

Author/genre exam

Aims and objectives

This exam offers the opportunity to study an ancient author or genre in considerable depth. Its objectives are that the candidate deepen their knowledge of an author/genre and of relevant scholarship in the field, and learn to assess and form critical responses to the material.

The candidate should discuss topics with the Chair of their committee. Normally the author/genre chosen should be in the language of the candidate's dissertation topic. However, there will be exceptions to this rule (e.g. a student whose thesis is on Lucretius may do a genre exam on Greek and Roman didactic poetry).

The candidate will work with the Chair of their committee to draw up lists of primary and secondary texts to form the basis of the exam. The primary texts are often equivalent to an OCT volume. The secondary texts often amount to fifty items (monographs, chapters and journal articles).

Scope and structure of the examination

Expectations normally include some or all of the following: a good knowledge of the primary texts, relevant scholarship and current critical issues; evidence of wide and intellectually demanding reading; evidence of independent thinking, often manifesting itself in the ability to assess the scholarship in the field and ask significant questions about the material; clear writing.

The exam will be three hours in length: the precise content to be determined by the Chair of the committee, in consultation with the other committee members, who will make it clear to the candidate, at least one month before the exam is taken, what format the exam will take. At least one exercise should test that the candidate has read the text(s) in the original language (eg a 'gobbet' exercise). Essay questions will address in some way approaches and developments in scholarship.