Graduate Studies Handbook

2019-20

Notes of Guidance for the Programme *Master of Science by Coursework in Social Data Science* for Students and Supervisors at the Oxford Internet Institute

Version 1, 01 October 2019

Issued by the Graduate Studies Committee

Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford
1 St Giles
Oxford
OX1 3JS
United Kingdom

Contents

1. Introduction

Welcome to Oxford and the Oxford Internet Institute. We hope that you will enjoy your time living and studying in Oxford, and will find it a rewarding experience.

As the Director of Graduate Studies for the Oxford Internet Institute, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the OII community. You join a growing group of current and former OII students who have studied for degrees here on our MSc and DPhil programmes, but also students who have taken part in shorter engagements such as our annual 'Connected Life' student conference, our annual Summer Doctoral Programme, and of course the many public events we hold at the OII. All the faculty and staff here at OII want to make your time here productive and rewarding, and we look forward to the opportunities we will have to get to know you and to learn from you and your diverse experiences as we teach and supervise you in your work. As you will soon discover, the OII is a department with multidisciplinarity at its core, which is reflected both in the wide range of academic backgrounds of the faculty but also in the diversity of students who come here to better understand life online. Welcome!

Greg Taylor, Director of Graduate Studies, OII

1.1 Scope and purpose of this handbook

This handbook applies to students starting the MSc in *Social Data Science* programme in 2019-20. The information in this handbook may be different for students starting in other years. It is hoped that you will find the information contained within the handbook to be a useful guide both while you are new to studying your course and throughout the duration of your studies. The handbook is also a source of reference for academic staff appointed as your supervisors and anyone else involved in teaching you, including in classes, seminars and lectures.

The information given here is an informal description and interpretation of some of the most relevant rules in *Examination Regulations*. Any formal question has to be settled by reference to the Regulations and not to this handbook.

To be kept up to date, a copy of this handbook is available on Canvas at https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/. Comments and criticisms of this handbook are welcome and should be sent to the OII's MSc Programmes Co-ordinator at msc@oii.ox.ac.uk. Students should refer to the Graduate Studies Handbook on Canvas as corrections may be made and this will be the most up to date version.

1.1.1   Disclaimer

The Examination Regulations relating to this course are available at http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/. These are the definitive University regulations that govern examination of the degree. If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the Examination Regulations then you should follow the Examination Regulations. If you have any concerns please contact the MSc Programmes Co-ordinator at msc@oii.ox.ac.uk.

The information in this handbook is accurate as at 01 October 2019, however it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges. If such changes are made the department will publish a new version of this handbook together with a list of the changes and students will be informed.

1.1.2   Key sources of information

OII Website: http://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/graduatestudy

College Handbooks: Please refer to individual College websites at http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/colleges

Internal Course Information and Formative Assignment Submission Site (Canvas): https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/

Summative Assignment Submission Site (WebLearn): https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/site/:socsci:internet:sds

Oxford Students: http://www.ox.ac.uk/students

International Students: http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa

Student Health and Welfare: http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare

Examination Regulations: http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/

Policy and Guidance on Postgraduate Taught Courses:
http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/pgpgtaughtcourses/

Dates of Term: http://www.ox.ac.uk/about/facts-and-figures/dates-of-term

1.1.3   Academic progress - who to contact

Students are ultimately responsible for their own academic progress.

The Course Directors for the MSc Social Data Science are Dr Bernie Hogan and Dr Scott Hale, and they have immediate responsibility for students on this course. The MSc Programmes Co-ordinator, Christine Bunyan, is responsible for course administration and is the person you should contact in the first instance with any queries.

At the start of the degree students will be assigned an academic supervisor (see **Section 4** for further details). This person will be the main point of contact for keeping an eye on academic progress until students are re-assigned to thesis supervisors at which point your thesis supervisor will take on this role and also liaise with the student and with other faculty members with whom the student is working on the thesis.

Students who wish to discuss any academic issues that they prefer not to discuss with the Course Director or their supervisor can also speak to the Director of Graduate Studies, Dr Greg Taylor.

It is usually expected that students contact their college for any welfare or health related issues, but if a student wishes to speak to someone who is not directly involved in teaching or supervision please speak to Victoria McDermott who is the Graduate Studies Manager and Disability Lead at the OII. She can be contacted at victoria.mcdermott@oii.ox.ac.uk or on 01865 287304.

1.1.4   Laptop specification for students

All software taught on courses is available on PCs in the student room at 1 St Giles or on the departmental servers.

Students should also install the software on their own personal laptops, which will require that the laptop meet some minimum specifications. Most modern laptops should work with the software used on the course, but as a guideline, a minimum suitable specification might be 1.5 GHz or faster CPU, 4 GB or more of memory, a display resolution of 1280 x 768 or higher, and a disk with a minimum of 10GB of free space.

Generally most software taught on the course is available on Windows, Mac or Linux operating systems. Chromebooks, netbooks or tablets are not suitable for the course. Please note that some packages might be Linux only; however, students will have access to this software via the departmental servers.

1.2 Induction

1.2.1   Induction programme

A general compulsory introductory meeting for all newly admitted graduates at the OII will be held at the beginning of the academic year in the week preceding the start of Michaelmas Term (0th week). During that meeting they will be introduced to the OII's Director, Director of Graduate Studies, MSc Programme Directors, and the Graduate Studies Support Team. This general introductory meeting will be followed by induction sessions introducing the new graduate students to OII premises, IT resources and departmental policies. These general meetings will be followed by separate meetings dealing with induction matters for the DPhil and MSc courses. In addition, students will be offered a tour of the OII and will be formally introduced to faculty members and the administration team.

All new students will be e-mailed the induction timetable, reading lists and Graduate Studies Handbook before the induction meetings.

As soon as you arrive in Oxford you should obtain your **University Card** from your college. This is essential for access to the University's email and computing systems and for registration as a reader at the OII's Library, the *Bodleian Library* (see **Section 8.4**), and the Social Sciences Library in the Manor Road Building. It is also used to access the OII's premises at 1 St Giles and 41 St Giles.

Your college will also provide you with:

- information about *Examination Regulations*;
- a leaflet on Oxford Libraries and how to register with them;
- a statement on data protection regarding personal student data, including a declaration for you to sign indicating your acceptance of that statement. Please contact your college's Data Protection Officer if you have not received it.

1.2.2 Other sources of information

The OII's **website** is found at http://www.oii.ox.ac.uk. It includes:

- Lists of staff and their research interests, which can help identify those working in fields similar to your own.
- A regularly updated events section, with information on OII activities.

The Social Data Science degree is run in cooperation with other departments of the University. Faculty who are directly involved are listed on https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/study/msc-in-social-data-science?tab=supervisors, but students are encouraged to look at the biographies and research interests of other faculty in:

- Department of Engineering Science (http://www.eng.ox.ac.uk/)
- Mathematical Institute (https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/)
- Department of Computer Science (http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/)
- Department of Statistics (http://www.stats.ox.ac.uk/)
- Department of Sociology (https://www.sociology.ox.ac.uk/)
- Department of Economics (https://www.economics.ox.ac.uk/)
- Faculty of Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics (http://www.ling-phil.ox.ac.uk/)
- Oxford e-Research Centre (http://www.oerc.ox.ac.uk/)

The **University's web pages** contain extensive information on numerous key aspects of graduate work. Please check your **Oxford email** regularly as it will be used to send you important information about your course. Students should also regularly check their **Canvas inbox**.

The *University Gazette,* https://gazette.web.ox.ac.uk/current-issue, published at least weekly in term time, contains a wide range of other University announcements, including forthcoming seminars and lectures. Of special interest is the 0th week issue each term, which contains a detailed supplement listing lectures for the forthcoming term. All issues can be read online, consulted in most libraries (including the OII Library), and can be bought at the OUP Bookshop, 116 High Street.

The Oxford University Virtual Learning Environment is **Canvas**, https://login.canvas.ox.ac.uk. There you will find the most up to date reading lists for courses you are enrolled to take and course deadlines along with threaded discussion forums and general information. Students can access Canvas using their University of Oxford Single Sign-On. If you have any technical issues or queries on content such as reading lists please contact the MSc Programmes Co-ordinator at msc@oii.ox.ac.uk.

2. MSc Programme

2.1 Aims of the programme

2.1.1 Educational aims of the programme

The MSc programme is designed for students with core quantitative skills who wish to challenge themselves to understand and overcome the mathematical and computational challenges of analysing structured and unstructured data using machine learning and other techniques. We aim for the programme to contribute to the education of current and future researchers, analysts and practitioners from both public and private sectors, providing them with the toolkit (concepts, theories, methods and principles) to carry out innovative, high quality research, develop new methodological approaches, and to build and deploy new systems involving computational and human interaction . The principal aims of the MSc programme are:

- To provide advanced training in four types of research skill: research methodologies; written and oral communication; critical theoretical and analytical skills; research project planning and completion.
- To provide students with good empirical and theoretical knowledge and understanding of the major topics and concepts in social data science as well as a general understanding of the interplay between computational and social systems.
- To provide students with advanced empirical and theoretical knowledge and understanding of key topics and concepts in areas relating to the student's particular interest.
- To enable students to think strategically about evolving technologies and their implications for policy and practice.
- To assess students' progress through supervision and mechanisms of formal assessment.
- To provide appropriate pastoral support through the allocation of personal supervisors in conjunction with the system in place at College level.

2.1.2 Programme objectives and outcomes

The objectives of the MSc in Social Data Science are that, on completion of the course, students will have:

1. Designed a research project that applies tools and methods from data science to address a social science research question.
2. Evaluated and compared multiple computational approaches to a research question and chosen the most appropriate or efficient one.
3. Communicated across disciplines and explained research outcomes in an accessible language and to a wide audience.
4. Obtained a critical understanding of the uses and limitations of current computational approaches to social science questions and become responsive to emerging practices and challenges.
5. Evaluated and compared multiple computational approaches to a scientific challenge and chosen the most appropriate or efficient one.
6. Developed a wide ranging appreciation of both contemporary social and political science theories and data science approaches to tackling research questions related to these theories.
7. Manipulated and analysed large volumes of heterogeneous data to answer social science research questions by taking advantage of parallel, distributed, and other emerging computation methods.
8. Identified the current state-of-the art for analysing large-scale human behavioural data and either innovated with new methods or adapted existing methods to the specific challenges inherent with data related to human behaviour.
9. Applied techniques and tools from software engineering to build robust, reliable, and maintainable tools for analysing, visualising, and modelling data.

2.1.3 Related teaching and learning strategies and methods

Teaching methods are a combination of lectures, classes and one-on-one supervision meetings.

Detailed reading lists are available for each paper on the OII Website at http://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/graduatestudy and on the University of Oxford online reading list platform ORLO at https://oxford.rl.talis.com, and students are expected to undertake whatever assignments are set by course providers in addition to work required for formal assessment.

Regular essay writing and algorithm implementation will ensure that students practice and develop skills of analysis, explication and argumentation as well as ensuring that they have an in-depth understanding of the material covered.

To ensure that students develop oral as well as written communication skills, they will be asked to give class presentations in addition to, or in place of written work, and reading lists will be provided to support both purposes.

Formative written work will be marked and returned to students with comments to support student progress through the course. Summative work will be marked, and feedback provided for written summative work as allowed by the examining conventions.

2.2 Skills and attributes

Students will have the opportunity to develop the following skills over the course of the MSc:

2.2.1   Intellectual skills

1. The capacity to read and evaluate original research articles.
2. Theoretical knowledge and understanding of the major topics, approaches and research methods within social data science
3. The ability to read, critique, and write well-structured software code
4. Ability to think strategically about new technologies and their implications for policy and practice.
5. General critical and analytical skills.
6. The ability to plan, conduct and write up a programme of original research.

Related teaching and learning strategies and methods

1-5 are taught mainly through class teaching and supervision; 6 is taught primarily through the completion of the thesis, during which time the student will have individual tutorials to discuss the research question and research design, monitor progress and review drafts.

Assessment

These intellectual skills will be assessed through the completion of coursework, through unseen examinations, and through the thesis.

2.2.2   Practical skills

1. Effective oral and written presentation and communication skills.
2. Research methods skills.
3. Use of ICTs for communication and collaborative working.

Related teaching and learning strategies and methods

1 is taught mainly through class teaching and supervision as all students will write regular essays as well as making presentations to the class. 2 is taught through the intensive courses and research methods training. 3 is taught mainly through class teaching and the regular use of the Canvas VLE and other similar tools across the course.

Assessment

These skills will be assessed through satisfactory completion of all class assignments, the completion of coursework, through the unseen examinations, and by means of the thesis. 3 is formatively, not summatively assessed, through students' interaction with supervisors and class teachers.

2.2.3   Transferable skills

1. Critical analysis.
2. Oral and written communication skills.
3. Self-organisation, including time management.
4. Research design and project planning.
5. Use of ICTs for communication and collaborative working.

Related teaching and learning strategies and methods

1-3 are taught mainly through class teaching and supervision and specifically in the work which students prepare for class essays and presentations, and in preparation of coursework and the thesis. 4 is taught through the compulsory research methods training and through engagement with supervisors in the preparation of the thesis. 5 is taught mainly through class teaching and the regular use of the Canvas VLE and other similar tools across the course.

Assessment

These transferable skills will be assessed through satisfactory completion of all class assignments, the completion of coursework, through the unseen examinations, and by means of the thesis. 3 is formatively, not summatively assessed, through students' interaction with supervisors and class tutors.

2.2.4   Achievement of learning outcomes

In summary, to ensure that all OII MSc students achieve the learning outcomes identified in the previous section, they must:

1. Attend all classes, seminars, lectures or meetings as the OII Graduate Studies Committee deems necessary.
2. Complete all assignments (written, practical, or oral) as set by class teachers for the options taken.
3. Submit to the examiners the coursework required for formal assessment.
4. Sit and pass the required unseen examinations required for the courses they have taken which use examinations as the assessment method.
5. Submit to the examiners a thesis of up to 15,000 words.

1 and 2 will be assessed by the supervisor, class teacher and course provider. 3, 4 and 5 will be assessed and marked in accordance with Examiners' Guidelines (see **Section 2.7.1**). Supervisors will also provide guidance, informal advice and assessment during meetings with their student supervisees.

2.3 Programme structure and schedule

The MSc degree is a one-year (full-time) taught course running from the beginning of Michaelmas term until August 1st in the year of completion, or the nearest working day if 1st August falls at the weekend.

Oxford University has three terms each of eight week duration. These terms are called: Michaelmas Term (October to December); Hilary Term (January to March); Trinity Term (April to June).

Full-time students will be expected to be in residence at Oxford for each of the 8 weeks of the three terms. You will be free to leave Oxford after the end of each term but are advised to return during the week prior to the start of the next term (referred to as 0th week). For certain optional courses students are required to sit written examinations in 0th week of Trinity Term or at other times in Trinity Term.

You will need to submit your thesis via the Assignment Submission WebLearn site of the weekday on or nearest after the 1st of August of the year in which the degree is to be completed and you will also need to be available to return to Oxford in late August or September in the event of being called back for viva voce.

This course is comprised of the following nine components, including foundation, intensive, and option papers:

Parts 1-3: Foundation papers

Foundations and Frontiers of Social Data Science

This class is taught over two terms (Foundations of Social Data Science in Michaelmas Term and Frontiers of Social Data Science in Hilary Term). Foundations of Social Data Science will be examined through assessed written work

consisting of one 5,000 word essay and will form 50% of the overall mark. The deadline for submission is 12:00 noon on Friday of 0th week of Hilary Term.

Frontiers of Social Data Science will form the remaining 50% of the mark and will be examined through assessed written work consisting of one 5,000 word essay . The deadline for submission is 12:00 noon on Friday of 0th week of Trinity Term.

Applied Analytical Statistics

This class is taught during Michaelmas Term, and will be examined through assessed written work consisting of one 5,000 word essay. The essay must be submitted by 12:00 noon on Friday of 0th Week of Hilary Term.

Research Design for Social Data Science

Research Methods for Social Data Science takes place during Hilary Term and is examined via assessed written work, consisting of one 5,000 word essay. The deadline for submission is 12:00 noon on Friday of 0th week of Trinity Term.

Parts 4-6: Intensive papers

Fundamentals of Social Data Science in Python

This paper is taught during Michaelmas Term, and examined through assessed written work consisting of a project and a written research report not exceeding 3,500 words. The materials are due by 12:00 noon on Friday of 9th week of Michaelmas Term.

Data Analytics at Scale

This class takes place in Michaelmas Term and is examined through assessed written work consisting of a project and a written research report not exceeding 3,000 words. The materials must be submitted no later than 12:00 noon on Friday of 0th week of Hilary Term.

Machine Learning

Machine Learning is held during Michaelmas Term and examined through assessed work consisting of a problem set and a written research report of no more than 3,000 words. The deadline for submission of these materials is by 12:00 noon on Friday of 0th week of Hilary Term.

Parts 7-8: Two Option Papers

The two option papers, lasting eight weeks each, will be chosen in a specialised subject area from the list of option courses (see **Section 2.3.4**), or another paper agreed by the Director of Graduate Studies. The papers will be assessed by coursework or written examination. Assessment details for each class are provided in the reading lists available on the OII website and in the Canvas learning environment not later than the end of week one of Michaelmas Term. In the case of written work, this will normally be by one long essay or by a project and written report not exceeding 5,000 words, due by 12:00 noon on Friday of 0th Week in Trinity Term. Unseen written examinations will normally be held as indicated in the assessment details for each class and as scheduled by the Examination Schools.

In exceptional circumstances an option paper from another Oxford Master's degree (including the OII's MSc in Social Science of the Internet) may be taken, as long as this is relevant to your studies and formally agreed with your supervisor, the course convenor, and the MSc Programme Directors.

Part 9: Thesis

A thesis not to exceed 15,000 words, on a topic either put forward by academics within the Social Data Science programme (including general themes) or proposed by the student, comprises Part 9. The topic does not need to be chosen until Hilary term, but is subject to approval by the student's supervisor, the director of the couse and the Board of Examiners. One digital copy of the thesis must be submitted via the Assignment Submission WebLearn site by noon of the weekday on or nearest to the 1st of August of the year in which the degree is to be completed. Candidates earning a Distinction on the thesis may be invited to deposit a copy of their thesis in the Oxford Internet Institute Library.

Weightings

Part 1 has a weighting of 15%, each of parts 2, 3, 4, 7, and 8 has a weighting of 10%, each of parts 5 and 6 has a weighting of 7.5%, and part 9 (thesis) has a weighting of 20%.

2.3.1   Programme schedule

The following tables demonstrate the basic structure of the courses each term and is the minimum set of lectures, seminars and classes that an MSc student is expected to attend (see **Appendix E: Term Schedules** for further details of draft timetables). Students should seek permission from supervisor and course tutor if they plan to miss any of these sessions.

You will also be expected to engage fully in the intellectual life of the department throughout your studies, including attendance at MSc workshops, participation in departmental seminars and our events programme. You are encouraged to participate in discussions at workshops or events, and students should consider ways throughout their studies to express their work to the world at large.

Full-time Programme

Michaelmas Term (MT) 2018	Hilary Term (HT) 2019	Trinity Term (TT) 2019
Foundations of Social Data Science	Frontiers of Social Data Science	Foundations of Visualization
Applied Analytical Statistics	Research Design for Social Data Science	Special Topics in Research Design
Fundamentals of Social Data Science in Python	Option Paper 1	Thesis
Data Analytics at Scale	Option Paper 2	
Machine Learning		

There are many other lectures and seminars in Oxford that are of interest to OII students. Please consult the lecture list published by the University at the beginning of each term for details. Lecture lists are available online https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/lectures?wssl=1.

Students are responsible for their own academic progress and are expected to spend at least 40 hours on coursework and studying each week during term. You will also need to do some study during vacations.

- For courses meeting once a week during Michaelmas and Hilary terms, MSc students are advised to allocate between 10 and 15 hours of preparation each week for each course and/or paper they undertake. For intensive courses meeting Tuesday to Friday, MSc students are advised to allocate approximately 20 hours each week.
- This includes classroom time for lectures, seminars, labs, and Teaching Assistant sessions. Details of the TA sessions will be circulated during induction week.
- In Trinity term students should devote all their time to their thesis, which includes attending the weekly Special topics in research design Seminar (Weeks 1-8) and Foundations of Visualization (Weeks 1-4)

Students should note that this leaves very little time during the week for any paid employment.

Please see Appendix F for a draft course timetable for 2019-20. Please note that this may be subject to further changes but students will be notified and the most up-to-date schedule will be uploaded on Canvas.

It is a fundamental component of the Oxford educational system that students engage in individual reading and study in order to broaden and deepen their knowledge of their chosen field. All students will be expected to read widely in preparation for weekly classes and lectures, moving beyond the core texts on reading lists to develop both breadth and depth in their understanding of the literature. In addition, students will be expected to meet regularly with their supervisors while completing their dissertation, and may be asked to present their research to their peers. Thesis research is a largely self-directed process.

The OII has a lively research community with weekly internal research seminars at which work in progress is discussed and in which you are expected to participate. It also has a strong programme of conferences, policy

forums and seminars with invited external speakers to which students may be invited. Details of upcoming events can be found on our website at https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/events/.

2.3.2   Programme deadlines

These are the main assessment deadlines for the course. For full details on all assessments due including formative please see **Appendix C: Assessment Timetable.**

Term	Essay Submission Deadline / Date of Exam	Marks Available
Michaelmas Term		
Foundations of Data Science	12:00pm on Friday, 0th week, Hilary Term	End of February
Applied Analytical Statistics	12:00pm on Friday, 0th week, Hilary Term	End of February
Fundamentals of Social Data Science in Python	12:00pm on Friday, 9th week, Michaelmas Term	End of February
Data Analytics at Scale	12:00pm on Friday, 0th week, Hilary Term	End of February
Machine Learning	12:00pm on Friday, 0th week, Hilary Term	End of February
Hilary Term		
Frontiers of Data Science	12:00pm on Friday, 0th week, Trinity Term	End of May
Research Design for Social Data Science	12:00pm on Friday, 0th week, Trinity Term	End of May
Options (2 courses)	12:00pm on Friday, 0th week, Trinity Term (written coursework); any unseen written examinations will take place on a day and time to be determined by Exam Schools	End of May
Trinity Term		
Thesis	1st August (or the closest working day after when this falls on a weekend.)	End of September

2.3.3   Course details: core papers

As reading lists are likely to be updated by course tutors throughout the academic year, please refer to the lists posted at https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/study and on the University of Oxford online reading list platform ORLO at https://oxford.rl.talis.com for the most up-to-date versions. Individual course pages can be found at https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/.

Foundations and Frontiers of Social Data Science

Providing an intellectual framework for Social Data Science within the landscape of scientific inquiry, including important external issues and challenges that shape the contexts in which Social Data Science takes place and how these influence what social data science is and is not.

Applied Analytical Statistics

Focussing on the tools and techniques used by social scientists to understand, describe and analyse (quantitative) data. The focus will be on learning how to apply practical statistics in a social research context (rather than looking at fundamental mathematical foundations of statistical concepts).

Research Design for Social Data Science

Core methods and understandings of data science—reliability, robustness, validity, reproducibility, predictive accuracy—effective research design, and ethical research.

Foundations of Visualization

Discussion of the two-way interaction between visualization and the social sciences: (i) using visualization technology in social sciences, and (ii) using social science methodologies to facilitate discourses about visualization.

Special topics in Research Design

Cohort-building course with emphasis on research skills development in the run up to the thesis. Students will be grouped into small clusters to work with faculty on shared areas of interest for additional development towards their thesis.

2.3.4 Course details: intensive papers

Fundamentals of Social Data Science in Python

Python fundamentals including version control, server access, data clean/wrangling, and APIs

Data Analytics at Scale

Discussion of computational complexity, computability, efficiency, and Big-O notation. Tools and frameworks for processing data at scale including MapReduce, Hadoop, and Spark as well as data storage and retrieval techniques (SQL and NoSQL).

Machine Learning

Machine learning technologies and applications. Overview of machine learning, optimization, cluster analysis, classification, Gaussian processes, Expectation-Maximization and variational analysis, neural networks and deep learning.

2.3.5 Course details: optional papers

Students should agree with their supervisors which 2 option papers they would like to take. Students are then responsible for submitting their examination entry by Friday of Week 8 in Michaelmas Term. Teaching in some options may not be available every year.Courses must also have a minimum number of students signed up in order to run, this is normally at least 2, and at the discretion of the convenor. Depending on the option paper, students may be required to submit a 'Summative Title Approval Form' by Monday of Week 8 in Hilary Term to the individual course convenor. Individual course conveners will communicate if this is required during the first lecture. This form can be obtained from Canvas.

Students are strongly encouraged to carefully review course reading lists before settling on a final decision as these provide detailed information on what to expect from each course. It is also advised that students watch the short videos, where available, for many of the option courses at https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/study/msc-in-social-data-science/. These videos have been created by the faculty to help you decide which course to take.

It is essential that students ensure they satisfy the stated prerequisites, as specified on the course reading lists, for any option course they wish to take.

Details on the timetables for the courses can be found in **Appendix E: Term Schedules**, and on Canvas.

Digital Era Government and Politics

Experiments for Data Science

Human and Data Intelligence

Internet Economics

Introduction to Speech and Language Processing (not running 2019-20; Convenor on sabbatical)

Introduction to Natural Language Processing for the Social Sciences

Online Social Networks

Statistical Analysis of Networks

Sociological Analysis

Sociogenomics

Statistical Lifetime Models

The Philosophy of Ethics and Information

Time Series Econometrics

2.3.6   Auditing courses

Auditing means attending a course without taking that course as credit. It may be possible, in exceptional circumstances and subject to capacity and the pedagocial needs of the course, for a student to audit an option paper or method option paper in addition to those on which they are formally registered. Auditors must fully commit to attending all of the classes for the course, and must fully engage in class discussions. Auditors may also be required to complete the formative assessments for the course.

Students are advised that Hilary Term is extremely demanding and the extra work entailed in auditing a course should only be undertaken where a clear plan is in place to minimise the impact on other learning activities.

Students must complete an OII Audit Request Form, available on Canvas with their supervisor, and give a reason for why they think the course would be beneficial to their research. Students should submit the form to **msc@oii.ox.ac.uk** by Friday of week 8 of Michaelmas Term. Students will be notified by the end of week 9 if they have successfully secured a place on the course as an auditor.

2.4 Option selection

Students will be invited by email to enter for their examinations (sit-down examinations and submitted assessments) when the examination entry window opens. The email invitation will ask students to log in to Student Self Service to complete their core and optional examination entry assessment selections by a given date. The deadline is Friday of week 8 in Michaelmas Term. For further information on examination entry please refer to http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams.

If a student wishes to change their options outside of the examination entry window they must apply for permission in writing through their senior tutor or other college officer using the change of options form available from their college office. Applications for alterations of options will not be processed until a late entry fee payment has been received.

2.5 Examination entry

2.5.1   Examination timetable

The Examination Schools publish the timetables as early as possible and no later then five weeks before the start of the examination. Please see further details on where to access the timetables at http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/timetables.

2.5.2   Sitting your examination

Information on (a) the standards of conduct expected in examinations and (b) what to do if you would like examiners to be aware of any factors that may have affected your performance before or during an examination (such as illness, accident or bereavement) are available on the Oxford Students website: http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/guidance.

2.5.3   Exam resits

If a student fails an exam they will be permitted to retake it on one further occasion only, as specified in the degree's Examining Conventions. The exams must be resat at the next opportunity the exam is usually offered,

which is generally in the following academic year (see **Section 2.7** for more details). Students will need to complete another examination form which will be sent by the college to complete and must be completed by the stated entry date. The Examinations Schools will confirm examination details nearer the time and date. For further information please refer to the Examination Schools at: http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/entry.

2.6 Submission of summative coursework

All written summative assessments, including the thesis, must be submitted electronically via the Assignment Submission WebLearn site by the stated deadline and should include an official OII assignment cover sheet.

Students should go to the "Assignment Submission" site at https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/site/:socsci:internet:sds, click on "Assignments" on the left hand menu, select the assignment that they would like to submit, and follow the instructions.

Please note that assignments should only ever be identified by candidate number. Students should not put their name or college anywhere on the submitted work.

Students will be asked to tick a box to certify that they are the sole author of the work and the assignment will automatically be put through plagiarism detection software.

Work submitted after the deadline will be processed in the standard manner and, in addition, the late submission will be reported to the Proctors' Office. If a student is concerned that they will not meet the deadline they must contact their college office or the MSc Programmes Co-ordinator for advice.

If anything goes wrong with a student's submission then they should email a copy of their assignment to msc@oii.ox.ac.uk immediately. In cases where a technical fault that is later determined to be a fault of the WebLearn system (and not a fault of your computer) prevents a student from submitting the assessment on time, having a time stamped email message will help the Proctors determine if the assessment will be accepted. Students should note that waiting until the last minute to submit materials is not advisable since Weblearn can run slowly at peak submission times and this is not considered a technical fault.

Further instructions on using the Assignment Submission WebLearn site, and the official OII assignment cover sheet, can be found on Canvas.

2.6.1   Resubmission of coursework

If a student fails any coursework they must resubmit. Students will need to complete another examination form which will be sent by the college to complete and must be completed by the stated entry date. Please refer to the Examination Conventions on Canvas regarding resubmission deadlines. For further information please refer to the Examination Schools webpage at http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/entry.

2.6.2   Potential overlap between examinations

Students should note that any two examinations (including the thesis) are distinct pieces of scholarship, and will be marked as separate units of assessed work, independent of each other. This has two implications: first, if a student feels that one should draw on the other, a citation or reference to that earlier piece of work should be provided in accordance with usual best practice for academic citation (but should use the student's candidate number rather than name to maintain anonymity). Second, students are reminded that they may not copy whole sections between two pieces of exmined work. The thesis, for example, may build on work undertaken in assessed coursework for the Methods paper, but the material must be rewritten explicitly for the thesis. Please also refer to **section 3.3.2** for information on plagiarism.

2.7 Examination and assessment

The degree will be examined by a combination of coursework and unseen examinations (see Appendix C: Assessment Timetable for an overall list).

The research design component of the degree (Research Design for Social Data Science) will be examined through written work consisting of an essay which will be due on Friday of 0th Week of Trinity Term.

The core foundation papers (Foundations and Frontiers of Social Data Science & Applied Analytical Statistics) will be examined by formally assessed coursework in the form of essays. The essays will be due on the Friday of 0th week of Hilary Term.

The intensive paper Fundamentals of Social Data Science in Python will be assessed by written work to be submitted no later than Friday of 9th week of Michaelmas Term.

The intensive papers Data Analytics at Scale and Machine Learning will be assessed by written work to be submitted no later than Friday of 0th week of Hilary Term.

The two options papers will each be examined by formally assessed coursework due on the Friday of 0th week of Trinity Term, or by unseen written examination on a date and time to be determined by Exam Schools.

In addition, a dissertation of up to 15,000 words on a topic to be chosen by the student will be due on August 1st (or in the case August 1st falls when the University is closed, the nearest working day, e.g. Friday July 31st when August 1st falls on a Saturday, or Monday August 2nd when August 1st falls on a Sunday).

All students will be required to tick a box asserting that the work submitted for assessment is their own.

2.7.1   Examination guidelines

All examination scripts and theses will be identified by candidate number only and will be assessed by two markers internally and referred to the external examiner in cases where the markers are unable to agree a mark.

Following standard university practice, all material will be marked on a marking scale with 50 as the minimum pass mark, marks of 65–69 corresponding to a merit, and marks of 70 and above denoting distinction.

Students with an average of 70 or higher (calculated with the weighting scheme above) across all elements of the course, and who pass every course on the first attempt will be awarded a distinction as set out in the MSc's Examining Conventions.

Students with an average of 65 or higher (calculated with the weighting scheme above) across all elements of the course, and who pass every course on the first attempt will be awarded a merit as set out in the MSc's Examining Conventions.

Students must achieve a mark of 50 for each of the components of the course and for each course within the components (core courses, methods courses, option papers, and the thesis) in order to be awarded the degree of MSc. Students whose work is considered to be on the borderline of a pass, of a merit, or of a distinction may be called to a viva voce if it is felt that they may present further evidence that would enable them to be upgraded.

Please see Error! Reference source not found. for more information on marking scales.

A candidate who fails the degree on the basis of only one summative essay, examination or thesis will be permitted to resubmit the failed assessment. Examinations may be resat, and summative essays resubmitted, at the next usual examination time or submission deadline, which will usually be in the following academic year. The thesis may also only be resubmitted in August of the following academic year at the usual thesis submission deadline.

Please see the OII Examining Conventions (**Appendix G: Examining Conventions**) for further information on resubmission and resits.

Coursework progress will be monitored by the Graduate Studies Committee and efforts will be made to identify students who require particular assistance.

No candidate shall be permitted to take an examination unless he or she has been admitted as a candidate for the examination in question by the body responsible for the course and has satisfied any other conditions prescribed in the regulations for that course.

2.7.2   Board of examiners

There will be three internal examiners on the Board of Examiners, one of whom will be Chair of Examiners. There will be one External Examiner appointed by the board members, the appointment being ratified by the Graduate Studies Committee.

One Examiners' Meeting will be held in each term in order to agree and certify marks. The final Examiners Board meeting will be held in September to confirm final degree marks. Students whose work is considered to be on the borderline of a pass, merit, or distinction may be called to a viva voce if it is felt that they may present further evidence that would enable them to be upgraded.

2.7.3   Internal examiners

The internal examiners for 2019-20 will be confirmed in due course.

2.7.4   External examiner

The external examiner for 2019-20 will be Professor Tobias Preis.

2.7.5   Complaints and appeals

Students are strictly prohibited from contacting the assessors or examiners directly about any aspect of marking and examination.

If you are unhappy with an aspect of your assessment you may make a complaint or appeal (see **section 0** for more details).

2.7.6   Regulation of assessment

The assessed coursework, examinations, and thesis will be under the supervision of the Social Sciences Divisional Board. The subjects of each examination will be determined by regulation by the OII, which shall have the power to arrange courses of instruction for the examination. The OII Graduate Studies Committee will appoint the Board of Examiners consisting of three internal examiners, one of whom will be chair each year. One external examiner will be nominated by the Board and confirmed by the Graduate Studies Committee, and invited to serve by the Vice Chancellor. Internal marking of coursework and exams will be assessed by the relevant course providers and by another qualified assessor. One examiners' meeting will be held after each term's marking has been completed. Internal and external examiners will be required to produce reports after the examinations for consideration by the Graduate Studies Committee, and the Social Sciences Board.

Examinations will be governed by the Regulations of the Proctors.

External examiners will verify that standards appropriate to the award, in part by comparison with standards of comparable institutions, are applied. They ensure that the assessment procedures and the regulations governing them are fair and appropriate, that the conduct of the examination and the determination of the awards have been fairly made and that individual student performance has been judged in accordance with the regulations and conventions of the examining board. The external examiners recommended by the Committee will have some experience in teaching and examining at a post-graduate level, and will be research active.

Examiners are expected to report to the Vice-Chancellor in each year in which they act, upon the above issues. This includes:

- the standards demonstrated by the students;
- the extent to which the standards are appropriate to the award;
- the design of assignments and internal marking;
- access by externals to all of the necessary material for assessment;
- students' performance in relation to their peers in this and comparable courses, and the basis for comparisons;
- the policies and procedures relating to external examiners;
- the strengths and weaknesses of the students as a cohort;
- the quality of teaching and learning as indicated by student performance.

Please see Error! Reference source not found. for more information on marking scales.

Examination conventions (see **Appendix G: Examining Conventions**) are the formal record of the specific assessment standards for the course or 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 the award. They include information on: marking scales, marking and classification criteria, scaling of marks, progression, resits, use of viva voce examinations, penalties for late submission and penalties for over-length work.

2.7.7   Indicators of quality and standards

Standards are monitored by Internal and External Examiners' Reports, and by the comments submitted to examiners by coursework markers, supervisors and tutors. The OII, in turn, monitors standards through the discussions of the Graduate Studies Committee on the basis of the Examiners' reports, evaluation forms and general feedback received. The Examiners reports can be found on Canvas at https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/.

The course has been designed to meet the criteria set out in the ESRC's Postgraduate Training Guidelines, and is a recognised pathway to the OII's ESRC-recognised doctoral programme.

Some further indication of quality and standards may be gauged by following the success of OII MSc students in winning places for further study at prestigious universities or in presenting research in leading academic conferences.

2.8 MSc extensions

Under exceptional circumstances, for example due to personal or family illness, students can apply for a deadline extension for any coursework that counts towards their final mark. Students will need to apply to the Senior Tutor in their college who will then write to the Proctors. Deadline extensions need to be applied for in advance and have to be accompanied by a medical note. The Proctors then decide if the reason is valid and inform the examiners. The department and individual course convenors or lecturers **cannot** grant extensions.

2.8.1   Suspension of status

Suspension of status is the formal process by which a student can temporarily halt their studies with a view to returning to study later. Since students are expected to complete a graduate taught course within the time-scale of the course in question, suspensions of status are rare. If a student cannot work for a particular reason, e.g. illness, family circumstances, and so forth, then application for suspension of status can be sought. MSc students must suspend for an entire year, and cannot suspend for one term, as research students can. Please see **section 7.3.1** for further information.

2.8.2   Illness

Students whose work is unavoidably interrupted for any significant period due to illness should consider applying for a suspension of status until the following academic year. A student whose illness is not serious enough, or of too short duration to justify suspension of status, may, nevertheless, feel that it is likely to have an adverse effect on their performance in the examination. In this case they must ask their College Senior Tutor (not academic supervisor) to inform the University Proctors who, with sufficient evidence (including a doctor's report) have the option, at their discretion, of writing to the examiners and asking that the candidate's illness be taken into account. Candidates should not write directly to the Proctors or seek advice on this process from the Director of Graduate Studies. The Students College Secretary should be able to further advise you on this matter.

3. Thesis Preparation and Submission

This section expands upon the provisions of the *Examination Regulations*, which should always be consulted. The following suggestions, in so far as they go beyond the printed regulations, are not obligatory, but they are what the department recommends as clear and acceptable.

Bear in mind that success in writing a thesis is achieved in a number of ways: by an imaginative and extensive search for sources, by a thorough investigation of evidence, by rigour of analysis, by originality of interpretation, and by clarity of presentation.

Students should also consult the *Examination Regulations* for the Degree of Master of Science by Coursework:

https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2019-20/mosbcisocidatascie/studentview/

3.1 Overall thesis guidance

Students are required to submit a thesis on a topic of the student's choice, subject to the agreement of their supervisor and the Board of Examiners. Length of the main thesis is a maximum of 15,000 words. Details on calculating length are found in **Section 3.2.4**. Students are expected to write up their thesis in Trinity Term and over the summer. The thesis is to be submitted via the Assignment Submission WebLearn site by noon of the weekday on or nearest after the 1st of August of the year in which the degree is to be completed.

Students will be expected to present their initial thesis plans at an MSc Research Seminar in Trinity Term. Student presentations will be discussed and feedback provided. Workshops are attended by fellow students, supervisors and the MSc Programme Directors.

MSc students must submit an electronic copy of their thesis via the Assignment Submissions WebLearn site by noon on 1st August (or the nearest subsequent working day when this falls at the weekend). The thesis should include the official OII Summative Assignment Coversheet, which is available to download from Canvas. The thesis should bear the student's candidate number (to ensure anonymity), word count, and degree on the title page. For students drafting their work in Latex rather than a standard word processor, a template file is also available on Canvas.

Please note that assignments should only ever be identified by candidate number. Students should not put their name or college anywhere on the submitted work.

Students who are awarded a Distinction mark for their thesis may be invited to submit a hardbound copy for the OII Library. In the hardbound copy of the thesis the student's candidate number must be replaced by their name but everything else should remain the same (although students may correct minor typos).

For further information about the format and presentation of the thesis, see below.

3.1.1   Choice of thesis topic

The exact topic and title of a thesis require careful thought. At the risk of stating the obvious, it should be a topic which:

- is of interest to the student;
- addresses an interesting and well-specified research question;
- is feasibly researchable (in the sense that the necessary skills and resources are available to the student);
- is appropriately scoped (i.e., is neither too broad or too narrow);
- can be supervised and researched in Oxford (in terms of the resources available, such as supervisors and libraries);
- does not depend too heavily on confidential information (see below)

The University works upon the assumption that the results of research contained in a thesis belong in the public domain and that subsequent readers should be able to verify any documentary references. You should not therefore embark on research that is heavily dependent on confidential information without first checking with

your supervisor that this is likely to be acceptable, and then applying to the Graduate Studies Committee. For the reasons given above, the Graduate Studies Committee is very reluctant to accede to requests to exempt a thesis from consultation, particularly if this request is made only when the thesis is submitted. Under no circumstances should you give undertakings to providers of sources that access to the completed work will be restricted, unless you have first sought the agreement of the Committee. It is also expected that to the extent practicable, data and results will be published on the web, at least through the OII website.

It is important to be clear not only about the overall topic of the thesis, but also about the particular questions regarding your topic that you seek to answer and the means by which you do so.

In order to help facilitate the matching of students with thesis advisors, supervisors have been asked to document potential thesis ideas and/or the general types of projects they would like to supervise. Students will be provided with this list of project ideas and interests at the start of Michaelmas Term. Students are encouraged to not only read these project ideas and interests, but also to look at the interests and research of faculty on their departmental webpages.

Students should contact potential thesis supervisors in Michaelmas Term to discuss projects further and may also propose their own thesis projects. Students proposing their own thesis projects should also approach potential supervisors to discuss the project, talk with their initial faculty supervisor, and/or the MSc Director.

In Week 1 of Hilary Term, students will be asked to submit a rank-ordered list of their top thesis projects or a description of their own proposed project. Students proposing their own projects must ensure they are on a suitable topic and at a suitable level for the MSc in Social Data Science and should ideally have the agreement of a named supervisor who is willing to supervise the project. The Graduate Studies Committee will review student-proposed projects and project rankings and allocate projects to students. From Week 9 of Hilary Term to the end of the course, students will be formally supervised by the faculty member overseeing the thesis project.

3.1.2   Ethics approval for research projects

The University of Oxford regards research integrity as a core value and has a longstanding commitment to ensuring that it is embedded in its research culture and activity. The University's "Academic Integrity in Research: Code of Practice and Procedure" states that all its researchers, be they staff, students or visitors, are expected to maintain the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of their research. To facilitate this, the University is guided by the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC).

All MSc students must submit a CUREC form prior to commencing any research. CUREC forms should be completed in consultation with your thesis supervisor. The form should carefully consider the ethical issues raised by your research. Most students will need to complete a CUREC1A form, but cases that raise complex ethical questions may require the completion of a CUREC2 form. If you feel strongly that your research will not require ethical review, you should complete the internal Research Ethics Checklist available on Canvas. This form will be reviewed and assessed by the committee. If the committee feel the project will require ethical clearance, you will then be asked to complete a CUREC1A form. It would be advisable to complete this checklist form as soon as possible in Hilary Term in the event that your research project does actually require a CUREC1A form.

It is very important that no research is undertaken until ethical clearance has been granted. Retrospective clearance cannot be granted, and the lack of ethical clearance will reduce the integrity of your work, pose reputational damage to the department, and University and will likely hinder your ability to publish.

While students are encouraged to submit their CUREC form (approved and signed by their supervisor) as **early as possible** in Hilary term, the deadline for submission is **noon on Friday Week 8 of Hilary Term**. CUREC application forms and supporting documents should be sent to drec@oii.ox.ac.uk and cc msc@oii.ox.ac.uk and the student's supervisor.

Students that fail to meet this deadline will need to ask their supervisor to send an email to drec@oii.ox.ac.uk explaining when the committee can expect their form and will not have the same guarantee of timeliness as though who submit before the deadline.

Please note that **CUREC1A** applications generally **take 30 days** to process; **CUREC 2** applications can take up to **60 days** due to the fact that they are externally reviewed.

The CUREC1A form and guidance for its completion can be found at
https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/apply/sshidrec. Further guidance, including an
annotated CUREC 1A form can be found on the Research Support section on Canvas. Students are encouraged to
review all of the guidance documents prior to submitting their applications in order to help expedite their
application.

We would also strongly recommend that students complete the research integrity online training course for the
social and behavioral sciences, offered by Research Support Services. The course takes about three hours to
complete, and upon completion, you will receive an email acknowledgement that you have passed the course.

For any CUREC queries, please speak to the Research Facilitation Team (drec@oii.ox.ac.uk).

3.1.3   Ethics process

Once an application is submitted to the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC), it will be assessed, and
any feedback for amendments will be emailed to the students and supervisors by the Ethics Secretary. Students
should respond to feedback within one week, working carefully with their supervisors to ensure all of the
feedback is addressed. It is very common for the first draft of the application to receive feedback, as the
committee will help to highlight points that might not have been considered, so please do not feel discouraged if
the form requires amendments. Conventionally, the approval of an amended form is considerably quicker than
the original review.

Any questions about the feedback received can be directed to the Ethics Team in the first instance
(drec@oii.ox.ac.uk).

3.1.4   Travel for research purposes

In the event that a student's research requires travel, the student will need to submit the following documents as
part of their ethics application:

▪   Travel insurance

Please note that even if students plan to travel to their home countries to undertake research, they will still be
required to complete the Travel Insurance and Safety in Fieldwork applications. This is due to the fact that by
undertaking research, they will be conducting University business and not be there merely in a personal capacity.

Travel Insurance and Safety in Fieldwork applications are required for any research-related activity, including
conference attendance. If you have any questions regarding this, please contact the Ethics Team
(drec@oii.ox.ac.uk).

You will need to complete these forms, in consultation with your supervisor. The Ethics Team also administer
travel management for the department, so if there are any amendments required to these forms, the Ethics Team
will email feedback to you.

3.1.5   Thesis title

Thesis titles should be concise, clear and specific. Titles should be comprehensible to a non-specialist audience. A
sub-title, if used, should be separated from the first part of the title by a colon, and it should begin with a capital
letter. Titles should contain indications of the precise scope or focus of the work. Many students find that
including a researchable **question** in their titles helps to focus the thesis by then answering that question, rather
than just describing a phenomenon.

Students will need to complete the thesis title approval form in Qualtrics by **noon on Friday Week 1 of Trinity
Term**.

The Board of Examiners will then approve thesis titles by Week 8 in Trinity Term for each student. The supervisor
will provide academic guidance and oversee the thesis progress. For further information on supervisors
responsibilities, please refer to **Section 4** below.

Students and supervisors are reminded that the thesis must have an integrated argument, and must stand alone as a finished and informative piece of work. The thesis title must be formally registered on the MSc examination entry form which students will receive from their college to complete and submit to the Examinations Schools.

3.1.6   Change of thesis title

Should the focus of a student's research change during work on their thesis, it is important that the student consider whether the current title is still appropriate or whether it should be revised.

If subsequently a student needs to change their thesis title, they will need to write by letter or e-mail to the MSc Programmes Co-ordinator, who will ask the Chair of the Board of Examiners for permission to change the title. Any such request must indicate both the former title and the proposed new title. In cases where the topic has remained the same but the title has changed, only the new and previous titles are required in this request. If the topic of the research has changed significantly, the request should also include an updated short abstract. The final deadline for receipt of requests is **Monday 6th July 2020 by 5:00pm** (or three weeks in advance of the thesis deadline for students who have been given an approved extension by the Proctors).

Please note that MSc Students should submit thesis proposal title changes to their supervisor at least **one week** ahead of the July deadline. Late submission of thesis proposal changes will not be tolerated unless prior warning has been communicated or for exceptional circumstances.

3.2 Thesis preparation

3.2.1   Introduction

An introduction to a thesis is crucial to clarifying the thesis's purpose and character. The following are among the items which you might wish to consider including in an introduction:

- A short explanation of the thesis topic and the reasons for choosing it.
- A listing of the principal questions that the thesis seeks to answer.
- A summary of the main existing views or conventional wisdom about your subject.
- An indication of how the thesis confirms or challenges these views; what is its contribution?
- An account of the types of primary and secondary sources used, and a discussion of the problems associated with these sources.
- An explanation of the main methods of analysis/intellectual approaches used in the thesis.
- An indication of what the thesis has not done: what parts of the subject were neglected, what sources were ignored or unavailable, what questions were not asked, what methodologies were not used.

3.2.2   Writing

Habits and timetable

It is essential to keep in the habit of writing, and not to procrastinate on the grounds that further sources must be sought or more reading is necessary. Often the process of writing itself helps to clarify the precise areas on which more information is still needed, and to refine the questions that should be asked in respect of the topic. In consultation with the supervisor, it is important to set a business-like timetable for completion of each chapter section of the thesis, and stick to it.

Back-up copies

Please keep ample back-up copies of all parts of your work, and keep them where they cannot be corrupted or lost. You are strongly advised to set your computer to save work automatically at regulat intervals. Data loss due to hardware faults, software crashes, los or theft, or similar causes is not sufficient grounds for an extension and students must take full responsibility for ensuring a back-up of their work is always available. The University makes available synchronised data back ups available. This is currently through Microsoft's OneDrive (https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/nexus365/onedrive-business-getting-started). We strongly encourage students to consider using OneDrive. This is especially the case if students are using sensitive data (such as named transcripts) and should not use an unapproved third-party cloud services back-up solution such as Google Drive or Dropbox.

English

A thesis must be in the English language and should, as far as humanly possible, be written in plain and comprehensible English. Good syntax and punctuation is vital.

Students should not think that because they are writing an academic thesis they must use long and complicated sentences. Rather, the principal goal of a scientific writer is to communicate clearly, which is often achieved through the use of simple but well-crafted use of language.

For practical (and sometimes entertaining) guides to good (and bad) English, see:

- Sir Ernest Gowers, *The Complete Plain Words*, rev. edn., Penguin Books, London, 1987.
- William Strunk and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*, 4th edn., Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 1999.
- Lynne Truss, *Eats, Shoots and Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*, Profile Books, London, 2003.

See also Fowler's *Modern English Usage*, published by Oxford University Press.

Correcting English is not the responsibility of your supervisor. If the student is not a native speaker of English, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that their thesis is written in correct and lucid English. Courses in English as a second language and in academic writing are available at the University's Language Centre: https://www.lang.ox.ac.uk/.

Similarly, for students whose research takes place in a language other than English it is expected that all quoted and featured evidence in theses will be translated by the student or under the student's discretion into English.

Style

A thesis should have a clear and consistent style so far as matters of spelling, capitalisation, abbreviation, dates, foreign words, references, bibliography, etc. are concerned.

Dates should be rendered consistently both in text and footnotes.

Students should be similarly consistent about their use of quotation marks. They should use *either* single *or* double as the default, not a mixture. The precise choice of style in such matters partly depends on what is most appropriate to the particular subject matter of the thesis, and in some cases on the form of publication ultimately sought.

Useful guides to style containing much material of particular relevance to academic theses include:

- P.J. Dunleavy, *Authoring a PhD*: *How to plan, draft, write and finish a doctoral dissertation or thesis*. Palgrave, 2003
- R. E. Allen, *The Oxford Writers' Dictionary* (or else its immediate predecessor, *The Oxford Dictionary for Writers and Editors*), Oxford University Press.
- Robert Ritter, *The Oxford Guide to Style*, Oxford University Press.
- Margaret Mahan, *The Chicago Manual of Style*, University of Chicago Press.
- Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Heinemann, London, 1982; and University of Chicago Press, sixth edition 1996.

Most academic journals also provide at least brief guidance on style and footnoting.

Figures and tables

Figures and tables should, if at all possible, be near the text that refers to them. All included figures and tables should be consecutively numbered and refered to somewhere in the text. Captions usually appear below figures but above tables.

Headings and subheadings

In most theses it is important not only that each section has a clear and informative title, but also that there is a consistent system of headings and sub-headings to assist the reader (and possibly the writer too) in following the narrative argument of the thesis. Very often a hierarchy of headings is needed. One quite common way of establishing a hierarchy is to have major section breaks centred and in larger type, and lesser ones set left and in

the same size type as the main body of the text (albeit distinguished from it by being in bold, italics or similar). Many variations in between are possible, the number of levels being dependent on the nature of the material. Work out a clear and consistent hierarchy of headings appropriate to your subject, and then stick to it.

Sections should be consecutively numbered in a fashion that reflects their place in the overall hierarchy of the theses. For example, the second sub-sub section of the third sub-section of the first section might be numbered 1.3.2.

3.2.3   References

References are an important part of a thesis. They enable you to provide an indication of your skill and judiciousness in use of sources, and they assist the reader in understanding and evaluating what you are saying. They can also be one line of protection against accusations of plagiarism – the presentation of another person's work as your own. The American Psychological Association's style, otherwise known as **APA style**, is the OII recommended referencing style. This reference style can be used in LaTeX with the apacite package. The OII library has copies of the APA style guide and related reference works; additional information is available online at http://www.apastyle.org/.

Apart from indicating a clear preference that footnotes should be at the bottom of each page, the *Examination Regulations* give no guidance on a preferred style for reference notes. The Graduate Studies Committee has therefore issued the following guidelines for footnotes:

- Any system of footnoting is acceptable, provided it is **rational, unambiguous** and **consistent.** Guidance may be sought from works mentioned above.
- Footnotes should, if at all possible, be at the foot of the page to which they refer. Alternatively, they may be grouped at the end of the thesis. They should not be grouped at the ends of chapters. When they are grouped at the end of a thesis, two separate copies of footnotes, separately bound or stapled, should be enclosed with the thesis for the examiners' use.
- In almost all footnoting systems, book and journal titles should be either underlined or italicised. Italics are preferred. Article and chapter titles should be in quotation marks.

Be consistent about these matters.

3.2.4   Thesis length

The maximum length for an MSc thesis is not to exceed 15,000 words. Please note that this is a maximum limit and many theses with quantitative analysis or formal modelling are likely to be shorter. All theses should take a parsimonious approach to word length. This limit must be observed. It is a maximum, not a norm: many successful theses have been significantly shorter. Over-length theses are liable to be rejected unless you have, with the support of your supervisor, secured in advance permission through the Board of Examiners to exceed the limits. Such permission is granted only very exceptionally.

In calculating the MSc thesis length this should include the following:

- Main body
- Footnotes
- Figures—counts in terms of word equivalents in the figure
- Tables

The following are not counted in the word length:

- Title Page
- Abstract
- Table of contents
- Table of figures
- Appendices: Any appendix does not count toward the word count, but students should be advised that examiners are not required to read appendices as part of the marking process, although they may choose to do so. As such, it should contain only supporting material
- Bibliography

3.3 Intellectual Property Rights and Plagiarism

3.3.1   Intellectual property rights

As someone undertaking research and writing, students need to be aware of the importance of copyright and other intellectual property rights issues in relation to your own and other people's work. Students need to learn about the possibilities and problems of academic and commercial exploitation of their research and writing. This includes the terms of contracts with publishers, universities and other bodies. It also includes the avoidance of plagiarism, addressed below.

Much help and advice is available on these matters, including from the students supervisor and other members of the OII's staff with experience of different types of research, publication and employment contract. For information about Oxford University's facilities for help in this area, and its intellectual property policy generally, see http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/researchsupport/ip/.

3.3.2   Plagiarism

The offficial University guidance on plagiarism is available to view at http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism. We have summarised some of the key elements that students have questions about below, but students should consider the university guidelines as taking precedence in case of conflicting information.

Plagiarism is the presentation of any part, or the substance of any part, of another person's work (including the work of other students) as if it were your own. It can take the form of unacknowledged quotation and of substantial unattributed paraphrase. It is not acceptable for any of your academic work to incorporate plagiarised material. This includes essays and presentations as well as material submitted as coursework or as part of a formal examination.

Auto-plagiarism is the presentation of any part, or the substance of any part, of your own pre-exisiting work as if it were novel. It can take the form of unacknowledged quotation and of substantial unattributed paraphrase. It is not acceptable for any of your academic work to incorporate auto-plagiarised material. Any summatively assessed work submitted during the MSc or another degree is considered pre-existing work. It is therefore not permitted to reuse substantive elements of a summative essay in a later summative submission (including the thesis). Formatively assessed work is not considered pre-existing work for the purpose of auto-plagiarism.

If you employ good scholarly practice in your written work – for example, by attributing quotations and using only legitimate and acknowledged paraphrase – there is little danger that you will be accused of plagiarism unjustifiably. Written work should involve the use and discussion of material written by others with due acknowledgement and with complete references given. This is standard practice among scholars and can be clearly distinguished from appropriating without acknowledgement and presenting material produced by others as your own.

The University employs a series of sophisticated software applications and other methods to detect plagiarism in submitted work. They regularly monitor on-line essay banks, essay-writing services, and other potential sources of material. When submitting an assignment through the Summative Assignment Submission Weblearn page students must certify that they agree to their work being checked for plagiarism using Turnitin software.'Turnitin' is an electronic plagiarism detection software. It helps detect potential plagiarism by comparing submitted assignments to databases of electronic written work. Each assignment that is submitted through Turnitin is given a report with information about which parts of the work might have been improperly cited or plagiarised.

Plagiarism is a disciplinary offence for which offenders can expect to receive severe penalties. For example, the University has the statutory power to deprive somebody of a degree or other qualification after it has been awarded, if it is proved that it was obtained unfairly (for example, if a thesis or submitted coursework is found to contain plagiarised material). The relevant disciplinary regulations are:

4. No candidate shall present for an examination as his or her own work any part or the substance of any part of another person's work.

5. In any written work (whether thesis, dissertation, essay, coursework, or written examinations) passages quoted or closely paraphrased from another person's work must be identified as quotations or paraphrases, and the source of the quoted or paraphrased material must be clearly acknowledged.

Please also see the Oxford Student Skills webpage at http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills for further information on advice on academic good practice.

3.4 Thesis submission

3.4.1   Overall

The thesis must:

- be of no more than the maximum word count (no more than 15,000 words for MSc students), not counting bibliography and appendices (see **Section 3.2.4** above for details)
- include a title page (see below)
- include an abstract (see below)
- be submitted in English

3.4.2   Title page

The title page (i.e. the first printed page after the front cover) should contain the following information:

- Title (and subtitle, if any).
- Master's thesis submissions should **not** include the author's name or college on the title page, but must include the student's candidate number.
- Words to the effect of 'Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of MSc in Social Data Science at the Oxford Internet Institute at the University of Oxford'.
- Month and year, or else the Oxford term and year, in which the thesis was submitted.
- The exact word count of the whole thesis (see **Section 3.2.4** above for details).

3.4.3   Abstract

Theses must have an abstract of up to 300 words, which should fit on one side of a single sheet of A4 paper and should be placed immediately after the title page.

The abstract should be a very clear summary of the subject matter of the thesis, its aims, scope, principal sources, central argument and conclusions. The abstract should be self-standing, and contain all the information on the title page of the thesis. It should be comprehensible to non-specialists, and be suitable for use in general surveys such as Aslib, *Index to Theses*, 'Choice of thesis topic', etc.

3.4.4   Word processing

The thesis should be:

- word processed ideally with LaTeX although Word and other software are acceptable;
- with a margin of 3.0 to 3.5 cms on the left-hand side of pages;
- the main text should be in double spacing (taken to mean a distance of about 0.33 inch or 8 mm between successive lines of text), but indented quotations and footnotes may be in single spacing;
- the text must be of an adequate size, definition and standard of legibility;
- the pages of the thesis must be numbered consecutively from beginning to end and should include any appendices and the bibliography.

3.4.5   Binding

Students who are requested to supply a final copy of their thesis for submission to the Bodleian Library should note carefully what is said in *Examination Regulations* regarding the method to be used for binding.

3.4.6   Submitting

Master's students must submit an electronic copy of their thesis via the Assignment Submission Weblearn site on the 1st day of August (or the nearest working day thereafter).

3.4.7   Viva voce

MSc students are not expected to undergo a viva unless their results are borderline. An MSc student may need to be available to return to Oxford in late August or early September in the event of being called back for viva voce.

3.4.8   Resubmitting your thesis

If a student fails their thesis they must resubmit. Students will need to complete another examination form which will be sent by the college to complete and must be completed by the stated entry date. The resubmission deadlines will be the following August (i.e. 1 year after submitting original thesis) and the Examination Schools will confirm the exact date nearer the time. For further information please refer to the Examination Schools website at http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/entry.

3.5 Notification of results of MSc

The *MSc in Social Data Science* is formally examined by the Board of Examiners in the OII. Students are examined on the basis of written examination, coursework and thesis. The Examiners for the MSc will normally complete their examination and release their marks by the end of September.

3.6 MSc thesis prize

There is one thesis prize each year which is awarded to the student with the highest thesis mark. The winner will receive a sum currently set at £150. The prize will be decided at the final Board of Examiners meeting in September based on nominations from thesis assessors. At its discretion, the Board may also recognise other thesis/theses which did not win the prize, but nevertheless were notable for exceeding the usual standard with an award of "Highly Commended Thesis".

Students awarded the thesis prize or recognised for producing a highly commended thesis will be publicised on the OII website and encouraged to note this achievement on their curriculum vitae.

3.7 Library and digital copies for MSc thesis

Students who are awarded a Distinction mark for their thesis may be invited to submit a hard bound copy for the OII Library, where their work will be preserved and made available for future generations of scholars. The MSc Programmes Co-ordinator will contact those students directly if their thesis is being added.

3.8 Conferral of degree

The arrangements for the conferral of the students' degree are made through their college. Degrees are conferred at the Sheldonian Theatre and a list of dates is available at http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/graduation/ceremonies.

4. Supervision and Teaching

4.1 Supervision

All MSc students have a faculty supervisor throughout their time in Oxford. They will begin with a general supervisor at the start of Michaelmas Term and then move to a thesis-specific supervisor at the end of Hilary Term. The supervisor guides the student through his or her course of study. The supervisor reports on the student's progress to the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) at the end of each term and will also provide feedback to the student.

The advice of the supervisor will always be sought by GSC before recommending any change in status, transfer between courses, and so on.

Graduate students will also all have a College Adviser. The role of the College Adviser is to provide pastoral and general academic advice. They can be particularly helpful if the student has any academic or other difficulties that he or she does not feel able to discuss with the faculty supervisor.

If you have any issues with teaching or supervision please raise these as soon as possible so that they can be addressed promptly. Details of who to contact are provided in **section 0** on complaints and appeals.

4.1.1 Appointment of supervisor(s)

All MSc students are assigned a supervisor at the beginning of Michaelmas Term. Before arriving in Oxford for Induction Week, new MSc students will be asked to submit a brief summary of their academic interests to the MSc Programmes Co-ordinator. The Graduate Studies Committee will use this to help decide who to appoint as a supervisor.

Thesis supervisors will be assigned following the process detailed in 3.1.1 according to students' thesis projects.

4.1.2 Change of supervisor

Incompatibility

The Department and all University supervsiors recognise that occasionally a student may feel there are good grounds for contemplating a change in supervisor. In these cases, this should first be discussed with the supervisor concerned, or if this seems difficult, with the MSc Course Director, the Director of Graduate Studies, the Graduate Studies Manager, or the MSc Programmes Co-ordinator. If this involves concerns over the quality of supervision, students are encouraged to seek to resolve the matter by informal means where possible, but should also be aware of the University's formal complaint procedures. The procedures adopted by the Proctors for the formal consideration of complaints and appeals are described in the University Student Handbook (Proctors and Assessor's Memorandum) https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/student-handbook and the relevant Council regulations http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/.

Periods of absence

If a supervisor is to be on leave and away from Oxford, or is leaving Oxford permanently, he or she is expected to make clear arrangements through the Graduate Studies Committee to cover the period of absence. This may involve continuing to supervise some students and transferring the supervision of others.

Appointment of a second supervisor

It is recognised that students may develop new interests or change focus over their time at the OII. Where a student finds that a faculty member other than their supervisor would help their dissertation research progress, there are two possibilities open to the student.

Student, with agreement of the potential additional supervisor and their existing supervisor, can request the addition of a second Thesis Supervisor. This should be done by filling out form GSO.25 (https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/progression) and submitting it to the MSc Programmes Co-ordinator (msc@oii.ox.ac.uk). Normally all such requests will need to be made before the beginning of Trinity Term in which the student's dissertation is due so there is time for the co-supervision to be

effective. If approved, the student and the two supervisors will be responsible for discussing the best co-supervision arrangements.

Additionally, students can always request meetings with any member of the faculty. The faculty are very open to informally supporting students for whom they are not the official supervisor, and students are encouraged to take advantage of this by approaching faculty members who can help advance their research. This can take place at any time, and requires no formal permission or arrangements.

4.1.3 Role of supervisors

The faculty supervisor is responsible for planning the student's course of study and for keeping an eye on their overall progress. The supervisor's approval and signature is required on applications to the Graduate Studies Committee on a wide range of matters.

The supervisor(s) will be the main source of information and advice throughout the course of the student's research. Their responsibilities include:

- advising you about lecture courses, both specialist and broadening;
- advising you about skills-training courses including research techniques;
- advising you about literature sources;
- keeping you informed of your progress (both informally and through the formal termly report).

In addition to the above, the responsibilities of thesis supervisors include:

- meeting regularly with you to discuss your work (see below);
- planning the framework of your research programme;

MSc students will primarily meet with their supervisor at least once a term in Michaelmas and Hilary Term. They will meet with their thesis supervisor throughout Trinity Term and the summer vacation. Students and supervisors are expected to meet an average of 6 to 8 times from the end of Hilary to submission.

MSc supervisors are expected to:

- Hold meetings with the student to discuss progress of thesis.
- Discuss progress, feedback comments to course providers, programme directors and the Director of Graduate Studies, and report on progress in termly teaching meetings.
- Assist in choice of option papers, and ensure that students are aware of deadlines and procedures for registration for courses, examinations etc.
- Help in the development of the thesis topic.
- Write termly reports on the student.
- Comment in a timely manner on materials submitted.
- In particular, comment on final drafts in good time for students to respond before final submission.

This last obviously depends on supervisors' availability in Oxford during the summer vacation months, and on students' timely submission of drafts. Best practice is for students to submit a complete draft one month before final deadline, allowing a response to students at least ten days before the deadline for submission. Supervisors should provide a reasonable level of availability during the summer; it is the student's responsibility to arrange dates for submission of work to supervisors – but it would be helpful if supervisors could warn students of any extended period of unavailability during the month before the thesis submission date.

4.1.4 Contact with supervisors

The tradition of graduate work at Oxford is one of individual supervision of each student, combined with small seminars and classes.

It is essential for you to keep in regular contact with your supervisors, irrespective of whether you are resident in Oxford or researching elsewhere. You should ensure that your supervisors have your full contact address and email address. These and any updates and changes of contact details should be provided via the MSc Programmes Co-ordinator.

It would be a great help to your supervisors if you would contact them at or before the beginning of each term.

4.1.5   Supervision reports

A number of students and supervisors have found that a practical and convenient method of maintaining an agreed record of meetings is for the student, as a matter of course, to send the supervisor a short e-mail summarising the content of the meeting and the agreed outcomes.

At the end of each term your supervisor writes a formal report on Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) on your progress and is required by the University's regulations to communicate the contents of the report to you. In these reports, supervisors should give a full account of your work during the term and indicate the nature and extent of their contact with you. Supervisors are asked to give priority to prompt completion and return of the report forms. Copies of the report are sent to your college and to the Graduate Studies Committee where any problems are discussed and followed up. Completed report forms are subject to the Data Protection Act 1998, which stipulates that you as the 'data subject' may be given access to information held on you.

Continuation on the course depends on your satisfactory progress, so you should take very seriously any warnings expressed by your supervisor(s) that you are not working as well as you ought to. You should also bring to their attention, in good time, any problems that are seriously affecting your progress, before the situation becomes too serious.

For more information on the Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) please refer to **Appendix D: The GSR Graduate Supervision Reporting**.

4.1.6   Role of College Adviser

In addition to the supervisor, your college will have assigned you to a College Adviser, who takes a general interest in your well-being, and from whom you can seek academic and other advice.

4.2 Responsibilities of graduate students

Graduate students have a wide range of responsibilities. Since for the most part these responsibilities are not specific to students at the Oxford Internet Institute, but apply equally to all graduate students, they are not outlined in detail here. They are, however, of critical importance.

They include:

- taking responsibility for your programme of work and research;
- accepting the importance of constructive criticism within the supervisory relationship;
- making positive use of the University's teaching and learning facilities;
- providing regular reports on progress as required;
- following the University's procedures (including those outlined in these Notes of Guidance) promptly and conscientiously;
- doing everything to ensure a high standard of written and spoken work.

You should consult the much fuller information on the role and responsibilities of graduate students obtainable in *Code of Practice on Supervision* available at http://www.socsci.ox.ac.uk/students/for-postgraduates.

4.2.1   Skills training

A wide range of information and training materials are available to help you develop your academic skills – including time management, research and library skills, referencing, revision skills and academic writing - through the Oxford Students website http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/.

Each student will undertake further research training which is specifically geared to the task of completing an MSc. This is delivered via a dedicated seminar series for graduate students running in Trinity Term. The seminar series will include presentations by speakers, including a session on the mechanics of writing a thesis. Each week students will present their thesis work for approximately 20 minutes (previous and related literature or work on their topic, gaps in previous work, preliminary findings, hypotheses, problems encountered). Students' training needs will be discussed with their supervisor at the beginning of each term. Further information about training needs, including the Training Needs Analysis Form, can be found at https://www.socsci.ox.ac.uk/training/tna.

The OII holds weekly lunchtime brownbag seminars during term time in which students and OII research staff discuss ongoing research projects. Students are able to sign up to other OII organised seminars and those which individual research groups or groups with common areas of interest organise for their own members and others within the department. Full details of forthcoming events are available on the OII website at https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/events/.

The compulsory methods training, statistics, and intensive courses will provide students with the basic methods required in order to undertake, analyze or apply social data science research, whilst the Foundations and Frontiers of Social Data Science will provide students with the theoretical, conceptual and technical understanding the opportunities and challenges in social data science, whether this be for the purposes of academic or practical research, or industry. More specialised development of particular research methods will be supported by the option courses in Hilary Term and through the process of thesis preparation, in which students will be closely supported by their thesis supervisors.

All OII MSc students will receive specific training within the department on academic writing and thesis preparation if needed.

5. Feedback, Concerns and Queries

5.1 Feedback to students

Students will receive regular feedback through their supervisor and the reports uploaded on GSR. MSc students are also encouraged to speak to the course convenor about any issues or concerns.

During their time in Oxford, students will be expected to undergo both formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment does not contribute to the overall outcome of your degree and has a developmental purpose designed to help you learn more effectively. Summative assessment does contribute to your degree result and is used to evaluate formally the extent to which you have succeeded in meeting the published assessment criteria for your programme of study.

Feedback on formative and summative assessment is an important element of all Oxford's Master's programmes. Feedback on formative assessment e.g. mid-course essays/assignments, should provide guidance on academic writing, will indicate areas of strength and weakness in relation to an assessment task, and will provide an indication of the expectations and standards towards which students should be working. Feedback on summative assessment e.g. end of course assessments and theses, should provide a critical review of the work and suggestions for improvements to enable students to develop their work for future continued study.

In 2011, the University's Education Committee introduced new policies in response to requests from students for enhanced formal mechanisms for the provision of feedback on both formative and summative assessment. In addition to informal feedback, all students on taught Master's programmes can expect to receive formal written feedback on at least one designated piece of formative assessment during their first term.

Students can expect to receive informal feedback on their progress and on their formatively assessed work. Students will receive feedback on formative assignments for each course throughout the terms. These will come from the Course Tutors in either written or oral format. Please see Appendix D for further information on exact timings.

Students will receive formal written feedback on all their summative essay assessments submitted over the year via email.

All students will also receive formal written feedback on their thesis, submitted in the final term of the course via email by 31st October in the relevant year.

5.2 Feedback from students

5.2.1   Course evaluation

The OII is concerned that students should also have the opportunity to comment on the structure, teaching and content of the programme and courses. Feedback will thus be sought through the use of student feedback meetings and student evaluation surveys at the end of each lecture or seminar series. Further information about this will be given by course providers and the MSc Programmes Co-ordinator. The feedback received from students is anonymous. The evaluations are reviewed at the Graduate Studies Committee and if there appears to be a common topic that comes up this is discussed and students are notified of how this will be either resolved or changed for the next academic year.

5.2.2   Opportunities to provide evaluation and feedback

The OII analyses any feedback received from any University wide surveys via the Graduate Studies Committee.

Students on full-time and part-time matriculated courses are surveyed once per year on all aspects of their course (learning, living, pastoral support, college) through the Student Barometer. Previous results can be viewed by students, staff and the general public at: http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/aad/surveys/.

The OII asks all MSc students to complete a survey in the last taught session each year. This survey is about the academic aspects of their course. This is analysed and discussed at the Graduate Studies Committee in October.

5.2.3 Student representation

Course represenatives are a key link between the students within your cohort to the academic staff at the OII. They seek out students' views and represent you at meetings, working in partnership with staff to improve your course, campaign for change, and resolve any course-related issues which may arise. Course representatives work closely with the Divisional Board Reps, Oxford Student's Union, and its elected officers (both full and part-time) to improve student experience across the university. Throughout Michaelmas Term the Oxford Student's Union put on specific training for course representatives for each division.

Please see the Oxford Student Union website at https://www.oxfordsu.org/education/representation/ for information on training sessions that they provide which all new course reps are strongly advised to attend. These sessions are usually held in Michaelmas Term. The Oxford Student Union also has a basic guide https://www.oxfordsu.org/resourcehub/courserepguide/ on expectations of a course representative.

The OII has a Graduate Joint Consultative Committee (GJCC) which is a staff-student committee designed to enhance opportunities for feedback and participation amongst both MSc and DPhil students (see Appendix A: Graduate Joint Consultative Committee for further details).

Students have the opportunity to elect two representatives from the Social Data Science MSc cohort to sit on this committee, and one of these will also represent the cohort at GSC. Details on student representatives and committee members will be added to Canvas in Michaelmas Term.

The student representative will serve on the committee for one academic year and elections will take place in Michaelmas Term. The nominated representative shall be entitled to attend the termly meetings and contribute to discussion. The student representative is responsible for sending a brief report to all students after each meeting listing all the issues discussed and request any feedback if required.

The GJCC committees will meet once during term time, normally in Week 2. GJCC committee meetings are open to all interested students at the OII, although in matters of voting, the elected representatives will be the only voting members.

The Chair of the GJCC will be a DPhil student representative and will also serve on the Graduate Studies Committee at the OII. It is normally expected that the Chair will be a student who has served on the GJCC for at least one year previously, although the committee can decide to waive this in exceptional circumstances.

Student representatives sit on the Graduate Studies Committee and the Research Committee and they will be nominated by the GJCC. The Research Committee normally meets in Week 6 and the Graduate Studies Committee normally meets in Week 3 for the Social Science of the Internet MSc and in Week 7 for the Social Data Science MSc. The Research Committee discusses all relevant academic and research issues with a view to promoting and co-ordinating those activities within the Institute. The Graduate Studies Committee is responsible for the oversight and evaluation of all courses and provision for graduates, as well as the admissions process, and the implementation of teaching policy.

Please see **Appendices A and B** for descriptions of the Graduate Joint Consultative Committee, Graduate Studies Committee and Research Committee responsibilities and membership.

At divisional level, there is a PGT Discussion Forum, made up of student representatives from each department/faculty of the division. Issues raised by this body are reported to the division's Graduate Studies Committee. MSc students are asked to elect two representatives to sit on this forum at the start of the first term.

Student representatives sitting on the Divisional Board are selected through a process organised by the Oxford University Student Union (OUSU). Details can be found on the OUSU website at http://ousu.org/ along with information about student representation at the University level.

5.3 Sources of advice, help and counselling

If a student has concerns, academic or administrative, and they are uncertain of the proper way to go about solving them, they have several possible courses of action open to them.

For academic issues:

- Within the OII students can consult their supervisor, the course convenor, the Director of Graduate Studies, or the Head of Department, who will if necessary, consult the appropriate authorities on the student's behalf.
- At the student's College they can consult the Senior Tutor, the Tutor for Graduates or their own College Advisor, who will give similar help.
- Students can also consult the OII's Graduate Studies Manager, or the MSc Programmes Co-ordinator, who will advise on the obtaining of necessary forms, submission of applications, dates and deadlines, deposit of theses, etc.

For careers advice:

- The Careers Service of the University at 56 Banbury Road can help students evaluate their career prospects. More information is available at https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/careers.

On a more personal level:

- The University Counselling Service at 3 Worcester Street (which acts strictly in confidence) is experienced not only in general psychological problems but also in the special problems and blocks associated with academic work. See http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling or phone: (2)70300 or email counselling@admin.ox.ac.uk.
- "Nightline" is a confidential listening and information service run for students by students and is open from 8pm until 8am from 0th week to 9th week each term Students can phone 01865 270270 or visit Nightline at 16 Wellington Square. Please see https://oxfordnightline.org/ for more information. The student's College nurse or the local doctor with whom they are registered may be able to help.

Every college has their own systems of support for students, please refer to your College handbook or website for more information on who to contact and what support is available through your college.

Details of the wide range of sources of support are available more widely in the University are available from the Oxford Students website (www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare), including in relation to mental and physical health and disability.

5.3.1 Disability Advisory Service

The University operates a Disability Advisory Service which provides information and advice to students with impairments, health conditions, specific learning disabilities, and any other physical or mental difficulties (see http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability). The Oxford Internet Institute works closely with this service to support students who require additional support or accommodation in their coursework, examinations, assessments, and interactions with the faculty and their peers at the OII.

Students who require support of this nature are advised to contact the Disability Advisory Service as soon as possible during the academic year, or when a new situation arises, for advice and support. The Service will liase with the OII to provide you the support you need.

The OII supports the University's *Common Framework for Supporting Disabled Students* (http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability/staff). Victoria McDermott is the OII's disability lead, who is available to discuss any related issues, and to assist with connecting the student with appropriate support.

5.3.2 Complaints of harassment

The University is committed to fostering an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all students are respected. Harassment or victimisation is regarded as unacceptable behaviour and is not tolerated in any form. All members

of the University are expected to treat each other fairly and with respect, courtesy and consideration. This Procedure is designed to deal with student reports of harassment by other students that arise in a University context. This covers behaviour on University or college premises, or in the course of University activity within or outside Oxford whether academic, sporting, social, cultural, or other. Harassing behaviours can take a variety of forms as defined in the University Harassment Policy. Reports of harassment against students which arise purely within the college environment may be dealt with under appropriate college procedures, while reflecting the principles of the University Harassment Policy. Reports of harassment brought by students against University staff will be dealt with under the staff Procedure.

If a member of staff wishes to make a report of harassment against a student, this will normally be dealt with through the University Student Disciplinary Procedure: Non-Academic Misconduct. In the first instance, the member of staff should seek support and guidance from their head of department or line manager.

Student Welfare and Support Services can provide support to students, and to staff requiring advice on student cases. Where the harassment is of a sexual nature, students can contact the Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service. All reports made to support services will be recorded in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy.

In serious cases, it is likely to be appropriate to proceed directly to stages 2 and 3 of this Procedure.

Harassment Complaint Stage 1 – Information Action

In some cases, a student who feels harassed by another student may feel able to approach the person in question to explain what conduct the first student finds upsetting, offensive or unacceptable, and to ask that person to refrain from that behaviour. At no time should a student feel obliged to approach an alleged harasser, and the University does not wish to suggest that students who feel that they have been harassed are responsible for rectifying the situation. It may often be appropriate to proceed directly to stages 2 and 3 of the procedure.

Before taking informal action, the student could discuss the situation with a Harassment Advisor, or in the case of sexual behaviour, with a Specialist Advisor at the [Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service](#).

The OII has 4 trained Harassment Advisors who are part of the University's confidential harassment advisors network.

What can the harassment advisor do?

Listen to staff and students who believe they are being harassed, to clarify the options open to them and to assist them in resolving the matter informally where possible and provide similar support to those accused of harassment.

Where requested, support individuals throughout the resolution of their concerns. This may include discussing with the individual what they may wish to say or write to the person whom they feel has harassed or bullied them, or how they might approach a senior member of staff for assistance in resolving the issue. This list is not exhaustive, but includes empowering and supporting the individual.

Deal with all cases with the utmost confidentiality except in cases where there is an unacceptable risk to a member of staff, student or to the institution.

The harassment advisor cannot:

- approach the alleged harasser in an attempt to mediate or resolve the matter for you;
- act as your representative or advocate; or
- be involved in any formal stage of the process, be it in writing the formal complaint, the investigation, disciplinary or grievance procedures, except by way of giving you the support you need during this time.

Further details on the role of the harassment advisor can be found on the [Harassment Advisor Network webpage](#).

OII harassment advisors:

Laura Maynard	laura.maynard@oii.ox.ac.uk
Karen Mead	karen.mead@oii.ox.ac.uk
David Sutcliffe	david.sutcliffe@oii.ox.ac.uk
Sandra Wachter	sandra.wachter@oii.ox.ac.uk
Grant Blank	grant.blank@oii.ox.ac.uk
Peaks Krafft	p.m.krafft@oii.ox.ac.uk
Kathryn Eccles	Kathryn.eccles@oii.ox.ac.uk

If the student does not feel comfortable contacting a local advisor in their college or department, they can contact the Harassment Line for details of another advisor (Tel. 01865 270760 or email harassment.line@admin.ox.ac.uk). A Harassment Advisor can:

- listen to students who believe they are being harassed, to clarify the options open to them and to assist them in resolving the matter informally where possible
- discuss with a student what they may wish to say or write to the person who they feel has harassed or bullied them or to a senior member of staff who can take action

Harassment Complaint Stage 2 – Student Welfare and Support Services

If informal action does not succeed in resolving the situation, or would not be appropriate given the nature of the behaviour, it is very important to get advice and support to understand the options available. Students can contact a local Harassment Advisor or the Harassment Line (Tel. 01865 270760 or e-mail harassment.line@admin.ox.ac.uk), or the Oxford SU Student Advice Service.

Other sources of advice include college Deans or Welfare staff, a Director of Graduate Studies, Peer Supporters, Peers of Colour or Rainbow Peers.

The University offers a voluntary mediation service for students who find themselves in conflict with another student (the Student Resolution Service). Any student or staff member can make a confidential enquiry via e-mail to: mediation@admin.ox.ac.uk. This service is not appropriate for cases of serious harassing behaviour or criminal conduct.

These sources of support and advice are also available to students who have been accused of harassment. Students can contact a local Harassment Advisor or (for reports of a sexual nature) a Specialist Advisor: supportservice@admin.ox.ac.uk.

If the harassment is sexual in nature, one of the specialist advisors in the Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service can:

- give advice on options available to the student
- put in place practical support and manage any impact on academic work
- refer the student to appropriate support services
- arrange mediation between the student and alleged harasser, if both parties agree, with a trained mediator
- ensure that relevant members of staff within the collegiate university are informed of the case if appropriate, with consent
- support students through a formal disciplinary process

Harassment Complaint Stage 3 – Formal Written Complaint

If informal action does not succeed in resolving the situation, or would not be appropriate given the nature of the behaviour, the student should make a formal written Report to the Proctors. In some cases, it will be appropriate to proceed directly to this stage. The Proctors' role is to determine whether the student who is the subject of the Report has breached the University Code of Discipline. Students should refer to the Disciplinary Procedures for details, including Appendix C: Special Arrangements in Reports involving Sexual Misconduct and/or violence.

If the student making the formal Report has not accessed advice and support, the relevant caseworker will normally direct the student to Student Welfare and Support Services.

The formal Report should set out as clearly and succinctly as possible

i.	the nature of the behaviour that the reporting student is concerned about;
ii.	the effect of this behaviour on the reporting student; and
iii.	where possible, the resolution that the reporting student is seeking.

The Report should include dates and details of any witnesses, together with any documentary evidence. The reporting student should also state, where appropriate, any action taken at Stages 1 or 2.

The Oxford SU Student Advice Service, or if appropriate, the Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service can discuss a draft of the formal Report with the reporting student in order to check that items (i)-(iii) above are covered and that relevant supporting documentary evidence is included. These Services cannot offer legal advice, or speculate on possible outcomes.

If the reporting student is dissatisfied with the way this procedure has been followed, they can make a complaint under the Student Complaints Procedure, in which case the complaint will be considered by members of staff who have not previously been involved in the case.

Referrals

On occasion, reports of harassment which should be considered under this Procedure may be made to staff other than those named in this procedure. In this situation, staff should explain the Procedure, and refer the student to Student Welfare and Support Services (supportservice@admin.ox.ac.uk).

If a student does not wish to seek support and advice, or to make a formal Report or if there are queries about the procedure to be followed, staff can contact the Director of Student Welfare and Support Services' office for advice on a confidential basis (director.swss@admin.ox.ac.uk).

There may be occasions when it is appropriate for the Director of Student Welfare and Support Services to make recommendations to appropriate bodies, including the Proctors, regarding arrangements that would have the purpose of limiting contact between students for so long as may be considered reasonably necessary. Issues including but not limited to those around teaching, examinations and accommodation/social activity may need to be considered.

Potentially Criminal Misconduct

This Procedure, or parts of this Procedure, may not be applicable where the reports are of behaviours that may attract criminal sanction. This would include, but would not be limited to, cases of hate crime, serious assault or threat of serious assault. The Director of Student Welfare and Support Services (or the Proctors for Stage 3) will decide whether this Procedure is applicable, having regard to all relevant circumstances including any police involvement.

Confidentiality

Information concerning reports of harassment must so far as reasonably possible be held in confidence by those to whom it is divulged. Unnecessary disclosure of such reports may attract disciplinary sanction. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis. Once a formal Report is pursued, it is likely to be appropriate and/or necessary for certain information to be provided to others within the University, within certain colleges, or to external bodies.

Those to whom disclosure may be made outside the University include the police, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator ("OIA") and the civil and criminal courts. The University will not normally report a matter to the police without the reporting student's agreement, except in those rare circumstances where there is sufficient evidence to suggest that an individual poses an extreme risk.8.5.8 Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service

The Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service is an all-in-one provision for any students regardless of age or gender who have been affected by sexual harassment or violence. They provide free support and advice, along with a safe place to be heard independent of your college or department.

They support students in all situations, whether the experiences of sexual harassment or violence happened in Oxford or elsewhere, and whether it was recent or in the past. Sexual harassment and violence also includes stalking someone or following them in person and/or online.

The support service is run by a team of three highly trained specialist advisors and an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA).For more information visit: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/supportservice?wssl=1

5.4 Complaints and academic appeals

The University, the Social Science Division and the OII all hope that provision made for students at all stages of their course of study will result in no need for complaints (about that provision) or appeals (against the outcomes of any form of assessment).

Where such a need arises, an informal discussion with the person immediately responsible for the issue that you wish to complain about (and who may not be one of the individuals identified below) is often the simplest way to achieve a satisfactory resolution.

Many sources of advice are available from colleges, faculties/departments and bodies like the Counselling Service or the Oxford SU Student Advice Service, which have extensive experience in advising students. You may wish to take advice from one of those sources before pursuing your complaint.

General areas of concern about provision affecting students as a whole should be raised through Joint Consultative Committees or via student representation on the faculty/department's committees.

5.4.1   Complaints

If your concern or complaint relates to teaching or other provision made by the faculty/department, then you should raise it with the Director of Graduate Studies (Prof Greg Taylor) as appropriate. Complaints about departmental facilities should be made to the Graduate Studies Manager (Victoria McDermott). If you feel unable to approach one of those individuals, you may contact the Head of Department (Prof Phil Howard). The officer concerned will attempt to resolve your concern/complaint informally.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may take your concern further by making a formal complaint to the Proctors under the University Student Complaints Procedure (https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/complaints).

If your concern or complaint relates to teaching or other provision made by your college, you should raise it either with your tutor or with one of the college officers, Senior Tutor, Tutor for Graduates (as appropriate). Your college will also be able to explain how to take your complaint further if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of its consideration.

5.4.2   Academic appeals

An academic appeal is an appeal against the decision of an academic body (e.g. boards of examiners, transfer and confirmation decisions etc.), on grounds such as procedural error or evidence of bias. There is no right of appeal against academic judgement.

If you have any concerns about your assessment process or outcome it is advisable to discuss these first informally with your subject or college tutor, Senior Tutor, course director, director of studies, supervisor, or college or departmental administrator as appropriate. They will be able to explain the assessment process that was undertaken and may be able to address your concerns. Queries must not be raised directly with the examiners.

If you still have concerns you can make a formal appeal to the Proctors who will consider appeals under the University Academic Appeals Procedure (https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/complaints).

6. Applying for the DPhil programme

Students wishing to apply for the *DPhil in Social Data Science* or the *DPhil in Information, Communcation, and the Social Sciences* with no break in study can do so by applying for readmission. When accessing the online application system, students should make sure that they choose the **readmission** application form instead of the standard application form. **Readmission** applicants do not have to pay the application fee. To this effect, students will need to enter a unique **code** which, if they are eligible, can be found in their Student Self Service account.

The readmission form must be submitted together with the following supporting materials:

- transcript(s) of previous higher education;
- three academic references (one of which must be written by their Master's supervisor);
- curriculum vitae;
- research proposal;
- one sample of written work.

For guidance on supporting materials please refer to the Notes of Guidance for Applicants to Graduate Study http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/applying-to-oxford/continuing-oxford-graduates.

Students should ensure that their re-admission form and all supporting materials, including references, are submitted to the Graduate Admissions Office in time to meet the application deadline(s). Please refer to http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/dphil-information-communication-and-social-sciences for OII application deadlines.

If a student does take any break in study (even if only for a term), then they will not be able to use a readmission form and will need to submit an application form for graduate study, http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/postgraduate_courses/apply/index.html, and pay the application fee.

7. Regulations and Policies

The main University regulations governing Postgraduate Taught Courses can be found at
http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/pgpgtaughtcourses/.

7.1 Examination Regulations

Examination Regulations are published in July each year covering the academic year from October to September. It can be obtained from colleges and is also available online at http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/. Any amendments made during the academic year are published in the *University Gazette*. This handbook has been compiled using the latest Examination Regulations.

You should note that references in the regulations to the 'board' should be taken to refer to the OII's Graduate Studies Committee and references to the 'Secretary to the Faculties' should be construed as the Graduate Office.

7.2 Fees regulations

Course fees are paid termly through the student's College. Fees are charged whether or not a student is working in Oxford. Fees are not charged if student status is formally suspended (see **section 2.8.1**).

7.3 Residence requirements

Students are required by the University's regulations to be in residence in Oxford during term time. That means a commitment to be in Oxford for at least the full eight weeks of all three terms of the academic year. The dates of full term can be found at https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/facts-and-figures/dates-of-term and in the front of the *Examination Regulations*.

MSc students are potentially required to sit written examinations in Trinity term depending on what option papers are chosen. MSc students will need to submit their thesis by 1st August (or the nearest subsequent working day if this falls at the weekend) although this may be done remotely, but will also need to be available to return to Oxford in late August or September in the event of being called back for viva voce.

7.3.1 Suspension of status as a postgraduate student

Suspension of status as a postgraduate student enables students to suspend their studies without payment of fees if there is good reason for a student to do so (removal of graduate students from the Register is a different matter arising from academic or disciplinary offences).

Application

You may apply to the Graduate Studies Committee for suspension of status for a specified period. Any such application should be submitted using the **form GSO.17** (available from http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/progression) with details of the anticipated period required and with supporting comments from both the student's supervisor and college.

Fees

If the application is approved, the student will not be liable to pay fees during the period of suspension.

Period of suspension

MSc students must suspend for an entire year, and cannot suspend for one term, as research students can. When the student returns from suspension, they are to complete the GSO 17A *Confirmation of Return from Suspension* form.

Grounds for suspension

The Graduate Studies Committee is prepared to consider applications for suspension of status on the following grounds:

1. Where a student is effectively prevented from pursuing their course of study in circumstances which are outside their control, yet there are good grounds for believing that the student will be able to resume work within a reasonable period, for example in cases of:
    a. unforeseeable financial difficulty,
    b. physical or mental incapacity, (including, maternity leave and unexpected domestic crises);
2. Where it is desirable that a student should give up their work for a *limited period*, either:
    a. in order to concentrate on some other project which cannot reasonably be deferred until their postgraduate work is completed (for example, in order to acquire some ancillary qualification); or
    b. to take up temporary work which is likely to be relevant to their subsequent career and the opportunity for which is *unlikely to recur*.
3. In the case of study abroad:
    a. where a student holds a research studentship which is suspended during the period of study abroad because of the nature of the study; or
    b. where a student's work is unduly delayed by difficulties in making arrangements for study, or in carrying out such study, in another country.

Notifying funders

If a student is funded by an external body or bodies, they must communicate with them about any planned or granted suspension of status, and must secure the funders approval if required.

7.4 Illness

The University records should show correctly for how many terms a student has been actively working on a thesis. If a student's work is unavoidably interrupted by illness, they will be encouraged to apply for suspension of status. If their illness is not serious enough or of too short duration to justify suspension of status, but the student nevertheless feels that it is likely to have an adverse effect on their performance in the examination, they must ask their Senior Tutor, supervisor and doctor to take up the case with the Proctors, who have the option, at their discretion, of writing to the examiners and asking that the students illness be taken into account.

Students should not write directly to the examiners, who cannot take account of pleas which do not arrive through the official channels. If a student falls ill and thinks that this might result in a subsequent application for extension of time, it is desirable to obtain a medical certificate at the time. Students should always let their supervisor know when illness has prevented work on the thesis.

7.5 Policies

A summary of University and OII policies and their websites can be found below.

7.5.1   Codes of Conduct and University Regulations

The University has a wide range of policies and regulations that apply to students. These are easily accessible through the A-Z of University regulations, codes of conduct and policies available on the Oxford Students website https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/regulations.

University Statutes and Regulations

http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/196-052.shtml

This contains numerous useful documents, for example: Regulations Relating to the Use of Information Technology Facilities

Notes of Guidance issued by the Educational Policy and Standards Committee

http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/

This contains up-to-date versions of the following:

- Notes of Guidance for Research Degrees
- Learning and Teaching Strategy
- Notes of Guidance on Examinations and Assessment
- Notes of Guidance on Introduction of New Courses and Major Changes to Existing Courses

Disability Office

http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/

This contains a wide range of rules and useful information for students and staff in respect of many different types of disability. It contains the University statement on:

- Access to Teaching and Learning for Students with Disabilities

Equality and Diversity

> *"The University of Oxford is committed to fostering an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its staff and students are respected."* University of Oxford Equality Policy

Oxford is a diverse community with staff and students from over 140 countries, all with different cultures, beliefs and backgrounds. As a member of the University you contribute towards making it an inclusive environment and we ask that you treat other members of the University community with respect, courtesy and consideration.

The Equality and Diversity Unit works with all parts of the collegiate University to develop and promote an understanding of equality and diversity and ensure that this is reflected in all its processes. The Unit also supports the University in meeting the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people with and without the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and/or belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation. Visit the Equality and Diversity Unit website for further details or contact them directly for advice: edu.web.ox.ac.uk or **equality@admin.ox.ac.uk**.

The Equality and Diversity Unit also supports a broad network of harassment advisors in departments/faculties and colleges and a central Harassment Advisory Service. For more information on the University's Harassment and Bullying policy and the support available for students visit: edu.web.ox.ac.uk/harassment-advice

There are a range of faith societies, belief groups, and religious centres within Oxford University that are open to students. For more information visit: edu.web.ox.ac.uk/religion-and-belief

Student Welfare and Support Services

The Disability Advisory Service (DAS) can provide information, advice and guidance on the way in which a particular disability may impact on your student experience at the University and assist with organising disability-related study support. For more information visit: www.ox.ac.uk/students/shw/das

The Counselling Service is here to help you address personal or emotional problems that get in the way of having a good experience at Oxford and realising your full academic and personal potential. They offer a free and confidential service. For more information visit: www.ox.ac.uk/students/shw/counselling

A range of services led by students are available to help provide support to other students, including the peer supporter network, the OUSU Student Advice Service and Nightline. For more information visit: www.ox.ac.uk/students/shw/peer

OUSU also runs a series of campaigns to raise awareness and promote causes that matter to students.

There is a wide range of student clubs and societies to get involved in - for more details visit: www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/clubs

Academic Integrity in Research

http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/cops/researchintegrity/

This sets out the University's Code of Practice together with procedures in the case of suspected misconduct, including plagiarism.

Proctors' Office

http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/proctors/

This contains information about complaints procedures and numerous other matters including student welfare and student support as well as student discipline. See especially:

Essential Information for Students http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/proctors/info/pam/index.shtml

*Council Regulations 6 of 2003 (*about complaints procedures: See para 48 onwards for Appeals concerning higher degrees involving research*)* http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/247-062.shtml

Research Services

http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/researchsupport/

This contains several key documents, addressing interesting issues including plagiarism and outside consultancies.

- Academic Integrity in Research: Code of Conduct and Procedure
- Public Interest Disclosure: Code of Practice and Procedure
- Statement of Policy and Procedure on Conflict of Interest

Central University Ethics Committee

http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/curec/

This is concerned with ethical issues involved in research involving human subjects. It includes a step by step guide to seeking ethical approval for research projects.

7.5.2   Fieldwork safety and training

It is not expected that Social Data Science students will undertake fieldwork at part of their theses. In the event that students do, the following sections give important information and considerations. Fieldwork is considered as any research activity contributing to your academic studies, and approved by your department, which is carried out away from the University premises. This can be overseas or within the UK. The safety and welfare of its students is of paramount importance to the University. This includes fieldwork and there are a number of procedures that you must follow when preparing for and carrying out fieldwork.

Preparation

Safe fieldwork is successful fieldwork. Thorough preparation can pre-empt many potential problems. When discussing your research with your supervisor please think about the safety implications of where you are going and what you are doing. Following this discussion and before your travel will be approved, you will be required to complete a travel risk assessment form. This requires you to set out the significant safety risks associated with your research, the arrangements in place to mitigate those risks and the contingency plans for if something goes wrong. There is an expectation that you will take out University travel insurance. Your department also needs accurate information on where you are, and when and how to contact you while you are away. The travel assessment process should help to plan your fieldwork by thinking through arrangements and practicalities. The following website contains some fieldwork experiences which might be useful to refer to https://socsci.web.ox.ac.uk/fieldworker-experiences

Training

Training is highly recommended as part of your preparation. Even if you are familiar with where you are going there may be risks associated with what you are doing.

Social Sciences Division Research and Skills Training (termly) https://socsci.web.ox.ac.uk/welcome-to-researcher-development

- **Preparation for Safe Fieldwork**. A half day course for those carrying out social science research in rural and urban contexts
- **An Insider's Guide to fieldwork** A student led course on negotiating the practical aspects of fieldwork.
- **Vicarious trauma workshops.** For research on traumatic or distressing topic areas or contexts.

Safety Office courses http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/safety/overseastravelfieldwork/ **(termly)**
- Emergency First Aid for Fieldworkers.
- Fieldwork Safety Overseas: A full day course geared to expedition based fieldwork.

Useful Links
- More information on fieldwork and a number of useful links can be found on the Social Sciences divisional website**:** https://socsci.web.ox.ac.uk/fieldwork-0
- Information on data protectionThe Data Protection Act 1998 is akey piece of UK legislation regarding data. Please see http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/dataprotection/ for further information.

7.6 OII Code of Conduct

The Oxford Internet Institute is committed to promoting and maintaining a positive, supportive, and professional work and study environment for students, staff, visitors, and all associates of the Department and University (whether employed or otherwise). All members of the Department – staff, students, and associates – must abide by the University's Equal Opportunities policies and Code of Practice relating to harassment and should treat everyone, whether inside or outside the Department, equally, with respect and without distinction, regardless of role or status. Department staff, whether established, non-established or administrative, must act at all times honestly, conscientiously, reasonably, and in good faith, having regard to their responsibilities, the interests of the Department and University, their legal obligations, and the welfare of colleagues and students.

The Department regards as unacceptable any behaviour that is contrary to these commitments. All complaints of improper conduct or treatment will be treated seriously and in confidence. Anyone who believes they have been treated improperly should, in the first instance, speak informally to their line manager, the Harassment Officers, or, where appropriate, the Head of Department. Complaints that are substantiated, or cannot be resolved informally, may lead to formal grievance or disciplinary action as outlined in both Department and University policies.

7.7 Discipline

Infringements of the OII's and the University's codes of conduct may lead to disciplinary action. Student discipline is the responsibility of the Proctors' Office and full details are given at: http://www.proctors.ox.ac.uk/studentconduct. Sanctions include removal from the register of graduate students and fines.

7.8 Disability and special needs

The OII has a wide range of facilities for those with disabilities, including (for those using wheelchairs) an entrance ramp, lift to all floors at the rear, a designated toilet for those with disabilities, and a kitchen and common room together with the library and seminar room on the ground floor. It also has induction loops in reception and in the seminar room for those with hearing impairment and a number of audio-visual aids for those with visual impairment.

If you have a disability or special needs you are urged to let the Graduate Studies Manager, your supervisor, or the Director of Graduate Studies know at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate support arrangements can be made wherever reasonably possible. Information about your health will be treated in confidence and only divulged on a need to know basis with your consent.

For full information on University policy on matters relating to disabilities, including the document *Access to Teaching and Learning for Students with Disabilities*, see the Disability Office website at http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab.

7.9 Health and safety

All Oxford Internet Institute employees, academic visitors, students, and any other persons entering the OII building are responsible for exercising care in relation to themselves and others who may be affected by their actions. This includes responsibility to:

- Make sure that your work is carried out in the approved way and in accordance with best possible practice
- Obey all instructions from a Safety Officer or the Head of Administration and Finance in respect of health and safety.
- Inform the Head of Administration and Finance of any significant new hazards to be introduced, or newly identified risks found in existing procedures.
- Report all fires, incidents and accidents immediately to reception staff or to the Head of Administration and Finance.
- Familiarise yourself with the location of fire fighting equipment, alarm points and escape routes, together with the fire procedures.
- Ensure that you sign in and out of the OII buildings at all times

Further details about health and safety including fire drills are given in the Induction pack.

7.10   University policy on student maternity, paternity and adoption leave

Students who give birth may choose to suspend their status normally up to a year. For further information please see http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/shw/childcare/.

7.11   Policy on the recording of lectures and other formal teaching sessions by students

The University recognises that there are a number of reasons why students might wish to record lectures or other formal teaching sessions (such as seminars and classes) in order to support their learning. The University also recognises that in most cases copyright in lectures resides with the University or with the academic responsible for the lecture or formal teaching session, and that academics and students may have concerns about privacy and data protection. This policy sets out the circumstances in which such recordings may take place; the respective roles and responsibilities of those involved in such recordings; and the implications of breaches of this policy.

For the purposes of this policy, the term 'recording' refers to any audio or visual recording of a lecture or other formal teaching session, made with any type of audio or visual recorder.

Permission to record a lecture or other formal teaching session

Students who have been given permission to record lectures or other formal teaching sessions as a reasonable adjustment on disability-related grounds do not need to ask for permission to record from individual academics. Students who believe they have disability-related grounds for recording should contact the University's Disability Advisory Service (http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability/study or disability@admin.ox.ac.uk) for further information on the process for obtaining such permission.

Students may request permission to record any lectures or other formal teaching sessions. All such requests should be made in writing (including by email) prior to the lecture course or equivalent, to the academic responsible. Subject to paragraph 3 above, the decision on whether to grant permission is at the discretion of the academic. Students may only record lectures where the academic responsible for the session has given their consent prior to the start of the lecture in writing (e.g. by email), and **recordings of lectures may not be made by students unless this consent has been given**. Retrospective requests are not permissible under this policy and covert recording of lectures will be treated as a disciplinary offence.

Students granted permission in writing to record a formal teaching session other than a lecture should ask the session leader to check at the start of the session that there are no objections from others present to a recording being made.

Where recordings are made available routinely by departments and faculties, students may not make personal recordings unless they have been given permission to record as a reasonable adjustment.

Use of recordings

Recordings of lectures or other formal teaching sessions may only be made for the **personal and private** use of the student.

Students may not: (a) pass such recordings to any other person (except for the purposes of transcription, in which case they can be passed to one person only); (b) publish such recordings in any form (this includes, but is not limited to, the Internet and hard copy publication).

Students may store recordings of lectures for the duration of their programme of study. Once they have completed the programme of study, students should destroy all recordings of lectures or other formal teaching sessions.

Where a student breaches this policy, the University will regard this as a disciplinary offence. All such breaches will be dealt with in accordance with Statute XI (http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/352-051a.shtml).

8. The University

The organisation of Oxford University is complex and it may be helpful to outline some of the main institutions and their functions. The University's academic departments are divided among four divisional boards. The Oxford Internet Institute is a department within the Social Sciences Division.

The University is also collegiate and all graduate students belong both to a department and a college. Departments deal with lectures, examinations, and administration of graduate work, while colleges deal with undergraduate tutorial teaching and with the provision of various 'domestic' facilities. All graduate students must be admitted first by the University and then by a college.

The University deals with educational standards and the committee with primary responsibility for academic quality assurance, including in relation to graduate studies, is the Educational Policy and Standards Committee (EPSC). It has issued Notes of Guidance on a range of topics relating to graduate studies which can be available from the University Website and which are printed in the *Examination Regulations*.

8.1 The OII as a department

8.1.1 Organisation

Details of the organisation of the department, contact information and photographs of OII personnel are available for both faculty and support staff at https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/people/.

Some key people related to the MSc Programme include:

- OII Director: Professor Phil Howard
- Head of Administration and Finance: Douglas Thornton
- Graduate Studies Manager: Victoria McDermott
- MSc Programmes Co-ordinator: Christine Bunyan
- DPhil Programmes Co-ordinator: Laura Maynard
- Graduate Studies Assistant: TBC
- IT Officers: Arthur Bullard and Patrick Wenham
- Director of Graduate Studies: Professor Greg Taylor
- Programme Directors of the MSc in Social Data Science: Dr Scott Hale and Dr Bernie Hogan

8.1.2 Graduate Studies Committee

This is the main University administrative body so far as the management of graduate studies in your field is concerned.

The Committee is chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies (Professor Greg Taylor) who has broad overall responsibility for the graduate programme. Details of the committee are listed in **Appendix B: Standing Committees**.

The GSC normally meets twice a term in Weeks 3 and 7.

8.1.3 Research Committee

The Research Committee is to discuss all relevant academic and research issues with a view to promoting and co-ordinating those activities within the Institute. This includes research funding opportunities, development and fundraising, publication and dissemination of research findings, events programme, teaching, academic resources including OII Library policy and research policy including ethical issues.

The Committee is chaired by the Director of Research (Professor Andrew Przybylski). Details of the committee are listed in **Appendix B: Standing Committees.**

The Research Committee normally meets once a term in Week 6.

8.2 The Colleges

The student's College is treated as their official address for all University correspondence. If a student is to be away from Oxford, it is important that the college and their supervisor are both informed. **Students should ensure that the OII's MSc Programmes Co-ordinator has full details of the student's college address, email address and telephone number**. All colleges provide dining and common room facilities where students can meet people from other disciplines. All have a Tutor for Graduates (or some equivalent post) who can give general advice and guidance. In addition each graduate student is assigned to a College Adviser, who takes a general interest in the student's well-being and will normally be working in politics or a cognate discipline.

There is considerable variety among the colleges. Six (Green Templeton, Nuffield, St Anthony's, Linacre, Wolfson, and St Cross) take graduates only, while there are around thirty colleges that admit both graduates and undergraduates. All colleges admit men and women.

8.3 Social Science Graduate Office

At the Social Sciences Divisional Offices, the main office dealing with the organization of graduate studies is the Graduate Office (GO). Academic records of all students registered for higher degrees and diplomas of the University are maintained centrally on a student database. Each student's record is opened on receipt of the student contract. All information is updated as student's progress on their courses.

The Graduate Office within the Social Science Division also keeps individual correspondence files on current students, in which are retained copies of all applications (e.g. for transfer of status) and related correspondence, copies of supervisors' termly reports, and other relevant documentation. Please note however that candidates' initial application forms for admission to Oxford, and all supporting materials including transcripts, are held by their colleges, **not** by the Department or the Graduate Office. They can be contacted at graduate-studies-2@socsci.ox.ac.uk.

8.4 Library facilities

8.4.1   Oxford libraries

The library resources of Oxford are rich, but geographically scattered. The Search Oxford Libraries Online (SOLO) catalogue covers print and online holdings for almost all Oxford libraries, including the OII Library, and the Bodleian Libraries. Some important libraries for graduate work are mentioned here, but several others may be useful for specialised purposes; particulars of these will be found in the leaflet on Oxford libraries that is issued to all new students. Most Oxford libraries are part of Bodleian Libraries. Full and up-to-date information on all Oxford libraries including times of opening, borrowing rights etc can be found at http://www.ox.ac.uk/libraries.

8.4.2   The OII Library

This subject-specific library houses many volumes on the social aspects of information and communication technologies. The library also holds current subscriptions to several journals not found elsewhere in Oxford. Suggestions of titles for the library are welcome and should be sent to facilities@oii.ox.ac.uk.

8.4.3   The Bodleian Social Science Library

This library in Manor Road has books for loan on Criminology; Economics; Politics and International Relations; International Development; Sociology; Social Policy and Social Work; and Socio-Legal Studies. It has an extensive run of periodicals not for loan. Around 8 million volumes of Bodleian Libraries material is housed offsite, and can be ordered to the Social Science Library. All library material, print and electronic, is listed on SOLO.

8.4.4   Bodleian Libraries

This is the main library service of the University. This is one of the UK's Legal Deposit libraries and in this role is entitled to request *inter alia* all works published or distributed in the UK. The Bodleian Libraries comprise 30 locations, including the Radcliffe Science Library, Bodleian Social Science Library and Law Library. To obtain access

to the Bodleian Libraries it is necessary to have a University Card. It is not possible to borrow books received under Legal Deposit. Photocopying of material in the Bodleian Libraries is permitted, subject to copyright laws; detailed arrangements for photocopying vary.

8.5 Computing facilities

8.5.1   University facilities

Students will receive an Oxford University email address as soon as they have registered. The University's IT services have extensive computing facilities available:

- courses in programming, word-processing, communications, and other topics;
- a shop at 13 Banbury Road selling hardware and software;
- repairs service for hardware.

In addition to its website at https://www.it.ox.ac.uk/, IT services produces various publications and leaflets giving full information about its services.

Computer services offer the following inductions for new graduate students in Michaelmas term:

- One 2 hour session for highlighting electronic resources for research.
- One shorter session during general departmental inductions for pointing out IT services.

8.5.2   OII facilities

The OII is currently located across three separate sites (1 St Giles, 41 St Giles and 34 St Giles). There are hot desks and seating areas allocated for MSc students in GF1 at 1 St Giles (located just behind reception). MSc students are also welcome to use the garden room and café at 41 St Giles as study spaces.

Master's students will have card access to 1 St Giles and 41 St Giles in office hours, 9am-5pm Monday to Friday. For meetings at 34 St Giles, students will need to liaise with faculty to get access.

The following are also available to students if required:

- specialist software (e.g., visualizaiton and design software) if already licensed to the OII or the University and agreed with the IT Manager;
- space for a personal blog;
- use of a wiki;
- external access to the OII server;
- loan of laptop or other ICT equipment (e.g. audio equipment for recording interviews) for work on OII research projects for a maximum of two weeks unless exceptional circumstances deem a longer period as agreed with the IT Manager.

The OII has its own IT support and web development team. They can be contacted at help@oii.ox.ac.uk and webhelp@oii.ox.ac.uk.

8.5.3   Canvas

The most up to date reading lists and course deadlines are held on the University of Oxford VLE called Canvas which can be accessed at https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/. Students can use their Single Sign-On to login. If you have any technical issues or queries on content such as reading lists please contact the MSc Programmes Co-ordinator at msc@oii.ox.ac.uk.

Canvas also provides the ability to submit formative coursework and receive feedback, threaded discussion forums and other features.

8.5.4   College facilities

In addition, the student's college is likely to offer computing facilities, especially for word-processing.

8.6 Training facilities (The Centre for Teaching and Learning)

The Centre for Teaching and Learning support all those who teach at the University of Oxford. It will promote inclusive teaching practices that are relevant to Oxford's unique learning environment. It will offer a range of courses, support and services, including:

- Accredited programmes in teaching and learning in Higher Education

- Digital tools, training and technical support

- Online courses and resources

- Consultancy for course and programme design (including blended and online)

- Networks and events for sharing teaching practices

Further details can be found at https://www.ctl.ox.ac.uk/

8.7 The Language Centre

The Language Centre provides a wide range of services at 12 Woodstock Road which are available free of charge to students.

- Courses in English as a foreign language.
- Specialist courses in Academic Writing.
- Library, with adjacent audio and video study laboratory, containing self-instruction material in more than eighty languages.
- Regular courses in French, German, Modern Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Welsh.

Details of language courses for the current year (which start on the Monday of first week of Michaelmas Term), and of the Centre's opening hours, library facilities, registration procedures etc., are available at the Language Centre and at http://www.lang.ox.ac.uk.

Applications to register must be done by handing in a registration form on Monday – Wednesday of Week 1 of Michaelmas Term. **If students think they need any such courses, they should not hesitate to apply for them.**

8.8 Careers guidance

The Careers Service of the University, http://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/, with offices at 56 Banbury Road, can help students evaluate their prospects of finding appropriate employment. They also provide course in CV writing.

8.9 Skills Toolkit

The Skills Toolkit (http://www.skillstoolkit.ox.ac.uk/) brings together information about workshops, seminars, conferences and on-line resources which will give students the opportunity to extend their research skills and further develop transferable skills. These have been designed with the intention of helping students achieve their research goals as well as enhancing their employability.

8.10   Other useful contacts

Oxford Students - http://www.ox.ac.uk/students

International Students - http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa

Student Health and Welfare - http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare

Contains a large array of information and advice, including information about the Counselling Service.

9. Financial matters

9.1 Grants, prizes and other funds

Financial help towards research expenses, when not available through the ESRC or other bodies financing your work, may be obtainable through various University funds or through students' colleges. Details of University scholarships, prizes and trust funds are published each term in a supplement to the *University Gazette*. The main list is published annually around the start of Michaelmas Term.

There is also information on these matters in the University's *Graduate Studies Prospectus*. This can be found on the university website at: http://www.ox.ac.uk/feesandfunding/. There may also be various college funds and awards available and students should speak with the college adviser about such opportunities.

9.2 Financial Assistance

The OII has a policy of seeking to support MSc students with help towards expenses connected with their study. Such expenses might include travel essential to conduct thesis research, participant compensation, cloud computing, conference attendance, etc.

There are two particular areas of support available to MSc students for the duration of your degree. In both cases, students are expected to seek support from other sources as well as approaching the OII.
1. Expenses connected with thesis
2. Conference attendance (Trinity Term)

Students wishing to apply for either grant should contact the OII's Finance Officer, Duncan Passey (finance@oii.ox.ac.uk) to request an application form. Completed application forms should then be submitted to Duncan along with a brief email of support from the students supervisor.

Any requests for further information should also be directed to Duncan at the email address above.

9.3 Paid work

For full-time student's their first commitment must be their Oxford degree work, which is demanding and intensive. If they need, or wish, to undertake paid employment of any kind (whether inside or outside the University), they must first obtain the approval of their college, their OII supervisor, and the Director of Graduate Studies. Full-time MSc students should note that the demands of the degree leave very little time during the week for any paid employment.

MSc students are not considered to be on vacation during any period when you are expected to study or be working on your dissertation / thesis, even if this is outside term time. This includes Trinity Term up until the thesis submission deadline of the weekday on or nearest to the 1st of August Overseas students should also check with the Student Information and Advisory Service if they are eligible to work at http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/during/work.

Your college is also likely to have a number of small jobs available, some of which – such as library jobs and occasional portering duties – can comfortably be combined with study. Such employment would still need to be approved as detailed above.

Please see the University guidance on Paid Work for Oxford graduate students at http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/policyonpaidwork/.

For any queries about working during your studies, please speak to the MSc Programmes Co-ordinator, or the OII Personnel Officer, Ornella Sciuto (email recruit@oii.ox.ac.uk or call 01865 287011).

9.4 Travel Insurance

The University offers free travel insurance to all students travelling for University business (e.g. for research purposes and fieldwork). The Travel Insurance Application and Travel Registration (TIRS) is a new online portal for submitting and processing travel insurance applications and registering travel details. Application details are held centrally, for use when processing claims. You are able to register their travel details even if you do not require University insurance. The University will use the information in the system to locate and contact travellers who are in areas impacted by an incident.

The online form is easy to use and includes instructions to guide you through as you enter your details. The form is available here: http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/finance/insurance/travel/. You will need your Single Sign-on to login to the system, and after submitting their travel insurance application form online, you will receive notifications as the application moves through the approval process.

9.5 University awards

The University has a number of prizes and awards available for academic achievement. For more information please see http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding/prizes-and-awards.

Appendix A: Graduate Joint Consultative Committee

1. The terms of reference of the Graduate Joint Consultative Committee of the Oxford Internet Institute are:
   1.1 To act as a two-way channel of communication between the department and its students on all aspects of their educational experience in the department.
   1.2 To refer matters raised through the representation system to the relevant department committee.
   1.3 To receive and comment on any changes planned by the department with respect to admissions, induction, teaching, and assessment as referred to them by any department committee.
   1.4 To comment on physical resources within or related to the department, for example but not limited to, computer facilities, laboratory provision, library provision, and online resources.
   1.5 To comment upon safety within the department.
   1.6 To receive and consider analyses of and department responses to: the outcomes of course evaluation mechanisms; national statistics such as the Student Barometer; student performance through summary statistics; and annual reports of the Chairs of boards of examiners and external examiners reports.
   1.7 To receive and consider reports from department reviews, course reviews and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies as is allowed by the terms of the relevant committees/bodies.
   1.8 To review on an annual basis the effectiveness of the student representation system in the department including identifying any changes to the system.
   1.9 To discuss follow-up action resulting from previous GJCC meetings, in particular any matter which was referred to other department committees
   1.10 To report to the OII's Graduate Studies Committee by submission of notes/summary of each meeting of the GJCC.
2. The membership of the Graduate Joint Consultative Committee shall be as follows:
   (a) Director of Graduate Studies,
   (b) MSc Programme Director (SSI),
   (c) MSc Programme Director (SDS),
   (d) DPhil Programme Director,
   (e) Head of Administration and Finance,
   (f) Graduate Studies Manager,
   (g) MSc Coordinator,
   (h) DPhil Coordinator,
   (i) Graduate Studies Assistant,
   (j) two representatives of full-time postgraduate research (DPhil in Information, Communication and the Social Sciences) students of the Institute in accordance with paragraph 3 below
   (k) two representatives of full-time postgraduate research (DPhil in Social Data Science) students of the Institute in accordance with paragraph 3 below
   (l) one representatives of part-time postgraduate research (DPhil) students of the Institute in accordance with paragraph 3 below
   (m) two representatives of full-time postgraduate taught (MSc Social Science of the Internet) students of the Institute in accordance with paragraph 3 below
   (n) two representatives of part-time postgraduate taught (MSc Social Science of the Internet) students of the Institute in accordance with paragraph 3 below
   (o) two representatives of full-time postgraduate taught (MSc Social Data Science) students of the Institute in accordance with paragraph 3 below
   (p) such other co-opted members as the committee shall determine
3. Students of the Institute shall elect representatives of their number to serve on the committee prior to the first committee meeting of each year.
4. The committee shall be chaired by one of the student members, to be elected by the committee at the first meeting of the year. If the student chair becomes unavailable (for instance, if they have completed or left the programme and a new chair has not yet been elected), the DGS will serve as interim chair only until such a time as a new chair can be elected.
5. The secretary to the committee will be the OII Graduate Studies Assistant. The secretary will take the notes from the meetings, and liaise with the chair to create the minutes of the meeting.

6. The committee will normally meet at least three times a year, with meetings usually held once each term. The committee shall have leave to allow the chair to take action as appropriate between meetings.

Appendix B: Standing Committees

Graduate Studies Committee

Function:

The Graduate Studies Committee shall manage all business of the Board relating to postgraduate studies within the department.

Terms of reference:

The terms of reference of the Graduate Studies Committee of the department are:

1. To implement all aspects of teaching policy for the OII as agreed by the Steering Committee.
2. To decide on:
    1. applications for admission as a Probationer Research Student and transfer to the OII DPhil programme, and applications for admission to the OII's MSc programme,
    2. suspension or removal of OII students from the register of graduate students,
    3. applications for transfer and confirmation of status,
    4. the examiners' recommendation regarding the award of the degrees of Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Science, and,
    5. the award of scholarships.
3. To approve:
    1. nominations of assessors for transfer and confirmation of status of research students,
    2. nominations for the board of examiners for the OII's MSc programmes
4. To review and make recommendations for changes and updates to the following in the light of university guidance and feedback from teachers, examiners and students:
    1. induction materials,
    2. OII graduate studies handbook,
    3. student feedback questionnaires,
    4. MSc courses and DPhil programmes,
    5. teaching methods and examination and marking schemes.
5. To receive:
    1. supervisors' termly and annual progress reports on all research and MSc students at the OII,
    2. reports of examiners and external examiners,
    3. results of student feedback questionnaires,
    4. statistics of success rates and details of complaints and academic appeals lodged and ensure that appropriate action is taken in the light of them.
6. To consider and approve applications for Visiting Student status.

Membership

The membership of the Graduate Studies Committee shall be as follows:

1. Director of Graduate Studies (*Chair*) (*ex officio*),
2. Members of the department's staff who are engaged in teaching for the department,
3. Head of Administration and Finance (*ex officio*),
4. IT Manager (*ex officio*),
5. Four representatives of postgraduate students of the department (one from each programme),

6. Such other co-opted members as the committee shall determine.

The Board will also endeavour to use its power of co-optation to ensure that there is gender representation on the Board proportionate to the profile of the permanent academic staff, if this has not been achieved through the elections.

Postgraduate students of the Department shall elect four of their number to serve on the committee. The student representatives shall not be entitled to take part in any reserved business except by leave of the chair.

Meetings

The Graduate Studies Committee will normally meet at least six times a year. The committee shall have leave to allow the Chair to take action as appropriate between meetings.

Research Committee

Terms of reference

The terms of reference of the Research Committee are:

1. To develop the department's research strategy and to discuss all relevant research issues with a view to promoting and co-ordinating those activities within the Institute, including:
    1. Research funding in the context of the Institute's overall finances,
    2. publication and dissemination of research findings,
    3. research related events, including the Bellwether series and OII colloquia,
    4. academic resources,
    5. research policy including ethical issues.
2. To consider and approve research funding proposals
3. To consider and approve proposals for Postdoctoral Fellowships, Associate status and Visitor status (other than Visiting Student status)

Membership

The membership of the Research Committee shall be as follows:

1. Director of Research (*Chair*) (*ex officio*),
2. Research and academic staff on departmentally funded contracts,
3. Head of Administration and Finance (*ex officio*),
4. IT Manager (*ex officio*),
5. three representatives from the department's contract research staff,
6. two representatives of the postgraduate students of the department.

The Board will also endeavour to use its power of co-optation to ensure that there is gender representation on the Board proportionate to the profile of the permanent academic staff, if this has not been achieved through the elections.

Postgraduate students of the Department may elect two of their number to attend meetings of the committee. The student representatives shall be entitled to contribute to discussion of any unreserved business described at paragraph (a) above but may not take part in any other business except by leave of the chair.

Apart from *ex officio* members, members shall serve for three years and be eligible for reappointment.

Meetings

The Research Committee will normally meet at least three times a year. The Committee shall have leave to allow the Chair to take action as appropriate between meetings.

Appendix C: Assessment Timetable

The following is the overall assessment timetable for 2019-2020. This is provided as guidance only: in case of changes, the course reading list on Canvas and any updates provided by the course tutors should be followed. This timetable does not include 'formative assessments' (i.e. those which do not count towards your final degree mark). You will be notified of these by your course convenors.

Course	Term	Type of Assessment	Essay Submission Deadline / Date of Exam	Marks Available
Fundmentals of Python in Social Data Science	Michaelmas	3500 word problem set and report	Friday Week 9, Michaelmas Term	End of February
Applied Analytical Statistics	Michaelmas	5000 word project and report	Friday Week 0, Hilary Term	End of February
Foundations of Social Data Science	Michaelmas	5000 word essay	Friday Week 0, Hilary Term	End of February
Data Analytics at Scale	Michaelmas	3000 word project and report	Friday Week 0, Hilary Term	End of February
Machine Learning	Michaelmas	3000 word problem set and report	Friday Week 0, Hilary Term	End of February
Frontiers of Social Data Science	Hilary	5000 word essay	Friday Week 0, Trinity Term	End of May
Research Design for Social Data Science	Hilary	5000 word essay and research design plan	Friday Week 0, Trinity Term	End of May
Digital Era Government and Politics	Hilary	5000 word essay	Monday Week 1, Trinity term	End of May
Experiments for Data Science	Hilary	5000 word essay	Friday Week 0, Trinity Term	End of May
Human and Data Intelligence	Hilary	5000 word essay	Friday Week 0, Trinity Term	End of May
Internet Economics	Hilary	5000 word essay	Monday Week 1, Trinity Term	End of May
Introduction to Natural Language Processing for the Social Sciences	Hilary	5000 word essay	Friday Week 0, Trinity Term	End of May
Online Social Networks	Hilary	5000 word essay	Monday Week 1, Trinity Term	End of May
Statistical Analysis of Networks	Hilary	3000 word report	Friday Week 0, Trinity Term	End of May
Sociological Analysis	Hilary	Written 3 hour exam	Trinity term	TBC
Sociogenomics	Hilary	5000 word essay	Monday Week 1, Trinity term	TBC
Statistical Lifetime Models	Hilary	Assessed Practical	Due TT, date TBC	TBC
Statistical Lifetime Models	Hilary	Written 1.5 hour exam	Trinity term	End of September
Time Series Econometrics	Hilary	Written 1h20 exam	Trinity Term	TBC
Philosophy and Ethics of Information	Hilary	5000 word essay	Monday Week 1, Trinity Term	End of May
Thesis	Trinity	15000 word thesis	3rd August	End of September

Please note that the Examination Schools control the scheduling of exams and these are usually only confirmed 5-6 weeks before the date.

Appendix D: The GSR Graduate Supervision Reporting

At the end of each term, the student's supervisor(s) will submit a report on their academic progress. To facilitate this reporting, the University operates an online Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR). Within this system, students have the opportunity to contribute to their termly supervision reports by reviewing and commenting on their own progress.

Students are **strongly recommended** to complete a self-assessment, taking the opportunity to review and comment on their academic progress, measure their progress against the requirements and agreed timetable for their programme of study, identify any skills training they have undertaken or may need to the future, and list their engagement with the academic community (e.g. seminar/conference attendance or any teaching they have undertaken).

The student's supervisor(s) will review and comment on their academic progress and performance during the current term and assess skills and training needs to be addressed during the next term. The supervisor should discuss the report with the student, as it will form the basis for feedback on their progress, for identifying areas where further work is required, for reviewing progress against an agreed timetable, and for agreeing plans for the term ahead.

When reporting on academic progress, students on taught courses should review progress during the current term, and measure this progress against the timetable and requirements for their programme of study. Students on doctoral programmes should reflect on the progress made with their research project during the current term, including written work (e.g. drafts of chapters) and they should assess this against the plan of research that has been agreed with their supervisor(s).

All students should briefly describe which subject-specific research skills and more general personal/professional skills they have acquired or developed during the current term. Students should include attendance at relevant classes that form part of their programme of study and also include courses, seminars or workshops offered or arranged by the OII or the University. Students should also reflect on the skills required to undertake the work they intend to carry out. Students should mention any skills they do not already have or may wish to strengthen through undertaking training.

The relevant MSc Programme Director and the Director of Graduate Studies have access to these reports, and will review them, watching in particularly for any issues flagged as a concern. If the student has any complaints about the supervision they are receiving, they should raise this directly with the Director of Graduate Studies at the OII. Students should not use the supervision reporting system as a mechanism for complaints.

Students are asked to report in weeks 7, 8 and 9 of term. Once the student has completed their sections of the online form, it will be released to their supervisor(s) for completion and will also be visible to the Director of Graduate Studies and to their College Advisor. When the supervisor's sections are completed, students will be able to view the report, as will the relevant Director of Graduate Studies and their College Advisor. Directors of Graduate Studies are responsible for ensuring that appropriate supervision takes place, and this is one of the mechanisms they use to obtain information about supervision. College Advisors are a source of support and advice to students, and it is therefore important that they are informed of the students' progress, including concerns (expressed by the student and/or their supervisor).

Access to GSR for students will be via Student Self Service https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/selfservice. Students will be sent a GSR automated email notification with details of how to log in at the start of each reporting window, and who to contact with queries.

Appendix E: Term Schedules

The following tentative term schedules are provided for your guidance. Any changes in time or location will be available on Canvas and updated course reading lists, which should be understood as the definitive sources of this information.

Michaelmas Term Schedule

Michaelmas Term Schedule - MSc Social Data Science

	Monday			Tuesday			Wednesday			Thursday			Friday
	Weeks 1-4	Weeks 5-6	Weeks 7-8	Weeks 1-4	Weeks 5-6	Weeks 7-8	Weeks 1-4	Weeks 5-6	Weeks 7-8	Weeks 1-4	Weeks 5-6	Weeks 7-8	Weeks 1-8
9:00 AM													Foundations of Social Data Science *Lecture*
9:30 AM													Foundations of Social Data Science *Lecture*
10:00 AM	Python for Social Data Science	Data Analytics at Scale	Machine Learning	Python for Social Data Science	Data Analytics at Scale	Machine Learning	Python for Social Data Science	Data Analytics at Scale	Machine Learning		Data Analytics at Scale	Machine Learning	
10:30 AM	Python for Social Data Science	Data Analytics at Scale	Machine Learning	Python for Social Data Science	Data Analytics at Scale	Machine Learning	Python for Social Data Science	Data Analytics at Scale	Machine Learning		Data Analytics at Scale	Machine Learning	
11:00 AM	Python for Social Data Science	Data Analytics at Scale	Machine Learning	Python for Social Data Science	Data Analytics at Scale	Machine Learning	Python for Social Data Science	Data Analytics at Scale	Machine Learning		Data Analytics at Scale	Machine Learning	
11:30 AM	Python for Social Data Science	Data Analytics at Scale	Machine Learning	Python for Social Data Science	Data Analytics at Scale	Machine Learning	Python for Social Data Science	Data Analytics at Scale	Machine Learning		Data Analytics at Scale	Machine Learning	
12:00 PM													Applied Analytical Statistics *Lecture*
12:30 PM													Applied Analytical Statistics *Lecture*
1:00 PM													Applied Analytical Statistics *Lecture*
1:30 PM													
2:00 PM	Python for Social Data Science *Lab*	Data Analytics at Scale *Lab*	Machine Learning *Lab*	Python for Social Data Science *Lab*	Data Analytics at Scale *Lab*	Machine Learning *Lab*	Python for Social Data Science *Lab*	Data Analytics at Scale *Lab*	Machine Learning *Lab*		Data Analytics at Scale *Lab*	Machine Learning *Lab*	
2:30 PM	Python for Social Data Science *Lab*	Data Analytics at Scale *Lab*	Machine Learning *Lab*	Python for Social Data Science *Lab*	Data Analytics at Scale *Lab*	Machine Learning *Lab*	Python for Social Data Science *Lab*	Data Analytics at Scale *Lab*	Machine Learning *Lab*		Data Analytics at Scale *Lab*	Machine Learning *Lab*	
3:00 PM	Python for Social Data Science *Lab*	Data Analytics at Scale *Lab*	Machine Learning *Lab*	Python for Social Data Science *Lab*	Data Analytics at Scale *Lab*	Machine Learning *Lab*	Python for Social Data Science *Lab*	Data Analytics at Scale *Lab*	Machine Learning *Lab*		Data Analytics at Scale *Lab*	Machine Learning *Lab*	Foundations of Social Data Science *Tutorial/TA Sessions*
3:30 PM	Python for Social Data Science *Lab*	Data Analytics at Scale *Lab*	Machine Learning *Lab*	Python for Social Data Science *Lab*	Data Analytics at Scale *Lab*	Machine Learning *Lab*	Python for Social Data Science *Lab*	Data Analytics at Scale *Lab*	Machine Learning *Lab*		Data Analytics at Scale *Lab*	Machine Learning *Lab*	Foundations of Social Data Science *Tutorial/TA Sessions*
4:00 PM													Foundations of Social Data Science *Tutorial/TA Sessions*
4:30 PM													Foundations of Social Data Science *Tutorial/TA Sessions*

Colour	
Yellow	St Cross College Seminar Room
Green	41 St Giles

Hilary Term Schedule

To be confirmed in due course

Trinity Term Schedule

To be confirmed in due course

Appendix F: Examining Conventions

MSc in Social Data Science,
Examining Conventions
Academic Year 2019–20

1. INTRODUCTION

Examination conventions are the formal record of the specific assessment standards for the course or 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.

The supervisory body responsible for approving the examination conventions is the Social Sciences Board's Quality Assurance Committee.

All students should refer to the Essential Information for Students at https://www.proctors.ox.ac.uk/resources-for-students-0 for further information on examination matters and plagiarism.

2. RUBRICS FOR INDIVIDUAL PAPERS

This is a one-year (full-time) taught course which is comprised of the following nine parts. Full-time students will take all nine parts in a single year.

Part 1: Foundations and Frontiers of Social Data Science
> This class is taught over two terms (Foundations of Social Data Science in Michaelmas Term and Frontiers of Social Data Science in Hilary Term), both of which will be assessed.
>
> Foundations of Social Data Science will be examined through assessed written work consisting of one 5,000 word essay (excluding the bibliography, but including footnotes and tables, following the same guidelines as provided for thesis word counts in the Social Data Science MSc Handbook) and will form 50% of the overall mark. The written materials are due to be submitted electronically via WebLearn by 12.00 noon on Friday of 0th week of Hilary Term.
>
> Frontiers of Social Data Science will be examined through assessed written work consisting of one 5,000 word essay (excluding the bibliography, but including footnotes and tables, following the same guidelines as provided for thesis word counts in the Social Data Science MSc Handbook) and will form 50% of the overall mark. The written materials are due to be submitted electronically via WebLearn by 12.00 noon on Friday of 0th week of Trinity Term.

Part 2: Applied Analytical Statistics
> Examined through assessed written work consisting of one essay not to exceed 5,000 words in length (excluding the bibliography, but including footnotes and tables, following the same guidelines as provided for thesis word counts in the Social Data Science MSc

Handbook). The essay is due to be submitted electronically via WebLearn by 12.00 noon on Friday of 0th week of Hilary Term.

Part 3: Research Design for Social Data Science
Examined through assessed written work consisting of one 5,000 word essay (excluding the bibliography, but including footnotes and tables, following the same guidelines as provided for thesis word counts in the Social Data Science MSc Handbook). The essay is due to be submitted electronically via WebLearn by 12.00 noon on Friday of 0th week of Trinity Term.

Part 4: Fundamentals of Social Data Science in Python
Examined through assessed written work consisting of a project and a written research report not exceeding 3,500 words in length (excluding the bibliography and source code) words in length (excluding the bibliography, but including footnotes and tables, following the same guidelines as provide for thesis word counts in Social Data Science MSc Handbook). Accompanying the essay should be the code (but not any data) required to run all findings in the essay as an executable and commented Python file. The materials are due to be submitted electronically via WebLearn by 12.00 noon on Friday of 9th week of Michaelmas Term.

Part 5: Data Analytics at Scale
Examined through assessed written work consisting of a project and a written research report not exceeding 3,500 words (excluding the bibliography and any appendices, but including footnotes and tables, following the same guidelines as provided for thesis word counts in the Social Data Science MSc Handbook). The materials are due to be submitted electronically via WebLearn by 12.00 noon on Friday of 0th week of Hilary Term.

Part 6: Machine Learning
Examined through assessed written work consisting of a problem set and a written research report not exceeding 3,500 words (excluding the bibliography and any appendices, but including footnotes and tables, following the same guidelines as provided for thesis word counts in the Social Data Science MSc Handbook). The materials are due to be submitted electronically via WebLearn by 12.00 noon on Friday of 0th week of Hilary Term.

Parts 7-8: Two Option Papers
The options component of the degree (two 8-week options chosen from a list available in the Social Data Science MSc Handbook and on the OII website from the start of the academic year), or another paper agreed by the Director of Graduate Studies, will be assessed by coursework or written examination.
Assessment details for each class are provided in the reading lists available on the OII website and in the Canvas learning environment not later than the end of week one of Michaelmas Term. In the case of written work, this will normally be by one essay or by a project and written report not exceeding 5,000 words (excluding the bibliography, but including footnotes and tables, following the same guidelines as provided for thesis word counts in the Social Data Science MSc Handbook) submitted via WebLearn by noon on Friday of 0th week in Trinity term. Unseen written examinations, usually three hours in

length, will be held as indicated in the assessment details for each class and as scheduled by the Examination Schools.

Part 9: Thesis

A thesis, not to exceed 15,000 words (excluding the bibliography, but including footnotes and tables, see the Social Data Science MSc Handbook for detailed guidance) must be submitted electronically via WebLearn by noon of the weekday on or nearest to the 1st of August of the year in which the degree is to be taken. The topic of the thesis will be chosen by the student, subject to approval by the student's supervisor, the director of the course and the Board of Examiners. The deadline for submitting the title and topic is by noon on Monday of Week 1 in Trinity Term. Any changes to the title or topic after this date require approval by the Chair of Examiners. All requests for changes must be submitted at least 3 weeks prior to the final submission deadline for the thesis, and requests after this will not normally be approved. Students who have been given approval by the Proctors for a different submission date have until 3 weeks prior to their approved submission date to request changes to their title and topic.

All students will be required to sign a statement asserting that any coursework submitted for summative assessment is their own.

3. MARKING CONVENTIONS

Marking conventions are in accordance with the guidelines published in the Social Data Science MSc Handbook, which can be found on Canvas.

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

The marking scales below are used for all elements of the Masters Programme and are laid down by the Graduate Studies Committee of the Oxford Internet Institute. All marks from 0 to 100 can be given, with lower thresholds of 50 for a pass, 65 for a merit and 70 for a distinction – see 'Marking Scale' table below. This scale applies to the examination of scripts, theses and other formally assessed material. In the assessment of an essay and the writing of feedback to students, the examiners look for evidence of work that is responsive to the following criteria:

Argumentation and understanding	Analysis	Organisation and presentation
Understanding of key concepts	Use of sources and evidence to make or assess claims	Clear and logical structure of the work

Coherent and logically consistent argument	Critical appraisal of sources and evidence	Clearly written in good English
Research and reading of appropriate sources	Application of argument	Proper use of citations and bibliographic referencing
	Application of research methods	

Assignments will be assessed against the above criteria, with reference to the following marking scale:

	Mark Band	Marking criteria
Distinction	80–100	This is for **outstanding work** that will feature **all or almost all** of the following characteristics: original argument, creative selection of sources, expert application of method, highly critical appraisal and analysis, excellent integration of theory and evidence, excellent expression, consistent citation that follows bibliographic norms. In addition, work at this level: • Directly answers the question set, demonstrating mastery of relevant material and literature. • Demonstrates complete understanding of all the relevant standard and advanced concepts, frameworks and techniques at the highest level of ability. • If required by the questions set, demonstrates the highest level of expertise in the application of the methods and calculations associated with the above concepts, frameworks and techniques. • Explores the efficacy of the frameworks employed and raises original and outstanding issues, or issues that are unresolved and why they should be investigated further.
	75–79	This is for **superb work** that will feature **most** of the following characteristics: original argument, creative selection of sources, expert application of method, highly critical appraisal and analysis, excellent integration of theory and evidence, excellent expression, consistent citation that follows bibliographic norms. In addition, work at this level: • Directly answers the question set, drawing on a very wide range of relevant material and literature. • Demonstrates excellence in understanding of all the relevant standard and advanced concepts, frameworks and techniques. • If required by the questions set, demonstrates excellence in the application of the methods and calculations associated with the above concepts, frameworks and techniques. • Uses frameworks to assess the questions set in a very effective manner and shows thorough knowledge of their shortcomings.

	70–74	This is for **excellent work** that will feature **many** of the following characteristics: original argument, creative selection of sources, expert application of method, highly critical appraisal and analysis, excellent integration of theory and evidence, excellent expression, consistent citation that follows bibliographic norms. In addition, work at this level: • Directly answers the question set, drawing on a wide range of relevant material and literature. • Demonstrates excellence in understanding of all the relevant standard and advanced concepts, frameworks and techniques. • If required by the questions set, also demonstrates excellence in the application of the methods and calculations associated with the above concepts, frameworks and techniques. • Uses frameworks to assess the questions set in a very effective manner and shows good knowledge of their shortcomings.
Merit	65–69	This is for work of **fine quality with a well-defined focus**. Such work will include some elements of distinction and feature **all or almost all** of the following characteristics: thoughtful argument, well-researched selection of sources, good critical appraisal, well integrated theory and evidence, good/clear expression, accurate citation and bibliography. In addition, work at this level: • Addresses the question set, drawing on a good range of relevant material and literature. • Demonstrates a very good understanding of a wide range of the relevant standard and advanced concepts, frameworks and techniques • If required by the questions set, demonstrates very good abilities in the application of the methods and calculations associated with the above concepts, frameworks and techniques. • Uses frameworks to assess the questions set in an effective manner and shows some knowledge of their shortcomings.
Pass	60–64	This is for work of **good quality with a mostly well-defined focus**. Such work will feature **many** of the following characteristics: thoughtful argument, well-researched selection of sources, good critical appraisal, well integrated theory and evidence, good/clear expression, accurate citation and bibliography. In addition, work at this level: • Addresses the question set, drawing on a range of relevant material and literature. • Demonstrates a good understanding of the relevant standard and some advanced concepts, frameworks and techniques

		• If required by the questions set, demonstrates good abilities in the application of the methods and calculations associated with the above concepts, frameworks and techniques. • Uses frameworks to assess the questions set in an effective manner but may show limited knowledge of their shortcomings.
	50–59	This is for work that **reaches the overall standard** required of a Master's student and will feature many if not all of the following characteristics: standard argument and range of sources used, a solid but not thorough synthesis of ideas, minor errors or inaccuracies in analysis, adequate presentation, flaws or gaps in citation, and failure to follow bibliographic norms. In addition, work at this level: • Addresses the question set, drawing on a limited range of relevant material and literature. • Demonstrates adequate understanding of the relevant standard concepts, frameworks and techniques. • If required by the questions set, demonstrates adequate abilities in the application of the methods and calculations associated with the above concepts, frameworks and techniques. • Uses frameworks to assess the questions set in a somewhat effective manner but may show little knowledge of their shortcomings.
Fail	40–49	This is for work that **does not reach the overall standard** required of a Master's student. It will feature many if not all of the following characteristics: weak argument, narrow range of sources used, descriptive account, poor presentation, significant errors in analysis, inaccurate citation and gaps in bibliography. In addition, work at this level: • May attempt to answer the question set, but fail to draw on key material and literature. • May show inadequate understanding of the relevant standard concepts, frameworks and techniques. • If required by the questions set, may demonstrate inadequate abilities in the application of the methods and calculations associated with the above concepts, frameworks and techniques. • May be lacking in coherence and short on analysis but shows some relevant – if limited – knowledge of the topic under discussion.
	0–39	This is for work that shows a basic **lack of knowledge and ability**. Such work will feature many of the following characteristics: failure to address the question set, very weak argument, little use of even standard sources, descriptive, with large gaps, very poor presentation with flawed expression and extensive flaws in citation and bibliography.

		In addition, work at this level: • May fail to answer the question set. • May fail to demonstrate any understanding of the relevant standard concepts, frameworks and techniques. • If required by the questions set, may fail to demonstrate any abilities in the application of the methods and calculations associated with the above concepts, frameworks and techniques. • May be lacking in coherence and short on analysis with little or no demonstrated knowledge of the topic under discussion.

3.3 Verification and reconciliation of marks

Each MSc examination script, summative essay, problem set, or thesis (henceforth assessment) will be marked independently by two examiners or assessors; normally one marker will be a course convener.

After independently marking each assessment, the two markers will meet to reconcile their marks. If the discrepancies are 5 marks or less and do not straddle a key boundary: ±50 (fail), ±65 (merit), or ±70 (distinction), the final mark will automatically be the average of the two marks (rounding up). If the marks straddle a key boundary or if the difference between individual marks is greater than 5 marks, then the two markers will discuss the discrepancy. If, after discussion, the original assessors are unable to reach consensus on the appropriate mark, the script will be sent to a third marker who usually will be an external examiner. In the case of a fail mark or a dispute in the mark, normally the external examiner will be sent the work to mark. All marks will be reported to the Chair of Examiners.

For assessments made up of a number of elements, the overall marks awarded are determined by the method indicated in section 2 above. In those cases where each element is equally weighted, the markers will agree each individual element first, and those agreed marks will be averaged for an overall mark. Averaging to the nearest whole number is done with Excel, using standard rounding rules.

Where marks by the first two assessors straddle a class border or the first two assessors cannot agree a mark, the script will be read by a third marker in a participating department with appropriate expertise or the external examiner in exceptional circumstances.

Assessors' marks are advisory to the Board of Examiners and will be provisional until the final Board meeting in September.

3.4 Scaling

The Examiners may choose to scale marks where in their academic judgement:
 a) a paper was more difficult or easy than in previous years, and/or
 b) an optional paper was more or less difficult than other optional papers taken by students in a particular year, and/or

c) a paper has generated a spread of marks which are not a fair reflection of student performance on the University's standard scale for the expression of agreed final marks, i.e. the marks do not reflect the qualitative marks descriptors.

Such scaling is used to ensure that candidates' marks are not advantaged or disadvantaged by any of these situations. In each case, examiners will establish if they have sufficient evidence for scaling. Scaling will only be considered and undertaken after moderation of a paper has been completed and a complete run of marks for all papers is available.

If it is decided that it is appropriate to use scaling, the examiners will review a sample of papers either side of the classification borderlines to ensure that the outcome of scaling is consistent with academic views of what constitutes an appropriate performance within in each class.

Detailed information about why scaling was necessary and how it was applied will be included in the Examiners' report and the algorithms used will be published for the information of all examiners and students.

3.5 Short-weight convention and departure from rubric

The maximum deduction that can be made for short weight should be equivalent to the proportion of the answer that is missing.

Where a candidate has failed to answer a compulsory question or failed to answer the required number of questions in different sections, the complete script will be marked and the issue flagged. Details for individual papers are given above in section 2. The Board of Examiners will consider all such cases on a per paper basis so that consistent penalties are applied.

3.6 Penalties for late or non-submission

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.)

Late submission	Penalty
Up to one day *(submitted on the day but after the deadline)*	-5 marks (- 5 percentage points)
Each additional day *(i.e., two days late = -6 marks, three days late = -7 marks, etc.; note that a new day starts at midnight and*	-1 mark (- 1 percentage point)

each weekend day counts as a full day for the purposes of mark deductions)	
Max. deducted marks up to 14 days late	-18 marks (- 18 percentage points)
More than 14 days late from the notice of non-submission	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 normally be capped at 50.

3.7 Penalties for over-length work

Where a candidate submits a thesis (or other piece of written coursework) which exceeds the word limit prescribed by the relevant regulation, the assessors may suggest to the Board of Examiners to reduce the mark by up to 8 marks or include a tariff to be deducted according to the percentage exceeding of word count. The final decision on penalties to be applied rests with the Board of Examiners.

3.8 Penalties for poor academic practice

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 should mark work on its academic merit with the Board responsible for deducting marks for derivative or poor referencing.

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' (e.g., 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. Also, where the deduction of marks results in failure of the assessment and of the programme the case must be referred to the Proctors.

In addition, any more serious cases of poor academic practice than described above should also always be referred to the Proctors.

3.9 Penalties for non-attendance

Failure to attend an examination will result in the failure of the assessment. The mark for any resit of the assessment will normally be capped at 50.

4. PROGRESSION RULES AND CLASSIFICATION CONVENTIONS

4.1 Qualitative descriptors of Distinction, Merit, Pass, Fail

Classifications for the degree as a whole are awarded according to the same principles outlined in 3.2 above. In particular, a distinction will be awarded to students who consistently perform at the distinction level in individual parts of the degree, and who do not fail any assessment element.

A merit classification will be awarded to students who consistently perform at or above merit level in individual parts of the degree, who do not fail any assessment element, but who fall short of the expectations for a distinction.

A pass classification will be awarded to students who consistently perform at or above pass level in individual parts of the degree, but who fall short of the expectations for merit or fail one or more assessment elements.

Students who fail to achieve the standard for a passing grade on any one assessment element twice or more will be deemed to have failed the degree.

4.2 Final outcome rules

For a candidate to pass the degree of MSc the candidate must pass all nine parts of the course.

Part 1 has a weighting of 15%, each of parts 2, 3, 4, 7, and 8 has a weighting of 10%, each of parts 5 and 6 has a weighting of 7.5%, and part 9 (thesis) has a weighting of 20%.

Except in the event of a candidate failing one or more assessment elements (see 5 below), students who have an average of 70 or higher across the nine parts, calculated with the weightings set out above, will automatically be awarded a distinction.

Except in the event of a candidate failing one or more assessment elements, students who have an average of 65 or higher across the nine parts, calculated with the weightings set out above, and who do not meet the criteria for a distinction will automatically be awarded a merit.

Candidates who have fail any element of the examination on first attempt will not normally be eligible for the award of a distinction or merit.

The Board of Examiners will review all marks and may award a distinction (or merit) to a candidate who does not automatically qualify for that classification if the overall performance of the candidate is determined to justify a distinction (or merit); this will normally only be considered in cases where the overall mark is borderline to a distinction (or merit) and the thesis has gained a distinction (or

merit). The external examiner will normally see all work to be awarded either a distinction or fail mark. The external examiner will also normally see a selection of work from the middle range

4.3 Use of vivas

Students whose work is considered to be on the borderline between particular classifications may be called to a viva-voce by the Board of Examiners if it is felt that they may present further evidence that would enable them to be upgraded.

5. RESITS

A candidate who fails one or more summative assessment will be permitted one further attempt to resit the failed assessment. Examinations may normally only be resat, and summative essays resubmitted on the next occasion on which the examination is offered. This will usually be in the following academic year at the usual examination times and submission deadlines. The thesis may also normally only be resubmitted in August of the following academic year at the usual thesis submission deadline. The only exceptions to work being submitted on the next occasion on which the examination is offered will be when special permission has been granted by the University Proctors and the department Board of Examiners.

Where a part consists of more than one assessment, for example written work and a timed examination, if the candidate passes the written work but fails the timed examination, they are only required to resit the failed assessment (in this example the timed examination) not all the assessments for the part.

Candidates who fail any summative assessment or thesis of the degree on the basis of poor academic performance at the first attempt cannot normally be awarded more than a merit (i.e., cannot be awarded a distinction) and the maximum mark will normally be 69 at the second attempt. Where a part consists of more than one assessment, the mark for the assessment will be capped at 69, but the mark for the whole part will not be capped.

Candidates who fail any summative assessment or thesis due to a technical fail (non-attendance or non-submission), marks at the second attempt will be capped at 50. Where a part consists of more than one assessment, the mark for the assessment will be capped at 50, and the mark for the whole part will be capped at 50.

Candidates will be allowed only one opportunity to retake failed degree assessments and must do so within six terms of initial registration. Candidates who have failed any assessment cannot normally be awarded a merit or distinction classification overall.

Please see the Social Data Science MSc Handbook for further information on resubmission and resits.

6. MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES NOTICES TO EXAMINERS

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 *Policy and Guidance for examiners, Annex C* and information for students is provided at www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/guidance.

Subject to the provisions of the Proctors' rules concerning arrangements relating to illness, disability, etc., a candidate who fails to appear at the time and place appointed for any part of his or her examination shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the examination.

7. DETAILS OF EXAMINERS AND RULES ON COMMUNICATING WITH EXAMINERS

The External Examiner for the MSc Social Data Science for the 2019-20 academic year is Dr Tobias Preis (University of Warwick). The internal examiners are Dr Joss Wright (Chair), Dr Jonathan Bright, and Dr Balázs Vedres.

Candidates should not under any circumstances seek to make contact with individual internal or external examiners.

Appendix G: Examining Timetable

Please note that these conventions may be revised prior to Examination and students will be notified by e-mail of any changes.

Michaelmas Term 2019

Week 0   Assessment Scrutiny Committee confirm assessment questions for Michaelmas term papers

Week 1   Details of and arrangements for submission of the written course work shall be notified to candidates via WebLearn for Foundations of Social Data Science, Applied Analytical Statistics, Fundamentals of Social Data Science in Python, Data Analytics at Scale and Machine Learning

Week 8   Monday 2nd December 2019: Deadline for course convenors to provide the MSc Co-ordinator with their assessment question for their Hilary term papers

Week 9   Friday 13th December 2019: Deadline for submission of Fundamentals of Social Data Science in Python

Week 9   Assessment Scrutiny Committee confirm assessment questions for Hilary term papers

Hilary Term 2020

Week 0   Friday 17th January 2020: Deadline for submission of Foundations of Social Data Science, Applied Analytical Statistics, Data Analytics at Scale and Machine Learning

Week 1   Details of and arrangements of submission of the written course work shall be notified to candidates via WebLearn for Frontiers of Social Data Science, Research Design for Social Data Science and other SDS optional courses

Week 3   Monday 10th February 2020 by 12:00pm: Deadline for assessors to confirm marks for Foundations of Social Data Science, Applied Analytical Statistics, Python for Social Data Science, Data Analytics at Scale and Machine Learning

Week 6   **Exam Board meeting**:   Confirm marks for Foundations of Social Data Science, Applied Analytical Statistics, Fundamentals of Social Data Science in Python, Data Analytics at Scale and Machine Learning

Week 6   Marks released for Foundations of Social Data Science, Applied Analytical Statistics, Fundamentals of Social Data Science in Python, Data Analytics at Scale and Machine Learning

Week 8   Friday 13th March 2020 at 12:00pm: Deadline for submission of CUREC forms. To be uploaded via WebLearn

Trinity Term 2020

Week 1   Friday 24th April 2020 by 12.00pm: Deadline for submission of Research Design for Social Data Science and Frontiers of Social Data Science, and other option papers

Week 1   Friday 1st May 2020 at 12:00pm Deadline for Thesis Abstract form to be submitted

Week 4   Tuesday 26th May 2020 by 12:00pm: Deadline for assessors to confirm marks for Frontiers of Social Data Science, Research Design for Social Data Science, and option papers where available

Week 7   **Exam Board meeting**. Confirm Frontiers of Social Data Science, Research Design for Social Data Science, and option paper marks where available,

Week 9   Marks released for Frontiers of Social Data Science, Research Design for Social Data Science, and all option papers where available

Summer 2020

August   Monday 3rd August 2020 by 12:00pm: Deadline for submission of thesis. To be uploaded via WebLearn

September   Friday 4th September 2020: Deadline for assessors to confirm thesis marks

September   Students will be notified by Wednesday 9th September 2020 if they are to be called for a viva voce examination

September   TBC Wednesday 16th September 2020 at 12:00pm: **Exam Board meeting**. Confirm thesis marks and MSc degree final results

                     Marks released for thesis and MSc final outcome results by the end of September

Please note, option submission deadlines and mark release dates will vary depending on which ones you take.