

Compulsory taught module in the first year.

All PhD students in their first year must register, attend and pass one module from the approved list of modules. There is no requirement for taking the formal examination, but you must pass the module by submitting a module research essay (MRE) for assessment as part of your first year review (FYR) Preliminary Meeting.

It is important to note that the exact choice of the taught module should be done in consultation with your Principal Research Supervisor (PRS) to find the most suitable match for your PhD area. Selection of the module choice is done via the online METEOR system. There are no exemptions as those students who have already completed suitable modules as part of an earlier Cambridge MEng, MPhil or CDT can select the most suitable module they have already completed to write their module research essay upon during the first year of their PhD research. If the module selected is 100% exam based, then the module research essay (MRE) will replace the formal examination in the review process. For modules that have coursework content, it is possible to complete that coursework and then use it in place of the MRE, subject to the approval of your PRS. You may also request that the coursework be assessed by the module leader, if they are willing to do so, but no formal grade or credit will be given. In the case of Divisions that have a formally set up reading club it is possible to exchange the reading club for your compulsory module. This should be done in discussion with your PRS along with approval from the Postgraduate Office (PO). The formal assessment remains the same, you must write the MRE on aspects of work covered in the reading club and its relationship to your PhD.

The process for part-time students in their first year (over two) is the same assuming that the module material can be viewed remotely on the occasions that the student is not able to attend lectures in person. The assessment process remains the same as for full-time students but using the part-time PhD calendar.

The assessment of the compulsory module and RDC will be done in the first-year review process via the Preliminary Meeting and completion of the FYA1 form. As part of this formal assessment meeting you will have to submit 3 things.

- i) A draft table of contents of your FYR
- ii) A module research essay (MRE) or module coursework, based on the module you took and the way in which it impacts your PhD research.
- iii) A logbook of your RDC and reading club activities to date.

Your module research essay (MRE) is an important part of your first-year review process. It should briefly describe the technical content of the module but focus on any elements that are important background to your PhD research area. It should highlight important theories and concepts that may underpin the structure of your first (and subsequent) years of your PhD. Its main aim is to show that the material you covered in the module has been taken onboard, has relevance to your PhD and can be taken forward as part of your PhD research body. Ideally it would be no more than 4 pages long and will eventually form an appendix to your FYR. The MRE forms a basis for discussion during your Preliminary Meeting, and you are expected to demonstrate specific knowledge that you have learned from that module. Failure to do this will be reported to the next phase of the first year review process and may result in a recommendation not being allowed to continue with your PhD.

The first-year review Preliminary Meeting will also discuss the structure of your future FYR as presented in your draft table of contents along with the MRE and progress made as part of your RDC and reading club programmes. The outcome from the Preliminary Meeting is the completion of the FYA1 form and progression on to completing the FYR. You should then add your MRE and RDC log to your FYR as appendices.