|
| 70-100 | Distinction |
| 65-69  | Merit       |
| 50-64  | Pass        |
| 0-49   | Fail        |

### **3.2 Qualitative criteria for different types of assessment**

Qualitative criteria for the marking of the *Assessments*, *The Quantitative Methods paper*, and *Thesis* are provided in the **Appendix**.

These marking conventions have been developed to offer guidance to students on the criteria examiners will be using in judging assessed work. They are also intended to guide examiners in identifying the appropriate mark for the work being assessed.

The Core Criteria, within each given form of assessment (dissertation, exam, essay etc.), are consistent across all of the degrees offered by the School, and are viewed as the fundamental traits that define work for each grade band.

The Ancillary Observations include additional traits that may be exhibited by work in a given grade band, in general and in relation to particular subjects (Social, Cognitive, Medical, Visual and Museum Anthropology), and are there to aid decision-making in the allocating of a mark within a grade band, and to provide further guidance to students regarding traits that work of a given class may exhibit.

The positive Core Criteria are not replicated across grade bands, so are viewed as cumulative (i.e., for example, work that is in the 70-79 band will be expected to exhibit not only those positive traits listed for that grade band, but those of the lower bands too, except where mutually exclusive).

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Candidates are reminded to also consult the relevant course handbooks and *Exam Regulations* ('the grey book') for further guidance on the presentation and submission of assessed coursework.

Specific individualised consideration of any disruption to a candidate's ability to undertake assessment in the usual way will be based on a candidate's MCE and will happen at the exam board stage.

### 3.3 Verification and reconciliation of marks

All examined components of the degree are marked independently by two examiners or assessors from within the university (sometimes referred to as 'double-blind marking'), with oversight of the entire process being provided by an External Examiner. This procedure follows university and divisional guidance. Each marker allots a mark to the piece of work in question (individual examination answers, essays and thesis) and then both markers meet to determine an agreed final mark for each element. Where the overall marks assigned by the two Examiners differ the examiners identify the reasons for the difference through discussion and agree an appropriate mark. If reconciliation is difficult, a third marker acts as arbiter in agreeing the appropriate mark, and answers that have been given particularly discrepant marks may be remarked if necessary. In cases of a great difference of marks, or where the marks straddle a grade boundary, the External Examiner is asked to scrutinize any such marks, even if the examiners have agreed a mark following discussion. In addition, the External Examiner may query any mark assigned to a question, even if the internal examiners are unanimous in their judgement. Any differences of opinion are discussed fully at the examiners' meeting.

The weighting for each assessed element is provided in **Section 4.2**, below.

For Papers 2, 3 and 4, the final mark for the paper is calculated (to two decimal places) as the mean of the marks awarded for each of the two essays, which are equally weighted.

### 3.4 Scaling

The School of Anthropology & Museum Ethnography does not use scaling mechanisms for examination marks.

### 3.5 Short-weight convention and departure from rubric

In one-week timed-essay examinations a mark of zero will be awarded for any questions that should have been answered by a candidate but have not been (e.g. if one question is answered rather than two, a mark of zero is awarded for the question not attempted, and the final mark for that paper is determined as the mean of the marks for the two questions, with the mark for the second question being zero). In the case that a candidate answers more questions than is required by the rubric all answers submitted will be marked and those achieving the best marks, up to and including the number required by the rubric, will be counted towards the mark for the paper with the others not being counted towards the mark for the paper.

In the case of submitted pieces of coursework that are incomplete, or which fail to adhere to the stipulated rubric, these will be marked according to the criteria that are outlined in **Section 3.2**, above, which include specific criteria for marking work which is incomplete, rushed, or which departs from the stated rubric.

### **3.6 Penalties for late or non-submission**

Non-submission of a required examined element of the course will result in failure of that element and thus of the whole Examination (programme of study), notwithstanding the opportunity to re-sit an examination that has been failed or to re-submit work that has been failed or has not been submitted as required (see Section 5, below).

In the absence of special dispensation for illness-related or other genuine reasons, late submission of examined elements of the course will incur penalties. Special dispensation for late submission must be sought, ideally in advance, from the Proctors, via the student's college. Staff at the Examination Schools cannot give extensions, and examiners should not be approached. The scale of penalties agreed by the Board of Examiners in relation to late submission of assessed items is set out below.

Details of the circumstances in which such penalties might apply can be found in the Examination Regulations (Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 14.)

Where a candidate submits a thesis or essay after the deadline prescribed, the examiners will mark the work as if submitted on time. The Board of Examiners will then reduce the mark awarded according to the following tariff:

| <b>Lateness</b>  | <b>Mark penalty</b> |
|--|---------------------|
| Submission after 12 noon on the day of submission  | Five marks deducted |
| Each additional day<br><i>(i.e. two days late = -6 marks, three days late = -7 marks, etc.; note that each weekend day counts as a full day for the purposes of mark deductions)</i> | One mark deducted   |
| Maximum deducted marks up to and including 14 days late  | 18 marks deducted   |
| More than 14 days after the deadline   | Fail                |

Failure to submit a required element of assessment will result in the failure of the assessment. The mark for any resit of the assessment will be capped at a pass.

### **3.7 Penalties for over-length work and departure from approved titles or subject-matter**

Coursework must have the word count clearly indicated on the front cover. Word limits are deemed to apply to the text and footnotes or endnotes, but not to the bibliography, any appendices or glossaries, or to the front matter (abstract, title page, contents page, etc., if applicable).

Where a candidate submits a thesis which exceeds the word limit prescribed, the examiners will mark the work as if submitted within the stipulated word limit. The Board of Examiners will then reduce the mark awarded according to the following tariff:

1 mark deduction for every 1% or part thereof by which the stated word limit is exceeded, e.g.:

| <b>Word limit of submitted work</b> | <b>Penalty of one mark per:</b>                      |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 2000                                | 20 words or part thereof by which limit is exceeded  |
| 15000                               | 150 words or part thereof by which limit is exceeded |

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Where the examiners wish to query the word count of work submitted in hard copy, they may ask for an electronic version of the coursework to be submitted.

### 3.8 Penalties and procedures in cases of poor academic practice and plagiarism

All submissions are run through Turnitin and the Chair of Examiners is alerted to any issues that this reveals.

The *Examination Board* shall deal wholly with cases of poor academic practice where the material under review is small and does not exceed 10% of the whole.

Assessors (including Examiners) will mark work on its academic merit, but will alert the *Examination Board* to cases of derivative or poor referencing, and the board will be responsible for deducting marks accordingly.

Determined by the extent of poor academic practice, the board shall deduct between 1% and 10% of the marks available for cases of poor referencing where material is widely available factual information or a technical description that could not be paraphrased easily; where passage(s) draw on a variety of sources, either verbatim or derivative, in patchwork fashion (and examiners consider that this represents poor academic practice rather than an attempt to deceive); where some attempt has been made to provide references, however incomplete (e.g. footnotes but no quotation marks, Harvard-style references at the end of a paragraph, inclusion in bibliography); or where passage(s) are 'grey literature' i.e. a web source with no clear owner.

If a student has previously had marks deducted for poor academic practice or has been referred to the Proctors for suspected plagiarism the case must always be referred to the Proctors. In addition, any more serious cases of poor academic practice than described above will also always be referred to the Proctors.

Where assessment includes open-book examinations, candidates will be required to sign up to the University's honour code. While it is not permissible to submit work which has been submitted, either partially or in full, either for their current Honour School or qualification, or for another Honour School or qualification of this University (except where the Special Regulations for the subject permit this), or for a qualification at any other institution, it is permissible to use work that has been written during the course of a candidate's studies (e.g. collections, tutorial essays).

### 3.9 Penalties for non-attendance of examinations

[See Policy & Guidance for examiners; [Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 14](#)]

Failure to attend an examination without prior or subsequent permission from the Proctors will result in the failure of that assessment. The mark for any resit of the assessment will be capped at a pass (50). See section 5, below, for full details of resits and the circumstances under which mark caps apply.

## 4. PROGRESSION RULES AND CLASSIFICATION CONVENTIONS

### 4.1 Qualitative descriptors of Distinction, Merit, Pass, Fail final outcomes

**Distinction:** Demonstrates overall excellence, including sufficient depth and breadth of relevant knowledge to allow clarity of expression, demonstration of critical faculties and originality.

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**Merit:** Demonstrates a very good standard of knowledge and understanding of material, and a consistently good ability to apply it effectively.

**Pass:** Demonstrates overall a good standard of knowledge and familiarity with material, and the ability to apply it effectively.

**Fail:** Fails overall to demonstrate a sufficient range and depth of knowledge and understanding, and/or fails to apply it appropriately.

Note that the aggregation and classification rules in some circumstances allow a stronger performance on some papers to compensate for a weaker performance on others.

### 4.2 Final outcome rules

To be eligible to be awarded the degree of MSc, candidates must have passed all of the examined components of the course; see also [Examination Regulations](#).

Regarding eligibility for re-examination, see **Section 5**, below.

Each assessed element outlined in **Section 2**, above, contributes the proportion stated below to the final mark for the course.

#### ***MSc in Cognitive & Evolutionary Anthropology***

##### ***PART I***

*Paper 1: Quantitative Methods:* One-sixth

*Paper 2: Principles of Evolution and Behaviour:* One-sixth

*Paper 3: Human Evolution and Behaviour:* One-sixth

*Paper 4: Mind and Culture:* One-sixth

##### ***PART II***

*Thesis:* One-third

The final mark for the course is calculated as the mean of the marks awarded for all of the assessed components, as outlined in **Section 2**, above, weighted as indicated with the final mark rounded to the nearest whole number, and decimal points of .5 and above rounded up to the nearest whole mark.

The Board of Examiners may award a Distinction in the degree based on one of the following criteria:

EITHER (i) an overall mark of 70 or above OR (ii) an overall mark of 68 and above, with two assessed components and the MSc thesis at 70 or above.

The Board of Examiners may award a Merit in the degree for achievement of an overall mark of 65-69, except where a Distinction is awarded as described under (ii), above.

### 4.3 Progression rules

Continuation to PRS status for DPhil study after the MSc: MSc candidates may apply for admission as Probationer Research Students (PRS) during the admissions rounds that take place in their MSc year, subject to the usual process and admissions criteria.

#### 4.4 Use of vivas

There are no automatic *viva voce* examinations for MSc candidates but the examiners reserve the right to call candidates if required.

*Viva voce* examinations may be used by the examiners in cases where candidates fall on the borderline of Distinction/Merit or Pass/Fail classifications as a means of resolving any ambiguities in the examined work that may lead to greater credit being given to a candidate than is possible on the basis of the examined work alone. Marks will not be reduced as a consequence of performance in a *viva voce* examination; they can only remain as they are or be raised.

If held, *viva voce* examinations normally occur in the last week of September. Candidates will be notified as far ahead of this time as possible if they are to be called.

### 5. RESITS

#### 5.1 Following formal withdrawal from an examination

Where a candidate has been granted prior or retrospective permission from the Proctors to be *withdrawn* from an assessment unit (a sat examination or examination of submitted work) they are entitled to be examined on that assessment unit at a later date, which will constitute their *first attempt* and will be marked accordingly, without a mark cap imposed.

All timed-essays and examined submitted work (including the dissertation) this attempt takes the form of submission of the work in question before the end of the same academic year or at the equivalent time in the year following that in which it was originally due to be submitted.

Marks for any element that has been successfully completed will be carried forward. Any subsequent award of the degree on successful completion of all the assessment units may be delayed by up to three terms, i.e. until the Examination Board next meets.

#### 5.2 Following failure of an examination

Where an assessment unit has been *failed* at the first attempt, students are entitled to one further attempt. This applies to any or all assessment units that have been failed at the first attempt.

All timed-essays and examined submitted work (including the dissertation) the second attempt takes the form of a re-submission, after revision, of the work in question, before the end of the same academic year or at the equivalent time in the year following that in which it was originally due to be submitted.

Marks for any element that has been successfully completed at the first attempt will be carried forward; it is only possible therefore for students to re-sit the failed element(s). Any subsequent award of the degree on successful completion of all the assessed components may be delayed by up to three terms, i.e. until the Examination Board next meets.

A student who achieves the required standard in the MSc by re-sitting paper(s) (including re-submitting the dissertation if required) may then proceed to PRS status, subject to the application processes and criteria outlined in **section 4.3**, above.



### ***Capping of resit marks following failure of an examination***

Note that candidates who have failed an assessment unit through poor academic performance will be deemed to have *academically failed* that assessment unit. No mark cap will be imposed on the examination of the second attempt, but the candidate will be debarred from receiving a Merit or Distinction overall.

Candidates who have failed to submit a piece of examined work before the expiry of the late submission period (**section 3.6**, above) *without prior or retrospective dispensation from the Proctors* will be deemed to have *technically failed* that assessment unit; they will be permitted to re-submit that assessment unit once, as described above, under which circumstances their mark for that assessment unit will be capped at a maximum of 50 and they will be debarred from receiving a Merit or Distinction for the examination overall.

## **6. CONSIDERATION OF MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

A candidate's final outcome will first be considered using the classification rules/final outcome rules as described above in section 4. The exam board will then consider any further information they have on individual circumstances.

Where a candidate or candidates have made a submission, under Part 13 of the Regulations for Conduct of University Examinations, that unforeseen circumstances may have had an impact on their performance in an examination, a subset of the board (the 'Mitigating Circumstances Panel') will meet to discuss the individual applications and band the seriousness of each application on a scale of 1-3 with 1 indicating minor impact, 2 indicating moderate impact, and 3 indicating very serious impact. The Panel will evaluate, on the basis of the information provided to it, the relevance of the circumstances to examinations and assessment, and the strength of the evidence provided in support. Examiners will also note whether all or a subset of papers were affected, being aware that it is possible for circumstances to have different levels of impact on different papers. The banding information will be used at the final board of examiners meeting to decide whether and how to adjust a candidate's results. Further information on the procedure is provided in the Examinations and Assessment Framework, Annex E and information for students is provided at <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/problems-completing-your-assessment>.

Candidates who have indicated they wish to be considered for a Declared to have Deserved Masters degree will first be considered for a classified degree, taking into account any individual mitigating circumstances. If that is not possible and they meet the Declared to have Deserved Masters eligibility criteria, they will be awarded a Declared to have Deserved Masters degree.

## **7. DETAILS OF EXAMINERS AND RULES ON COMMUNICATING WITH EXAMINERS**

The Examiner for the MSc in Cognitive & Evolutionary Anthropology degree is Dr Adam Kenny.

The External Examiner for the MSc in Cognitive & Evolutionary Anthropology degree is Dr Sarah Johns, University of Kent.

Questions pertaining to examination procedure should be addressed to the Examiner or Chairman of Examiners. For the academic year 2021-22, the Chair of Examiners is Prof. Inge Daniels.

Candidates are not under any circumstances permitted to seek to make contact with individual internal or external examiners during or after the examination process regarding specifics of the

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examination of their own or others' work. Candidates who are unhappy with an aspect of their assessment may make a complaint or appeal to the Proctors via their college.

APPENDIX

1: Marking Criteria for Timed-Essays

| Descriptor  | Mark Range                      | Core Criteria   | Ancillary Observations   |
|-------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Distinction | 80-100                          | <p>An exemplary answer</p> <p>Features comprehensive, excellent, well-documented knowledge of relevant material, going well beyond core literature</p> <p>The answer is scholarly, with outstanding synthesis and sustained high level of critical analysis of evidence and major issues</p> <p>Features originality of approach and/or discussion</p> <p>The answer is meticulously organised and presented</p>  | <p>The answer may, in principle, be of publishable standard</p> <p>The answer may feature a wealth of relevant information showing excellent knowledge and understanding</p> <p>The answer may be highly sophisticated or incisive</p> <p>It may show new and worthwhile ways of considering the material</p>  |
|             | 70-79                           | <p>An excellent answer</p> <p>Features close engagement with the question</p> <p>Demonstrates excellent understanding of an extensive range of relevant material, going beyond core literature</p> <p>Demonstrates thorough knowledge of current major issues in the field</p> <p>Features excellent synthesis, analysis and critique of relevant evidence and theories</p> <p>Arguments are well-structured, clearly and persuasively made</p> <p>Features originality of approach and/or discussion</p> | <p>The answer may feature a wealth of relevant information showing excellent knowledge and understanding</p> <p>The answer may be highly sophisticated or incisive</p> <p>It may show new and worthwhile ways of considering the material</p> <p><i>Lower end:</i> An answer which omits a small amount of the core relevant evidence or fails to fully develop a particular argument, but nevertheless fulfils the core criteria (left), may be awarded a mark at the lower end of this band.</p> |
| Pass        | 65-69<br><i>Pass with Merit</i> | <p>A very good answer</p> <p>Features competent and accurate reproduction of received ideas and good, broad-based engagement with and understanding of the <i>core</i> relevant material</p> <p>The answer is regularly sophisticated in analysis, with impressive display of relevant knowledge and originality</p> <p>The answer is clearly organised, argued and well-illustrated</p>  | <p>The answer may have <i>Distinction</i> qualities in places, but less consistently so, and may be less comprehensive or sophisticated in critique</p>  |
|             | 60-64<br><i>High Pass</i>       | <p>A consistently competent answer</p> <p>Features competent and accurate reproduction of received ideas and good, broad-based engagement with and understanding of the <i>core</i> relevant material</p> <p>The answer is sometimes sophisticated in analysis, and displays relevant knowledge and some originality</p> <p>It is possible there are some minor errors of fact or omissions of relevant material</p>  | <p>The work may otherwise be of <i>Pass</i> quality but show some <i>Distinction</i>-level inspiration</p> <p>Ideas, critical comment or methodology may in places be under-developed or over-simplified; arguments may be less sophisticated and coherent than is the case in the <i>Pass with Merit</i> mark range</p>   |

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|             |                      |  |  |
|-------------|----------------------|--|--|
|             | 50-59<br><i>Pass</i> | <p>An answer which is competent in places or in some respects but weak in others</p> <p><i>Positive</i><br/>The answer exhibits some knowledge and understanding of the chosen topic and the relevant evidence and ideas<br/>The answer is competent and broadly relevant</p> <p><i>Negative</i><br/>Some important information and references are lacking<br/>The answer displays weaknesses of understanding and superficiality<br/>Some arguments are lacking in focus, development or coherence<br/>The answer may feature some significant factual errors<br/>There may be considerable proportion that is irrelevant or doesn't address the question</p> | <p>The answer may have <i>High Pass</i> quality in places but be too short, rushed, unfinished, badly organised or may not adequately address the question</p> <p>To be awarded marks in this band the answer must feature the positive traits identified (left); placement within this mark band depends upon the extent to which the positive traits are undermined by the negative traits</p> |
| <b>Fail</b> | 40-49                | <p><i>Positive</i><br/>The answer exhibits only rudimentary knowledge and analysis of relevant material<br/>There is evidence of some basic understanding</p> <p><i>Negative</i><br/>There is little evidence of awareness of essential literature, evidence or arguments<br/>Material is inadequately discussed, misrepresented or misunderstood<br/>There are significant factual errors and/or incoherent arguments<br/>The answer is poorly organised</p>  | <p>The candidate may have missed the point of the question</p> <p>The answer may be unduly brief</p> <p>The candidate may have failed to adhere to the rubric (e.g. by answering well but on material explicitly excluded)</p> <p>An otherwise competent candidate who has fallen seriously short of time may fall into upper end of this category</p>   |
|             | 1-39                 | <p>There is some attempt at the exercise, but it is seriously lacking in planning, content and presentation</p> <p>The answer may show a modicum of relevant elementary knowledge but be largely irrelevant, superficial and incoherent with significant misunderstanding and errors</p>   | <p>Marks at the top end of this scale may include superficial knowledge of some relevant points</p> <p>Marks at the bottom end of this scale include virtually nothing, or nothing of relevance in the answer</p>  |
|             | 0                    | Work not submitted.  |  |

**2: Marking Criteria for Quantitative Methods examination**

The Quantitative Methods examination is marked out of 100 points, with the following breakdown:

- (i) Short questions (theory): 30 points;
- (ii) Short questions (applications): 30 points;
- (iii) Analysis of data: 40 points.

In order to pass the examination, candidates must score at least 50 points in total, with a mark of not less than 15 for each of parts (i) and (ii) and not less than 20 for part (iii).

The breakdown of points awarded for each component is given next to each question on the examination paper.

These read *for example*:

**Question 3.1 [30 pts total]**

Produce a report in a style suitable for the results section of a journal article, properly formatted (e.g. figures and tables in the text, with captions; plots labelled).

- Describe the sample in relation to weight, height, gender, activity level, by type of school. Use descriptive statistics, graphs, and tables as appropriate. [5 pts]
- Provide inferential statistics regarding differences in weight as a function of type of school. Include the following information:
  - the test used and its justification; [1 pt]
  - the null hypothesis; [2 pts]
  - values for the statistical test, the 95% confidence interval, and the p-value; [3 pts]
  - conclusions regarding the null hypothesis; [2 pts]
  - a plot summarizing the results. [2 pts]
- Provide diagnostic plots to assess whether a linear model is appropriate to predict weight (response variable) as a function of height and gender (explanatory variables). [5 pts]
- Provide the R code used to answer the question, legible and properly annotated. [10 pts]

In marking these questions examiners will award marks on the basis of appropriateness of calculations, accuracy and evidence of understanding. Answers that are partially complete and/or partially correct may be awarded a partial score.

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**3: Marking Criteria for Theses**

The thesis is designed to test a student’s ability to conduct original research on a question that is relevant to and positioned within cognitive and evolutionary anthropology. It consists primarily of an original proposal for research, grounded in a review of relevant literature. The thesis should therefore be seen not as just another piece of written work, but as a description of a carefully constructed and argued research exercise in which a theoretically well-motivated and empirically tractable research question, proposal for quantitative design and statistical analysis, and discussion of potential outcomes, implications and limitations are key ingredients. The core activities of the proposed research should be possible to implement in no more than five months, by the student, with only minimal research assistance as appropriate (e.g., hypothesis-blind testers or coders). Required specialist resources (e.g., facilities, equipment) should be limited to those typical within a cognitive and/or evolutionary anthropology department.

The thesis will be assessed on the following main points:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Knowledge, understanding and critique of the background literature   | Originality and clarity of reasoning  |
| Formulation of a clear and tractable research question; development of testable hypotheses where appropriate.  | Proper choice of research methods and quantitative analyses to be performed |
| Careful discussion of the potential relevance of findings were the project to be executed and an explanation of their relationship to current research | Feasibility and effective resourcing  |

| Descriptor         | Mark Range | Core Criteria   | Ancillary Observations   |
|--------------------|------------|---|--|
| <b>Distinction</b> | 80-100     | An exemplary thesis<br>Features close engagement with the research question<br>Features comprehensive, excellent, well-documented knowledge, understanding and critique of relevant material<br>The work is scholarly, with outstanding synthesis and sustained high level of critical analysis of evidence and relevant issues<br>Arguments are consistently well-structured, clear and persuasive<br>The research design, proposed analyses and discussion of potential results are highly sophisticated or incisive, with no superfluity<br>The research is feasible, cost-effective, and plausible.<br>Features originality of approach and/or discussion<br>The work is meticulously organised and presented | The thesis may feature a wealth of relevant information showing excellent knowledge and understanding<br>The work may reveal new and valuable ways of considering the material |
|                    | 70-79      | An excellent thesis<br>Features close engagement with the research question   | The thesis may feature a wealth of relevant information showing excellent knowledge and understanding  |

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|             |                                 |  |   |
|-------------|---------------------------------|--|---|
|             |                                 | <p>Demonstrates excellent understanding and thorough knowledge of relevant material</p> <p>Features excellent synthesis, analysis and critique of relevant evidence and theories</p> <p>Arguments are well-structured, clear and persuasive</p> <p>The research design, proposed analyses and/or discussion of potential results are sophisticated or incisive, with little or no superfluity</p> <p>The research design is feasible, and demonstrates consideration of cost-effectiveness</p> <p>Features originality of approach and/or discussion</p>   | <p>The research may reveal new and worthwhile ways of considering the material</p> <p><i>Lower end:</i> A thesis which omits a small amount of the core relevant evidence or fails to fully develop a particular argument, but nevertheless fulfils the core criteria (left), may be awarded a mark at the lower end of this band</p>   |
| <b>Pass</b> | 65-69<br><i>Pass with Merit</i> | <p>A very good study</p> <p>The thesis is clearly organised and argued</p> <p>Features good, broad-based engagement with and understanding of the relevant material</p> <p>The research project is in many respects sophisticated in design, and impressive in its display of relevant knowledge and originality</p> <p>The research design, proposed analyses and/or discussion of potential results are appropriate and adequate</p> <p>The research design is feasible, and there is consideration of cost-effective use of resources, if appropriate</p>   | <p>Features competent and accurate reproduction of received ideas, and appropriate design and/or analyses</p> <p>The work may have <i>Distinction</i> qualities in places, but less consistently so, and may be less comprehensive in critique or sophisticated in design</p>   |
|             | 60-64<br><i>High Pass</i>       | <p>A consistently competent study</p> <p>The thesis is clearly organised and argued</p> <p>Features good, broad-based engagement with and understanding of the relevant material</p> <p>The research project is in some respects sophisticated in design, displaying relevant knowledge and some originality</p> <p>The research design, proposed analyses and/or discussion of potential results are broadly appropriate and adequate</p> <p>The research design is broadly feasible, and there is some consideration of cost-effective use of resources, if appropriate</p> <p>It is possible there are some minor errors of fact, omissions of relevant material, weaknesses in design or logistical plan (e.g., timetabling), or unacknowledged limitations of results particularly at the lower end</p> | <p>Features competent and accurate reproduction of received ideas, and appropriate design and/or analyses</p> <p>Ideas, critical comment or methodology may in places be under-developed or over-simplified; arguments may be less sophisticated and coherent than is the case in the <i>Pass with Merit</i> mark range</p> <p>There may be some superfluous elements showing error of judgement</p> <p>The thesis may otherwise be of <i>Pass</i> quality but show some <i>Distinction</i>-level qualities</p> |
|             | 50-59<br><i>Pass</i>            | <p>A thesis which is competent in places or in some respects but weak in others</p> <p><i>Positive</i></p>   | <p>The thesis may have <i>High Pass</i> quality in places but be too short, underdeveloped,</p>   |

**Examination Conventions: MSc in Cognitive & Evolutionary Anthropology (CEA)**

|             |       |  |  |
|-------------|-------|--|--|
|             |       | <p>The work exhibits some knowledge and understanding of the chosen topic and the relevant evidence and ideas</p> <p>The work is competent and broadly relevant</p> <p><i>Negative</i></p> <p>Some important information and references are lacking</p> <p>The work displays weaknesses of understanding and superficiality</p> <p>Some arguments are lacking in focus, development or coherence</p> <p>Important avoidable flaws or superfluity exist in the project design, logistical plan or proposed analyses, showing errors of understanding or judgement</p> <p>The thesis may feature some significant factual errors</p> <p>There may be considerable proportion that is irrelevant or does not address the question</p> | <p>unfinished, badly organised or may not adequately address the research question</p> <p>To be awarded marks in this band the thesis must feature the positive traits identified (left); placement within this mark band depends upon the extent to which the positive traits are undermined by the negative traits</p>   |
| <b>Fail</b> | 40-49 | <p><i>Positive</i></p> <p>The thesis exhibits only rudimentary knowledge and analysis of relevant material</p> <p>There is evidence of some basic understanding</p> <p><i>Negative</i></p> <p>There is little evidence of awareness of essential literature, evidence or arguments</p> <p>Material is inadequately discussed, misrepresented or misunderstood</p> <p>Critical flaws exist in the research design, logistical plan, or proposed analyses, showing poor understanding or judgement</p> <p>There are significant factual errors and/or incoherent arguments</p> <p>The thesis is poorly organised</p>   | <p>The work may have failed to adhere to the rubric but have otherwise written some relevant material</p> <p>The research project and/or proposed analyses may be seriously flawed, misconceived, simplistic or poorly executed</p> <p>An otherwise competent candidate who has fallen seriously short of time in the execution or writing up of the work may fall into upper end of this category</p> |
|             | 1-39  | <p>There is some attempt at the exercise, but it is seriously lacking in planning, content and presentation</p> <p>The thesis may show a modicum of relevant elementary knowledge but be largely irrelevant, superficial and incoherent with significant misunderstanding and errors</p>   | <p>Marks at the top end of this scale may include superficial knowledge and attempts at designing the experimental investigation</p> <p>Marks at the bottom end of this scale include virtually nothing, or nothing of relevance</p>   |
|             | 0     | <p>Work not submitted.</p>   |  |