

Master in Arts¹

Bachelors of the University of at least three years' standing may be conferred with a Master in Arts (*i.e.* an M.A. (*Dubl.*)). This is a **title of academic rank** and not an examined academic qualification. In the University of Dublin, Masters-level courses of study or research in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences lead to the award of an M.Litt. or M.Phil., **not** an M.A; there are many other Masters-level degrees in each Faculty; and they are all set out in PART 2 OF THE CALENDAR — GRADUATE STUDIES AND HIGHER DEGREES. However, none is styled an M.A. In other words, the M.A. (*Dubl.*) is nominal and unexamined, and it is not an academic qualification in the sense that an M.Litt. or an M.Phil. is.

The M.A. (*Dubl.*) has the same functions and status as an M.A. (*Oxon.*) or an M.A. (*Cantab.*), and in none of these functions is it an academic qualification. In Oxford, in Cambridge and in Trinity, there were previously many privileges associated with M.A. status as opposed to B.A. status. For example, in medieval times, the M.A. constituted a licence to teach in the university, and it was awarded to those graduates who had remained on for several years for this purpose. The most important remaining consequences are listed below:

- I. It is a basis on which the recipient becomes a member of the Senate of the University.² The Senate has a role in formal University decision-making, so membership allows graduates to have some influence on University business.²

Since the degree can be obtained only after three years have passed since the conferral of the B.A., it indicates seniority on the part of the recipient.

- II. It is an indicator of academic rank and precedence in academic institutions on formal occasions: it defines the academic regalia which the recipient wears on such occasions, and the role (if any) which the recipient can or must play.
- III. As the B.A. is incorporated into the M.A, the formal effect of the M.A. is to supersede the B.A. Hence, a recipient should be styled Joe Bloggs, M.A. (*Dubl.*), rather than Joe Bloggs, B.A. (Mod.) (*Dubl.*). However, a recipient should **not** be styled Joe Bloggs, B.A. (Mod.) (*Dubl.*), M.A. (*Dubl.*).

On an historical note, the award of M.A. as an exclusively academic qualification seems always to have been the practice in universities in the USA; but, on this side of the Atlantic, the M.A. was first introduced as a formal academic qualification in the nineteenth century by the University of London. Universities founded thereafter followed the London nomenclature. This was the practice adopted when the various colleges which became the N.U.I. were founded in the mid-1800s. Hence, what are called M.Litt.s and M.Phil.s in Trinity are called M.A.s in the N.U.I. (U.C.D., U.C.C., *etc.*). This has become the standard

¹ This text will replace the text at Section E, *II REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE AWARD OF DEGREES*, paragraph 4 of the Calendar 2014-15, Part 1.

² http://www.tcd.ie/registrar/assets/documents/statutes/33-University_SenatePDF%5B20.8KB%5D.pdf and http://www.tcd.ie/registrar/assets/documents/statutes/34-University_Senate_Schedule_1PDF%5B10.9KB%5D.pdf

practice, with the result that the Oxford/Cambridge /Trinity model is now less common, sometimes leading to erroneous assumptions about the nature of the M.A. (*Dubl.*).

Finally, the M.A. (*Dubl.*) may also be awarded in special cases, such as *honoris causa*, *jure officii*, and *ad eundem gradum* (see sections 7, 9 and 10 respectively of the Calendar, <http://www.tcd.ie/calendar/assets/pdf/2013-14/TCDE.pdf>).

Candidates wishing to be conferred with M.A. (*Dubl.*) must give notice on the prescribed form which is available from the Student and Graduate Records Office. The form must be returned so as to reach that office not later than the specified closing date for a Commencements session. The fee for the M.A. is €637 and should be paid to the Student and Graduate Records Office. The fee is waived in the case of eligible staff and graduates of fifty or more years' standing.