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Note: The modules offered and their timing are conditional upon the availability of faculty and may be subject to change.

The Organisational Behaviour PhD pathway: Course outline

The Organisational Behaviour PhD pathway at Cambridge Judge Business School runs over a period of 4 to 5 years. It includes a foundation year, when you will be registered as a research masters student, followed by 4 years as a PhD student.

The programme is specifically designed to prepare you for a successful academic career in the Organisational Behaviour department of a top business school. The PhD programme is formed of a coursework component and an individual research component.

Coursework

The coursework component comprises a suite of foundational and methodological courses, which are complemented by research seminars that introduce you to current debates and research streams in the field. The assessed coursework component is likely to comprise 11 or 12 modules, of which a dissertation counts for 3, an MRes¹ dissertation counts for 5, and a research project counts for one. Your assessed coursework will be completed during your masters degree and the PhD first year.

Typical coursework for a PhD in Organisational Behaviour includes the following modules²:

ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR MODULES

- Organisational Behaviour (biennial)

FOUNDATIONAL AND METHODOLOGICAL MODULES

- Organisational Research Methods Part 1 (biennial)
- Organisational Research Methods Part 2 (biennial)
- Econometrics I *
- Econometrics II *

MODULES FROM COGNATE DISCIPLINES³

- Seminar in Strategy Content (biennial)
- Social Psychology (Psychology Department) *
- IS, Innovation & Organisational Change *
- Organisation Theory *
- Consumer Behaviour (biennial)
- Marketing Strategy *
- Game Theory & Information Economics (biennial) *
- Quantitative Market Models (biennial)*

¹ MRes students may need to take additional courses if deemed necessary by the OB pathway rep and their supervisor.

² Students who can demonstrate sufficient competency in some of the above modules, may be allowed to take alternative modules after consultation with the masters director and PhD pathway rep.

³ Students may replace courses indicated with * with another module from the list of research courses specified in the MPhil handbook or – in the first year of their PhD – with another course from another institution. MPhil SMO students who do not write a masters dissertation may, after consultation with the programme director, replace any course indicated with * with an individual research project or another module from the list of research courses specified in the MPhil handbook.

- Qualitative Research Methods *
- advanced qualitative methods training *

The trademark of an academic career is continuous, lifelong learning. During your PhD we will therefore expect you to expand your field knowledge and methodological skill set further by participating in relevant courses offered by CJBS or cognate departments at Cambridge, as well as by attending appropriate courses or workshops in other business schools.

Research

The research component builds on the coursework and normally consists of 2 or 3 supervised research projects connected by a common theme. These projects will lead to 2 or 3 papers for journal publication and constitute the core of your PhD thesis. They will also form the basis of your academic job applications.

Foundation year: research masters degree

During your foundation year you are registered for a masters degree – a **Master of Research (MRes)** or an **MPhil in Strategy, Marketing and Operations (SMO)**.

MPhil in Strategy, Marketing and Operations (SMO)

The SMO MPhil is the standard route to a PhD in Organisational Behaviour. If you are registered for an SMO MPhil, you will be required to take:

- nine coursework modules (MPhil SMO), or
- eight coursework modules and a short individual research project (MPhil SMO), or
- six coursework modules and a masters dissertation

You can find more details about the individual research project and masters dissertation below.

Master of Research (MRes): 5 modules plus a dissertation

If you are registered for an MRes degree, you will take 5 courses from the above list and write a masters dissertation under the close supervision of a faculty member. This dissertation will have a maximum length of 16,000 words and count for 50% of the overall assessment in this year. A good MRes dissertation demonstrates a developing aptitude for the formulation of sharp research questions, the critical assessment of relevant academic literature and the appropriate choice and application of research methods. We will expect you to expand on and refine your MRes dissertation as part of your first year report during the first year of your PhD.

We will agree on the broad theme of your dissertation as well as your dissertation supervisor before you start your MRes year. If you apply for an MRes degree, you will be required to submit a brief dissertation proposal before the final admission decision is taken. You will then work with your supervisor to fine-tune your proposal further after you are admitted to the programme. This means that you can start working on your dissertation from the very beginning of your MRes year.

Preparatory Mathematics & Statistics (September)

The MPhil in Strategy, Marketing and Operations offers a pre-term mathematics refresher course, which starts in mid-September. Its aim is to review the mathematical and statistical methods required for the

modelling and econometrics modules. Students with strong and appropriate prior training may apply for exemption from this preparatory course. Otherwise, the course is mandatory.

Individual research project

MPhil SMO students may undertake a supervised individual research project (IRP). This project will provide first-hand research experience and prepare you for the individual research activity during the first year of your PhD. You are encouraged to propose a theme for your IRP. Faculty members will also advertise a number of themes that you can choose from. If you intend to do an IRP, you will need to agree on a theme with the MPhil director and a supervising faculty member at the beginning of the Lent term. The IRP is equivalent in weighting and workload to one course module.

Masters dissertation

MPhil SMO students may choose to write a dissertation. The dissertation is a more substantial individual research component than the IRP and is equivalent in weighting and workload to 3 course modules. This dissertation will be conducted under the supervision of a faculty member. If you wish to write a dissertation, you must apply for this route prior to the start of the academic year and provide a well-defined research plan, which must be approved by the MPhil SMO director and a supervising faculty member. MPhil students that choose to write a dissertation cannot undertake an IRP.

For the MRes, the dissertation is mandatory and counts for 50% of the mark.

PhD continuation requirements

We strongly encourage MPhil students to apply for continuation to our PhD programme. Availability of specific PhD Principal Supervisors will vary from year to year because each typically works with a maximum of two PhD students at any given time. The PhD programme aims to admit between 6 and 10 students (PhD and MRes) per year, depending on the strength of applications, among other factors.

If you wish to apply for continuation to the PhD at CJBS, you will need to develop an initial research proposal during the first term of your MPhil year, talk to faculty about the fit of your research interests and then apply for admission to the PhD in January. Faculty will assist with the development of this proposal. Applications are assessed by the PhD Admissions committee in January on the basis of:

- quality of the research proposal and strength of references
- module performance during the first term
- performance in the admissions interview
- fit between the proposed research and the research expertise in the subject group, resulting in a recommended supervision arrangement from PhD pathway faculty
- ranking compared to other applicants, which includes prior academic performance

An admissions offer would be conditional on your overall performance in the MPhil or parts thereof. The usual condition is a mark of 70% overall (and 70% in any dissertation or project).

Due to the competitive nature of our programme, an offer of admission to the PhD is not guaranteed and we also encourage and support MPhil students in making applications to other leading PhD programmes.

If you are registered for an MRes degree during your foundation year, you will proceed to PhD registration without a further application process, provided you achieve a mark of 70% in your dissertation and an overall average of 70% in your MRes year (the dissertation counting for 50% of the mark).

Summer (July–September)

As a continuing PhD student you will be strongly advised to discuss with your faculty supervisor how to continue your research over the summer prior to the start of your first PhD year. This ensures that you don't lose valuable time that could be put towards completing your PhD. Students may continue the work that they have begun on their masters dissertation or an individual research project. We prefer students to remain in Cambridge over this period if possible. If this is not practicable (eg for visa reasons), students can be supervised remotely via video call and email.

Entry from the MPhil in Psychology

Students with an MPhil in Psychology from the University of Cambridge may qualify to enter the Organisational Behaviour PhD pathway via the MRes degree route.

First year of the PhD

The first year of the PhD is probationary and has 2 assessed components:

First year report

You will work with a faculty supervisor to produce a first year report. This research can take the form of a draft scientific paper addressing a specific research question, which will eventually form the basis for one of your 2 PhD papers.

Your first year report should demonstrate your ability to formulate sharp research questions, summarise relevant academic debates, critically assess the extant literature and apply appropriate research methodology. While you are not required to, you can incorporate parts of your masters work, such as your module essays, IRP, dissertation or a summer project (if applicable), into your first year report.

Coursework

In your first year, you are required to complete the assessed coursework requirements for the OB pathway that were communicated to you in your PhD continuation letter. This will normally be one remaining module for continuing MPhil students and MRes students. Occasionally an MRes student may be required to take further assessed coursework depending on their training prior to the MRes.

Not-for-credit modules

During the first year and subsequent years, you may be required to attend other module(s) (not for credit) to broaden your research methods, for example in-house advanced quantitative methods training.

Second year continuation requirements

To proceed to the second year of the PhD you will have to gain a mark of 70% for your first-year report and pass all required courses (60% pass mark).

While we will continue to monitor your progress closely after the first year of your PhD, there will not be any more formal continuation assessment until the final PhD assessment.

Second year of the PhD

During the second year, you will focus on producing your first research paper. Many students do this by 'learning on the job' – by joining a project proposed by a faculty member or working closely with a faculty member to define a project to work on jointly. This usually results in a co-authored paper. You will be expected to present your progress to your subject group frequently and submit the paper for presentation at a top Organisational Behaviour conference in the autumn of that year.

Third year of the PhD

During your third year you will focus on completing your first paper and begin working on your second paper. You may continue to work with your co-author or another co-author or choose to work on your second paper independently. You can expect your advisors to play a significant role in helping shape the idea for this paper, but you will be expected to take the lead in executing it and be the clear primary author. This paper will normally be your job market paper. You will be expected to submit this paper for presentation at a top Organisational Behaviour conference in the autumn of that year. In parallel with the development of this second paper, you will revise your first paper and continue to present it at seminars and conferences.

We encourage you to spend part of your third or fourth year as a visitor in an Organisational Behaviour department of another top university, typically in the USA, to build closer ties with potential collaborators and the global Organisational Behaviour community.

Fourth year of the PhD

The fourth year is your job market year. You will be expected to present your paper or papers at top American and European job market conferences and continue to revise and polish them. You will submit your PhD thesis during your fourth year.

Optional further year of study (postdoc)

Good research requires you to take risks, to explore avenues and tackle issues that are new and original. Research may therefore not unfold as planned and your work may require substantial revision. In fact, many of the most influential research projects ended up taking considerably longer than anticipated. We encourage students to be aspirational and take risks – and we work with them to manage these risks.

To accommodate early 'wrong turns' and unforeseen delays, we sometimes recommend that a student delays entering the job market by a year and spend an additional year at CJBS (and possibly another university) to work on paper revisions with faculty and strengthen their portfolio of research paper before applying for a junior faculty position.

An optional further year at CJBS would be typically funded by:

- a CJBS post-doctoral grant (2 grants available by competition each year)
- paid teaching opportunities, which further strengthen a student's job market prospects