Graduate Studies Handbook

2022-23

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

Version 1, 26 August 2022

Issued by the Graduate Studies Committee

Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford
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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 Science of the Internet* programme in 2022-23. 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 https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/. 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 2022; however, it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses. 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: https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/study/
- College Handbooks: Please refer to individual College websites at https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/colleges/college-listing
- Internal Course Information and Formative Assignment Submission Site (Canvas): https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/
- Summative Assignment Submission Site (Inspera): https://oxford.inspera.com/
- 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/ https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk
- Policy and Guidance on Postgraduate Taught Courses: https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/policies/pgt
- 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 Director for the MSc Social Science of the Internet is Professor Ralph Schroeder and has immediate responsibility for students on this course. The MSc Co-ordinator (David Pepper) 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 (or unless) 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, Professor Greg Taylor. He can be contacted at greg.taylor@oii.ox.ac.uk.

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 Christine Bunyan who is the Graduate Studies Manager and Disability Lead at the OII. She can be contacted at christine.bunyan@oii.ox.ac.uk or on 01865 287020.

1.1.4   Laptop specification for students

All software taught on courses is available on the departmental servers.

Students should 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, 8 GB of memory (16 GB recommended), a display resolution of 1280 x 768 or higher, and a disk with a minimum of 50GB of free space.

While this specification refers to a work laptop that might be carried into the department, we also recommend students consider sourcing a second screen for use when videoconferencing from home.

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 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*;
- information about Oxford Libraries;
- 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: https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/people/
- A regularly updated events section, with information on OII activities: https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/events/

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.

The *University Gazette,* 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 to contribute to the education of current and future researchers, policy makers, 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, analysis and policy formulation. 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 Internet research as well as a general understanding of the technological and social shaping of the Internet.
- 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 the Internet and its 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 Science of the Internet are that, on completion of the course, students will have:

- Acquired skills in both quantitative and qualitative research methods including leading-edge methods of particular relevance to online activity.
- Learnt how to apply approaches from one or more of the social sciences to consideration of the Internet and related technologies and their societal implications.
- Gained empirical and theoretical knowledge and understanding of the major topics and concepts in Internet research as well as a general understanding of the technological and social shaping of the Internet.
- Gained wide-ranging critical knowledge and understanding of the scholarly literature, key topics and concepts in areas relating to the student's particular research interests.
- Learnt to think strategically about the Internet and its evolving technologies and their implications for policy and practice.
- Participated in, and learnt from, the range of intellectual activities ongoing in the OII and the wider University.
- Achieved a high standard of written work through the preparation and presentation of essays and assessed coursework.

In summary, the course equips students with both methodological and theoretical tools, and introduces them to the empirical evidence necessary for an in-depth understanding of the role of the Internet in society, including the changing nature of governance and the theoretical, practical and ethical questions surrounding internet use.

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 MSc in Social Science of the Internet page of the OII Website and on the University of Oxford online reading list platform ORLO, and students are expected to undertake whatever assignments are set by course providers in addition to work required for formal assessment.

Regular essay writing 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 appropriate for study of the Internet.
3. Ability to think strategically about the Internet and its implications for policy and practice.
4. General critical and analytical skills.
5. The ability to plan, conduct and write up a programme of original research.

Related teaching and learning strategies and methods

1-4 are taught mainly through class teaching and supervision; 5 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. Research methods teaching will also contribute to the development of 2 and 5.

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 16 weeks of compulsory 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 16 weeks of 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 or oral) as set by class teachers for the options taken.
3. Submit to the examiners the coursework essays 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 Examination Conventions and the 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) or two-year (part-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 8-week duration. These terms are called: Michaelmas Term (October to December); Hilary Term (January to March); Trinity Term (April to June). Please note, however, that the MSc in Social Science of the Internet has an **extended Hilary Term which lasts 9 weeks**.

Full-time students will normally be expected to be in residence at Oxford for each of the 8 weeks of Michaelmas and Trinity Terms and the 9 weeks of Hilary Term. 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). In addition full-time students are required to sit an in-person written examination in week 9 of their first term and thus must be resident in Oxford. For certain optional courses students are also required to sit written examinations in week 10 of Hilary Term.

Part-time students are not required to be resident in Oxford, but will need to plan to regularly attend scheduled lectures and seminars, and to attend examinations which fall outside the main weeks of term. The details of when examinations are held are noted in Appendix I: Examining Timetable.

You will need to submit your thesis via the Assignment Submission Inspera 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 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:

Part 1: Digital Social Research Methods: Methods Core
Part 2: Digital Social Research Methods: Statistics Core

The two core *Digital Social Research (DSR)* components of the degree will be examined through assessed written work consisting of one 2,500-word essay due by 12:00pm on Friday of 8th week of Michaelmas Term (in the case of the Methods Core) and through one 3-hour unseen written examination to be held in 9th week of Michaelmas Term (in the case of the Statistics Core).

Both components will allow students to explore the applicability of different methods and give them a chance to consider methods that they might apply in their thesis. Apart from the assessed examination and coursework, the courses will have a number of formative assessments, including laboratory and practical exercises, to ensure that students are competent with particular methodological techniques and able to use statistical and other software packages.

Parts 3-4: Compulsory Papers (i) Social Dynamics of the Internet and (ii) Internet Technologies and Regulation

Both these papers are examined by means of a three-hour online examination in 0th week of Hilary term, with students choosing three questions from a list of eight in each examination. These two courses provide foundational knowledge in this area of research, and the examination format will allow us to evaluate if this ground has been thoroughly covered and a critical understanding reached. Each course will require at least one formative piece of written coursework in preparation for the exam. This will help students understand what kind of analysis and writing is expected of them, and will benchmark their performance.

Parts 5-6: Methods Options

The two *DSR* methods option components of the degree, lasting eight weeks each, will be chosen from a group of option papers Each option paper will be examined through a combination of assessed written work and/or by unseen written examinations, depending on the course. Assessed written work will be due by 12:00pm on Friday in the week following the final teaching session for the module. Unseen written exams will be held at a time scheduled by the Examination Schools during the week following the final teaching session for the module.

Parts 7-8: Substantive Option Papers

The two option papers, lasting eight weeks each, will be chosen in a specialised subject area from the list of option courses offered by the OII (see section 2.3.4). All option papers will be assessed by coursework, typically one or two long essays and adding up to no more than a total of 5,000 words. All options will have some formative assessed coursework.

In exceptional circumstances an option paper from another Oxford Master's degree 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 Director.

Part 9: Thesis

A thesis not to exceed 15,000 words excluding the bibliography, but including footnotes and tables (see section 3.2.4 for detailed guidance) on a topic within the remit of the course, to be specified jointly by supervisor and student, and approved by the Board of Examiners. One digital copy of the thesis must be submitted via the Assignment Submission Inspera 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.

2.3.1 Weightings

In calculating the final degree mark, Part 1 has a weighting of 5%; Parts 2-8 each have a weighting of 10% and Part 9 (thesis) has a weighting of 25%.

Assessment	Weighting
Digital Social Research Methods: Methods Core	5
Digital Social Research Methods: Statistics Core	10
DSR: Methods Option Paper 1	10
DSR: Methods Option Paper 2	10
Social Dynamics of the Internet	10
Internet Technologies and Regulation	10
Option paper 1	10
Option paper 2	10
Thesis	25

2.3.2 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 F: 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 fully engage with 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) 2022	Hilary Term (HT) 2023	Trinity Term (TT) 2023
Social Dynamics of the Internet	DSR: Methods Option Paper 1 (Weeks 1-4 and 6-9)	Research in Real Worlds
Internet Technologies and Regulation	DSR: Methods Option Paper 2 (Weeks 1-4 and 6-9)	Thesis
Digital Social Research: Methods Core	Option Paper 1 (Weeks 1-4 and 6-9)	
Digital Social Research: Statistics Core	Option Paper 2 (Weeks 1-4 and 6-9)	

Part-time Programme[1]

Michaelmas Term (MT) 2022	Hilary Term (HT) 2023	Trinity Term (TT) 2023
Social Dynamics of the Internet	DSR: Methods Option Paper 1 (Weeks 1-4 and 6-9)	Research in Real Worlds (choose 4-8 sessions)
Digital Social Research: Methods Core	Option Paper 1 (Weeks 1-4 and 6-9)	
Michaelmas Term (MT) 2023	Hilary Term (HT) 2024	Trinity Term (TT) 2024
Internet Technologies and Regulation	DSR: Methods Option Paper 2 (Weeks 1-4 and 6-9)	Research in Real Worlds (choose 4-8 sessions)
Digital Social Research: Statistics Core	Option Paper 2 (Weeks 1-4 and 6-9)	Thesis
Thesis Proposal		

There are many other lectures and seminars in Oxford that are of interest to OII students. Please consult the lecture list and Oxford Talks page published by the University at the beginning of each term for details.

Students are responsible for their own academic progress and are expected to spend at least 40 hours (or 20 hours in the cases of part-time students) on coursework and studying each week during term. You will also need to do some study during vacations.

- During Michaelmas and Hilary Terms, MSc students are advised to allocate between 10 and 15 hours each week for each course and/or paper they undertake.
- 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 Research in the Real World Seminars (weeks 1-8).

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

Please see Appendix G for a draft course timetable for 2022-23. 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/.

2.3.3   Programme deadlines

These are the main assessment deadlines for the course. For full details on all assessments due including formative assessments please see **Appendix D: Assessment Timetable.** Part-time students should refer to the part-time programme schedule in section 2.3.1 for details on which assessments are normally taken in Year 1 and Year 2 of the course.

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[1] Requests to follow a different pattern of courses should be made to the MSc Programme Director in writing. We will attempt to accommodate all reasonable requests by part-time students who need to adjust this default approach to accommodate their learning needs and other commitments.

Term	Essay Submission Deadline / Date of Exam	Marks Available
Michaelmas Term		
Social Dynamics of the Internet	0th week, Hilary Term on a day and time to be determined by Exam Schools	End of March
Internet Technologies and Regulation	0th week, Hilary Term on a day and time to be determined by Exam Schools	End of March
Digital Social Research Methods: Methods Core	12:00pm on Friday, 8th week, Michaelmas Term	End of March
Digital Social Research Methods: Statistics Core	9th week, Michaelmas Term on a day and time to be determined by Exam Schools	End of March
Hilary Term		
Methods Options (2 courses)	12:00pm on Tuesday of Week -1 of Trinity Term (when assessed by written coursework); or during the week following the final teaching session for the module, as scheduled by the Examination Schools (when assessed by written examination)	End of June
Substantive Options (2 courses)	12:00pm on Monday, 1st week, Trinity Term	End of June
Trinity Term		
Thesis	1st August (or the closest working day when this falls on a weekend)	End of September

2.3.4   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.

Social Dynamics of the Internet

An overview of the major findings to date regarding the social implications of the Internet, drawing on material from several social science disciplines, including communication studies, sociology, and political science.

Internet Technologies and Regulations

Exploring the interplay between social and technological shaping of the Internet, and associated policy implications

Digital Social Research

Study of the Internet and related information and communication technologies (ICTs) provides new opportunities and challenges for social science research methods. Digital Social Research (DSR) introduces students to the knowledge and skills of value to the conduct and critical evaluation of empirical research on the social shaping of the Internet and its societal implications, as well as introducing the Internet and related digital technologies as tools for social research.

There are six components to the DSR element of the degree. The combined total of these six components accounts for 35% of the final mark for the degree. All students must take Digital Social Research: Methods Core and Digital Social Research: Statistics Core in Michaelmas term. At the beginning of the academic year, full-time students will select four 4-week methods option courses taught in Hilary term, each focusing on advanced methods topics. There are twelve methods option courses divided into two groups of six – Group A and Group B. Students will choose two methods options from each group. Part-time students will select two methods option courses per year, normally one from Group A and one from Group B.

The weighting of each DSR component within the degree is as follows:

Digital Social Research	Weighting	Scheduling
DSR: Methods Core	5% of the overall mark	Weeks 1-8, Michaelmas Term
DSR: Statistics Core	10% of the overall mark	Weeks 1-8, Michaelmas Term
DSR: Methods Option Course 1	10% of the overall mark	Weeks 1-4 and 6-9, Hilary Term
DSR: Methods Option Course 2	10% of the overall mark	Weeks 1-4 and 6-9 Hilary Term
Total	35% of the overall mark	

Through this methods sequence, students will learn:

• The significance of alternative methodological approaches that provide the context for theory construction, research design, and the selection of appropriate analytical techniques.
• To conduct and manage all stages of the research process from developing research questions and hypotheses to disseminating findings.
• How to devise appropriate research questions and research designs.
• Analytical and interpretive skills for a range of quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection.
• How to use online tools that support the research process (e.g., from statistical software to computer-assisted qualitative analyses).

Digital Social Research: Methods Core

This course provides students with the opportunity to engage with the methodological, ethical, and philosophical underpinnings of quantitative and qualitative social science research practices.

Digital Social Research: Statistics Core

This course introduces students to statistics for the social sciences, with an emphasis on application to research on the Internet and society.

2.3.5   Course details: optional papers

Students should agree with their supervisor which 2 option papers they would like to take. Students are then responsible for submitting their examination entry by Friday of Week 4 in Michaelmas Term. Further information about the examination entry process can be found here: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/entry https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/examination-entry

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, normally at least two, and at the discretion of the convenor.

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-science-of-the-internet/. 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 G: Term Schedules and on Canvas:

• Cultural Analytics
• Digital Era Government and Politics
• Digital Technologies and Economic Organization
• Digital Media in India and China
• Education, the Internet and Society
• Interpreting Social Networks
• Internet Economics
• Law and the Internet
• Subversive Technologies
• The Philosophy and Ethics of Information

2.3.6   Course details: methods options papers

Students need to agree with their supervisor which two Methods option papers they would like to take.Methods options are taught in weeks 1-4 and 6-9 of Hilary Term with the assessment due in week 9.

Students are then responsible for submitting their examination entry by Friday of Week 4 in Michaelmas Term. Teaching in some methods options may not be available every year. Courses must also have a minimum number of students signed up in order to run, normally at least two, and at the discretion of the convenor.

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 methods option courses at https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/study/msc-in-social-science-of-the-internet/. 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 F: Term Schedules**, and on Canvas.

- Advanced Statistics for Internet Research
- Computational Methods for the Social Sciences
- Digital Ethnography
- Digital Interviewing and Qualitative Data Analysis

2.3.7   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 pedagogical 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 normally fully commit to attending all of the classes for the course and fully engaging 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.

Please note that it may be necessary to limit the number of auditors per course to account for classroom capacity. There may be the option to virtually audit a course via Canvas, subject to convenor approval.

Students must complete an OII Audit Request Form with their supervisor, available at https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/, and give a reason for why they think the course would be beneficial to their research. Students should submit the form to the MSc Programmes Co-ordinator at msc@oii.ox.ac.uk by Friday of Week 8 of Michaelmas Term. Students will be notified by the end of Week 10 Michaelmas Term if they have successfully secured a place on the course as an auditor.

2.4   Option selection

Option selection is done by registering for assessments in the Student Self-Service portal. 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 usually around Week 4 in Michaelmas Term. For further information on examination entry please refer https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/examination-entryChanging option course choices

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 than 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 in-person examinations

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   Sitting your online examinations

Online exams are taken in Inspera. You must familiarise yourself with the system prior to taking an online exam. There are a wide range of resources to help you on the Oxford Students website (www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/online-exams).

Online exams require you to adhere to the University's Honour Code (www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/open-book/honour-code) and you should read this in advance of any online exams.

2.5.4   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: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/examination-entry.**Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

2.6   Submission of coursework

All written assignments, including the thesis, must be submitted electronically via the Assignment Submission Inspera site by the stated deadline. Ensure you are familiar with the online submission process in advance of any deadline. Full information is provided on the Oxford students website (www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/submission).

Students should go to the Assignment Submission site, 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 when submitting via Inspera 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 Inspera system (and not a fault of a 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 Inspera can run slowly at peak submission times and this is not considered a technical fault.

There are a number of University processes in place to help you if you find that illness or other personal circumstances are affecting your assessments or if you experience technical difficulties with an online exam or submission. Full information is available on the Oxford students website (www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/problems-completing-your-assessment).

Further instructions on using the Assignment Submission Inspera 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 Appendix H: Examination Conventions (also on Canvas) regarding resubmission deadlines. For further information please refer to the Examination Schools webpage at https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/examination-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 examined 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 E: Assessment Timetable for an overall list).

The research methods components of the degree ("Digital Social Research" or DSR) will be examined partly through assessed written work for the core methods course (DSR: Methods Core), partly by means specified in each of the taught modules offered in Hilary Term, and partly through one three-hour unseen written examination to be held in 9th week of Michaelmas Term for DSR: Statistics Core. In Hilary Term students must choose two methods modules from a list of available options, each of which is taught over a period of eight weeks. The assessment methods for these modules vary by module but may include written work or unseen examination.

The two compulsory core papers (*Social Dynamics of the Internet* and *Internet Technologies and Regulation*) will be examined by unseen written examinations to be held in 0th week of Hilary Term. Students will be informed of the date, time, and place of their examinations approximately six weeks beforehand.

The two options papers will each be examined by formally assessed coursework due at the beginning of 1st Week in Trinity term.

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 outlined in Section 2.3.1) 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 outlined in Section 2.3.1) 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.

Examinations may normally only be resat, and on the next occasion on which the examination is offered. This will usually be in the following academic year at the usual examination time. Summative essays may normally be resubmitted within the same academic year on the next occasion as determined by the Board of Examiners. Resubmission dates normally fall during Trinity Term or the Long Vacation. Please see the OII Examining Conventions (**Appendix H: 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. The internal examiners for 2022-23 are Professor Viktor Mayer-Schönberger (Chair), Professor Greg Taylor and Professor Rebecca Eynon. The external examiner for 2023-23 is Dr Ella McPherson

One Examiners' Meeting will be held in each term in order to agree and certify marks. Marks are released according to the following schedule:

Michaelmas Term core courses   End of March (Week 9 Hilary Term)

Hilary Term option courses   End of June (Week 10 Trinity Term)

Thesis and final classifications   End of September

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   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 5.4 for more details).

2.7.4   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 **Appendix C: Marking Scales** for more information on marking scales.

Examination conventions (see **Appendix H: 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.

2.7.5   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.

The course has been designed to meet the stringent 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   Problems completing your assessments

2.8.1   Extensions to coursework deadlines

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 should be applied for in advance wherever possible and should be accompanied by a medical note or other third-party evidence. The Proctors then decide if the reason is valid and inform the examiners. The department and individual course convenors or lecturers **cannot** grant extensions. For full details of how to apply for an extension please see the guidance on the Oxford Student portal: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/problems-completing-your-assessment

2.8.2   Excusal from written examinations

In the event of being unable to sit an exam due to 'illness or other urgent cause that is unforeseeable, unavoidable and/or insurmountable', students may submit an application for excusal from an examination up to 4 weeks before the exam and up to 14 days after the exam. This application should be made via the student's college. If a student is excused from an examination, they will be given the opportunity to sit the exam as a rescheduled first attempt on the next available date, usually during Trinity Term.

You cannot be excused from an exam if you have attended any part of the exam or if you have downloaded an open book exam paper. If you become unwell during an exam you should submit a mitigating circumstances notice to the examiners.

2.8.3   Declaring illness and other mitigating circumstances

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 had an adverse effect on their performance in certain assessments.

In this case, the student should submit a mitigating circumstances notice to the examiners (MCE) via Student Self-Service, for the consideration of the Board of Examiners. For technical instructions on submitting an MCE notice please refer to the Student self service manual, page 54. Alternatively, your College Office can submit an MCE on your behalf, but you will need to supply them with a student impact statement and any supporting evidence.

You should carefully read the guidance for students on the Consideration of mitigating circumstances by examiners. The most important part of your MCE is the statement you provide.

The examiners will consider the statement of mitigating circumstances and any supporting documentation very carefully during the Exam Board meeting. You will be able to view the outcome of your MCE via the results screen in Student Self Service when your year outcome has been released (in September of your final year).

2.8.4   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 timescale 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 7.5 for further information.

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 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.

3.1 Overall thesis guidance

Students are required to submit a thesis, which must not exceed 15,000 words, 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 Inspera site by the deadline of noon on August 1st (or the nearest working day when this falls at the weekend). Part-time students will write their thesis in the second year of the MSc.

Students will be expected to present their initial ideas for their thesis at an MSc Research Seminar in Trinity Term. Student presentations will be discussed and feedback provided. Workshops are attended by fellow students and the seminar convenor.

MSc students must submit an electronic copy of their thesis via the Assignment Submissions Inspera 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. The thesis should bear the student's candidate number (to ensure anonymity), word count and degree on the title page.

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 nor 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, potential 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 in Week 2 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 Programme Director.

In Week 1 of Hilary Term, students will be asked to submit a description of their proposed thesis topic.

Students are asked to confirm thesis methodology at the end of Hilary term via the ethnical approval application process (CUREC).

At the start of Trinity Term students will be asked to submit their thesis title and abstract.

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 application for ethical approval for the thesis, as well as any summative coursework that involves primary research. 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 Facilitation section of the OII Intranet and on Canvas. Students are encouraged to review all of the guidance documents prior to submitting their applications 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   Ethical approval application process

All MSc students must submit a CUREC form prior to commencing any research on their thesis. 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 (IREC) available on the the Research Facilitation section of the OII Intranet. 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 the following email addresses:

To: drec@oii.ox.ac.uk

Cc: msc@oii.ox.ac.uk and 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.

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

Once your application is submitted to the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC), it will be assessed, and any feedback for amendments will be emailed to you by the DREC team, with supervisors in copy. You should respond to feedback within one week, working carefully with your supervisor 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 you might not have considered, so please do not feel discouraged if your project requires amendments.

If you have any questions about the feedback you receive, please contact drec@oii.ox.ac.uk in the first instance.

3.1.4 Travel for research purposes

Many students will be required to travel in order to conduct their research. If your research will involve travel, you will need to submit the following documents as part of your ethics application:

- Travel insurance
- Travel and fieldwork risk assessment

N.B. Even if you plan to travel to your home country to undertake research, you will still be required to complete the Travel Insurance and travel and fieldwork risk assessment. This is due to the fact that by undertaking research, you will be conducting University business and not there just in a personal capacity.

Travel Insurance and a travel and fieldwork risk assessment are required for any research-related activity, including conference attendance. If you have any questions regarding this, please contact the DREC Team (drec@oii.ox.ac.uk).

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

3.1.5 Thesis proposal (part-time MSc only)

Part-time MSc students spend Trinity Term and the summer of their first year thinking about and planning for their thesis. Part of this process is a formative assignment to write a *thesis proposal*, to be submitted in their second year by **noon on Monday of Week 4 in Michaelmas Term**. The thesis proposal is sent to your supervisor.

The proposal is intended to serve several purposes:

- It provides a structured way for students and their supervisors to begin formally planning the thesis project: what will the questions be, what is the relevant literature, what methodological approaches are you likely to use.
- It provides an opportunity to do important preparatory work for the thesis: conducting a thorough literature review and outlining a methodological structure at this stage will reduce the amount of work to be done in the second year and make the entire project more manageable. Students should note that the thesis proposal is not a summatively assessed piece of work and it is permitted to reuse material from their thesis proposal in the final thesis.
- Thirdly, the proposal will offer a chance to gather feedback and suggestions from faculty other than your supervisor, which should help with developing and implementing your plans in the second year.

A good starting point for a thesis proposal outline would include a brief outline of the basic problem, identification of a research question (and, where appropriate, hypotheses), a review of the relevant literature, and thoughts about what methods and data sources are likely to be used. A rough guide for the length of the proposal is 2000–3000 words.

3.1.6 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 title helps to focus the thesis by then answering that question, rather than just describing a phenomenon.

Students will need to complete the thesis title and abstract approval form at the start of Trinity term and should consult with their supervisor before they do so.

The Board of Examiners will then approve thesis titles for each student in the Trinity Term Exam Board meeting. 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.

3.1.7 Change of thesis title

Should the focus of a student's research change during their work on their thesis, it is important that they consider whether their 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 3rd July 2023 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 such as when is a supervisor is unavailable or there is major shift in emphasis of the thesis.

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 of the thesis, and stick to it.

Because the thesis is a major piece of work, part-time students are advised to think about ways to shift as much of the work (such as reading, question setting, and project planning) to the first year as possible. This will allow more time for the substantive execution of the research project during the second year.

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 regular intervals. Data loss due to hardware faults, software crashes, loss 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 use 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 are vital.

 You should not think that because you are writing an academic thesis you 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 you are not a native speaker of English, it is your responsibility to ensure that your 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/

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, preferably as follows: 30 June 1999.

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 use of single quotation marks is generally preferred, with double quotes only being used for a quote within a quote. 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 referred 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. 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 the top of this word limit should be used for theses that need to make use of much qualitative material, while students undertaking 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 student's 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 https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/innovation/intellectual-property.

3.3.2   Plagiarism

The official University guidance on plagiarism is available to view at http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism**Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**. 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-existing 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 Inspera 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

The thesis must:

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

3.4.1   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 Science of the Internet 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. This word count must include footnotes and figure-counts but exclude the bibliography (see **Section 3.2.4** above for details).

3.4.2   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.

3.4.3   Word processing

The thesis should be:

- word processed;
- with a margin of 3.0 to 3.5 cms on the left-hand side of pages;
- the main text should be in 1.5 or 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, such as the bibliography.

3.4.4   Submitting

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

3.4.5   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 September in the event of being called back for viva voce.

3.4.6   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., one 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 https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/examination-entry.

3.5   Notification of results of MSc

The *MSc in Social Science of the Internet* 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. Each year a hard bound copy of the winning thesis will be added to the OII Library, where their work will be preserved and made available for future generations of scholars

3.7   Digital copies of MSc theses

Students who are awarded a Distinction mark for their thesis may be invited to submit a digital copy for the OII Digital Thesis Library on Canvas, where it will be accessible to future MSc cohorts. In such cases, the MSc Programmes Co-ordinator will contact those students directly following the release of thesis and final classification results in September.

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 their 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 they do 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 5.4 on complaints and appeals.

4.1.1   Appointment of supervisor(s)

All MSc students are assigned a general supervisor at the beginning of Michaelmas Term in their first year at the OII

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

If an assigned supervisor becomes unavailable, the MSc Programme Director will assign a new supervisor taking into account any expressed preferences from the student and potential supervisor(s).

4.1.2   Change of supervisor

Incompatibility

The Department and all University supervisors 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 Programme 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) and the relevant Council 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. Students should submit their request to the MSc Programmes Coordinator by email, CCing their potential second supervisor. The request will be reviewed by the OII Graduate Studies Committee. Normally all such requests will need to be made by Week 4 Trinity Term 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 OII faculty. The OII 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.

During your studies you will be supported in your first term by a general supervisor, and from Hilary term onwards by your thesis supervisor

General supervisor

The general supervisor will be the main source of information and advice throughout the first term of study. Their responsibilities include:

- Assist in choice of option papers, and ensure that students are aware of deadlines and procedures for registration for courses, examinations etc.
- Help students consider which other faculty to consider for thesis supervision
- Meet with the student 1 or 2 times in Michaelmas
- Write the termly reports on the student's progress in Michaelmas term

Thesis supervisor

Students will normally meet with their thesis supervisor between 8 to 10 times during Hilary and Trinity term. The majority of these meetings may happen Trinity Term and the summer vacation, once the student has obtained ethical approval and can commence primary research.

The responsibilities of thesis supervisors include:

- Help in the development of the thesis topic.
- Holding regular meetings with the student to discuss progress of thesis.
- Advise on data collection, methods and the research ethics approval application process (CUREC)
- Write the termly reports on the student's progress in Hilary and Trinity terms
- 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 the 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 email address and information on your availability.

Once your supervisor has been assigned it is your responsibility to make first contact, typically via email. Thereafter, 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 2018, 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 E: 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 this Handbook) promptly and conscientiously;
- doing everything to ensure a high standard of written and spoken work.

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.

The OII holds regular 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 will provide students with the basic methods required to undertake, analyze or apply Internet research, whilst the two core papers will provide students with the theoretical, conceptual and technical understanding needed for sophisticated analysis of Internet-related issues, whether this be for the purposes of academic or practical research, or policy-making. More specialised development of particular research methods will be supported by the 4-week methods option courses in Hilary Term and through the process of thesis preparation, in which students will be closely supported by their personal supervisors. Students will also be given the opportunity to take two option papers, which will give them specialist knowledge of particular areas of internet research, such as economics, law, or social network analysis.

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.

Students will receive formal written feedback on all their summative essay assessments submitted over the year via email. following the ratification of marks and feedback by the Board of Examiners. Please consult Appendix I: Examining Timetable for further information on exact timings.

All students will also receive formal written feedback on their thesis, submitted in the final term of the course via email by the end of September in the year of submission.

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: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/student-engagement Since 2019-2020, the University also began participating in the national Postgraduate Taught/Research Experience Survey (PTES and PRES) surveys, with a view that they will become the primary method of gaining feedback from postgraduate students.

The OII asks all MSc students to complete termly feedback surveys which are released once all summative assessments for that term have been completed (early Hilary Term for the Michaelmas feedback survey and early Trinity for the Hilary feedback survey). This survey is about the academic aspects of their course. This is analysed and discussed at the Graduate Studies Committee in October. In addition, students are asked to complete an End of Year survey at the end of Trinity Term, providing feedback on more general aspects of the student and learning experience throughout the year.

Student feedback is analysed and discussed at the Graduate Studies Committee in October.

5.2.3 Student representation

Course representatives 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 on expectations of a course representative https://www.oxfordsu.org/representation/academic-representation/represources

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 elect two representatives from each of the full-time and part-time MSc cohorts to sit on this committee. 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 usually 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. 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 Student Union (Oxford SU). Details can be found on the Oxford SU website 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 MSc Programme Director, or the Director of Graduate Studies, 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 can advise on administrative matters such as the obtaining of necessary forms, submission of applications, dates and deadlines, 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

For wellbeing support:

- The University Counselling Service (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. For more information see http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling or email counselling@admin.ox.ac.uk. They offer a free and confidential service and offer online consultations while working remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Every college has a welfare team, which provides support to students including signposting you to specialist services when necessary. You will be introduced to your college welfare team as part of your induction when you start your course.
- In the UK, primary healthcare (including mental health) is accessed via your doctor (also known as a General Practitioner or GP), who can refer you to specialist services where necessary. Your college will have a recommended National Health Service (NHS) doctor and many also have a nurse on site. Should you have a long-term health condition, it is possible for your college doctor to liaise with other health practitioners who know you and your medical history well. "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.

For community and peer support:

- The OII runs an internal peer support network for MSc students called Welfare Pods, which all students are invited to participate in during Induction Week. Further information is available on Canvas.
- A range of services led by students are available to help provide support to other students, including the peer supporter network, the Oxford SU's Student Advice Service and the Student Resolution Service. For more information visit: www.ox.ac.uk/students/shw/peer
- Oxford SU also runs a series of campaigns to raise awareness and promote causes that matter to students. For full details, visit: www.oxfordsu.org/communities/campaigns/
- 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

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. 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 liaise with the OII to provide you the support you need. For more information visit: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability

The OII supports the University's *Common Framework for Supporting Disabled Students*. Chrissy Bunyan 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.

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:

Grant Blank	grant.blank@oii.ox.ac.uk
Kathryn Eccles	kathryn.eccles@oii.ox.ac.uk
Laura Maynard	laura.maynard@oii.ox.ac.uk
Sandra Wachter	sandra.wachter@oii.ox.ac.uk

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.

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.

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 please 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 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 (Christine Bunyan). If you feel unable to approach one of those individuals, you may contact the Head of Department (Prof Vicki Nash). 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, Programme Director, Director of Graduate 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://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/academic-appeals-0).

6. Applying for OII DPhil programmes

Students wishing to apply for the OII *DPhil in Information Communication and the Social Sciences* or *the DPhil in Social Data Science* programme 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 an OII faculty member);
- 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 readmission 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 the Graduate Admissions website 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, and pay the application fee.

Students who have successfully completed the *MSc in Social Science of the Internet* degree who then go straight onto the *DPhil in Information Communication and the Social Sciences* degree will normally be exempt from the DPhil core courses (Digital Social Research, Social Dynamics of the Internet) subject to the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies.

7. Regulations and Policies

The main University regulations governing Postgraduate Taught Courses can be found at
https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/policies/pgt.

7.1

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 https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/. 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 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.

Notes of Guidance issued by the Educational Policy and Standards Committee

https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/a-z-policies-guidance

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

- Notes of Guidance for Postgraduate Taught Degrees
- Learning and Teaching Strategy
- Notes of Guidance on Examinations and Assessment

Academic Integrity in Research

https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/integrity This sets out the University's Code of Practice together with procedures in the case of suspected misconduct, including plagiarism.

Proctors' Office

https://www.proctors.ox.ac.uk/

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 https://www.proctors.ox.ac.uk/resources-for-students

*Council Regulations 6 of 2003 (*about complaints procedures*)* https://governance.admin.ox.ac.uk/legislation/council-regulations-6-of-2003

Research Services

https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/

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

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: https://academic.web.ox.ac.uk/student-conduct-0. Sanctions include removal from the register of graduate students and fines.

7.3 Fee 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 2.1.29**).

7.4 Residence requirements

Full-time students are normally 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 at the OII attend an extended Hilary Term with teaching through 9th week. MSc students are also required to sit written examinations in 9th week of Michaelmas Term, and 0th week of Hilary Term and thus must also normally be resident in Oxford at these times. MSc students will need to submit their thesis by noon of the weekday on or nearest to the 1st of August (although this may be done remotely), but they 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.

7.5   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 *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 though there are good grounds for believing that they will be able to resume work within a reasonable period for example, 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.

7.6   Change of mode of study

MSc students may apply to change mode of study (full-time to part-time or vice versa) **during their first term**. Appropriate grounds for a change of mode of study would include employment or a significant change in personal circumstances. Changes to mode of study will affect tuition fees and completion dates, and the student is required to seek approval for the change from both their college and the department (the Programme Director and Director of Graduate Studies). Students may ordinarily only change mode of study once and any change should usually be completed during the first term of their first year.

Students considering changing mode of study should contact the MSc Programmes Co-ordinator in the first instance. The application itself is made online via Student Self Service.

7.7 OII Professional Code

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.

7.8 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*, please see the Disability Office website at https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability/study

This contains a wide range of rules and useful information for students and staff in respect of many different types of disability. It also contains the University statement on Access to Teaching and Learning for Students with Disabilities.

7.9 University policy on student maternity, paternity and adoption leave

To support students seeking to take parental leave, the University's Student Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, and Shared Parental Leave Policy provides details of the arrangements for students who are about to have or adopt a child. The policy outlines how much leave students are entitled to, access to University facilities, graduate accommodation and childcare services and the provision for a flexible return to full-time study. Please see here for full details of the policy: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/furtherstudentsupport#content-tab--3

7.10 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 (please see the University's guidance on work with Display Screen Equipment).
- Obey all instructions from the Health & Safety Officer (Karen Mead) or the Head of Administration and Finance in respect of health and safety.
- Inform the Health & Safety Officer 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 Health & Safety Officer.
- Familiarise yourself with the location of firefighting 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.

7.11 Fieldwork safety and training

Many students will, as part of their course, be required to undertake fieldwork. 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.

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 https://safety.admin.ox.ac.uk/overseas-travel **(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/research-fieldwork

7.12 Educational Recordings Policy

The University adopted a new Educational Recordings Policy from Michaelmas 2022. It aims to support the responsible creation and use of recordings as an inclusive practice by providing clarity on a range of issues gathered through consultation with divisions.

The decision as to whether lectures should normally be recorded and made available to all students should be made by the relevant Department or Faculty Board, after consultation with students. The OII Graduate Studies Committee will be considering this policy in Michaelmas 2022.

7.13 Data protection

The University of Oxford handles a large amount of personal data and works continuously to ensure its policies and processes are up-to-date. More information about the University's approach to data protection can be found in the Policy on Data Protection. Please see here for the OII's Privacy Policy: https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/privacy-policy/

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 Education Committee. 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 Victoria Nash
- Director of Graduate Studies: Professor Greg Taylor
- MSc Programme Director: Professor Ralph Schroeder
- Interim Head of Administration and Finance: Joanna Barlow
- Graduate Studies Manager: Christine Bunyan
- MSc Programmes Co-ordinator: David Pepper
- DPhil Programmes Co-ordinator: Marten Krijgsman

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 (Greg Taylor) who has broad overall responsibility for the OII's graduate programmes. 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 Brent Mittelstadt). 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. 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, Nuffield, St Anthony's, Linacre, Wolfson, and St Cross) take graduates only, while there are around thirty colleges that admit both graduates and undergraduates.

8.3   Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

"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. We recognise that the broad range of experiences that a diverse staff and student body brings strengthens our research and enhances our teaching, and that in order for Oxford to remain a world-leading institution we must continue to provide a diverse, inclusive, fair and open environment that allows everyone to grow and flourish."

University of Oxford **Equality Policy**

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. Please see the sections below for further information about EDI work at the University, divisional and departmental levels and how OII students can get involved.

The Equality and Diversity Unit

The Equality and Diversity Unit (EDU) 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. They have a team of advisors covering each area of equality and diversity, in relation to both staff and students. Their work is overseen by the Equality and Diversity Panel, which reports to the Education and Personnel Committees of Council. Please see https://edu.web.ox.ac.uk/about-us for contact details of the EDU team members. You can also reach the EDU team at equality@admin.ox.ac.uk.

The Unit 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 disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, age, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity and religion and/or belief. Please see https://edu.web.ox.ac.uk/equality-themes#/ for further information about the University's work around each of these thematic areas, together with information about resources to support individuals from different backgrounds.

As of October 2021, some of the University's current projects that relate to diversity and inclusivity include:

- The Race Equality Task Force
- Student Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy
- Digital Education Strategy Review

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: https://edu.web.ox.ac.uk/harassment-advice#/

The Oxford Students' Union

Oxford SU is the representative body for all University of Oxford students and is involved in various projects that relate to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: https://www.oxfordsu.org/your-union/what-were-working-on/. To find out more about how to get involved with the SU's work, please contact the Student engagement team at studentengagement@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk.

EDI at the Social Sciences Division

Ths Social Sciences Division is committed to increasing the diversity of the people, scholarship and teaching across the division, and ensuring that each member is, and feels, valued, listened to and respected, able to be themselves, and to participate fully in the life of the Division.

The 2021 EDI Action Plan outlines steps the Division is taking to advance these goals: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

Departments across the Division are taking steps to tackle racism, advance equality, and create a more inclusive and equitable culture. The Action plan outlines steps being taken by the Division to advance change, including work by the Division's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Panel. For questions or comments about the Division's work in this area, please contact diversity@socsci.ox.ac.uk.

EDI at the OII

The Oxford Internet Institute is committed to enhancing diversity and promoting equality of opportunity amongst all our staff and students. The OII seeks to maintain a positive and supportive working environment for its members and takes the well-being of all seriously.

The OII's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) committee is an internal group that considers and advises on how the department should support a working culture in which equality and diversity is embraced, and where appropriate focus is given to identifying, implementing and monitoring effective actions on diversity matters. Professor Katya Hertog chairs the group, with administrative support from Christine Bunyan, Graduate Studies Manager and Ornella Sciuto, HR Officer. The Committee's Terms of Reference are:

- To monitor and promote, and make policy proposals relating to, equality, diversity and inclusion in the OII;
- To advise the Director and other Senior Executive Team members on equality, diversity and inclusion as regards the matters for which they are responsible;
- To support the department in providing an inclusive environment in which the rights and dignity of all its staff and students are respected;
- To provide a forum for discussion of equality and diversity issues raised by staff and students in a transparent manner;
- To consider and share best practice from the department, University, and the wider higher education community;
- To fulfil the role of Self-Assessment Team for Athena SWAN;
- To monitor and progress the Department's Athena SWAN action plan and develop future submissions;
- To actively promote the Athena SWAN Charter within the department through activities and events to foster equality, diversity and inclusion;
- To promote effective equality impact assessment of new departmental policies;
- To promote and support a well-balanced working and study environment for all staff and students;
- To monitor career support and mentoring for staff in the department;
- To liaise with and consult the University Equality and Diversity Unit as required.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee meets no less than once per term, normally in Weeks 2 and 7. Meetings are open, meaning all students and staff members are welcome to attend. Meeting papers and minutes of previous meetings are made available at: https://sharepoint.nexus.ox.ac.uk/sites/oii/EDI-Committee/SitePages/Home.aspx

For any queries or comments about the work of the OII's EDI Committee, please email edi@oii.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 library@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 Old Bodleian 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.

Oxford students have access to discounted software, including free antivirus software and more. Please see the Oxford Student portal for further information about IT resources available to graduate students, including file sharing and server access: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/it/resources

For full information on the facilities and services available at Oxford, please see the IT Services website.

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 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.

Students will have access to study space within the department's buildings subject to maximum capacity, including any requirements for social distancing. For some rooms it may be necessary to book a slot in advance. Full instructions on room booking and study spaces will be given in Induction Week. Any queries about OII facilities, including library facilities and study space, can be sent to facilities@oii.ox.ac.uk.

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:

1. specialist software (e.g. statistics packages) if already licensed to the OII or the University and agreed by the Head of IT;
2. space for a personal blog;
3. use of a wiki;
4. calendaring via Outlook exchange;
5. external access to the OII server;
6. 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 department.

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.

Further information and resources are available on the University's IT Services website, as well as on the OII's IT Support site.

8.5.3   Canvas

Canvas is the University's Virtual Learning Environment and the single point of entry for all information relating to your programme of study, which can be accessed at https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/. Students can use their Single Sign-On to log in.

Each component of the degree (core and optional courses) have their own course page on Canvas, which is the hub for the course reading list, lecture slides and recordings, and communications from the course convenor and teaching assistants. Canvas is also used for submitting formative coursework, threaded discussion forums and other features such as polls. If you have any technical issues or queries on content such as reading lists please contact the MSc Programmes Co-ordinator (msc@oii.ox.ac.uk).

8.5.4   College facilities

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

8.6   Training facilities

The Centre for Teaching and Learning supports all those who teach at the University of Oxford. It promotes inclusive teaching practices that are relevant to Oxford's unique learning environment and offers 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

Students also have free access to LinkedIn Learning via the IT Learning Centre. Use your Oxford Single Sign-on to register access to this vast online library of instructional videos and training courses, covering a wide range of software and IT related topics (as well as soft skills and business skills) for beginners through to experts.

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 University's Careers Service provides a lifelong service for current Oxford students and alumni. They can offer you impartial advice on any careers-related topic – including deciding what to do, applying for jobs or further study, and how to develop your skills. Their specialist careers advisers have backgrounds in a wide range of sectors, and run a range of events, workshops and careers fairs each year, as well as offering 1:1 appointments. Please see http://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/ for full information.

8.9   Skills Toolkit

The Research Skills Toolkit brings together information about workshops, seminars, conferences and online 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.

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. 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, conference attendance and so on.

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 – the funding available is up to a maximum of £150 per student.
2.   Conference attendance (Trinity Term) - the funding available is up to a maximum of £100 per student.

Research funding support forms are available to download from Canvas. Students wishing to apply for either grant should submit their completed forms to the OII's Finance Officer, Duncan Passey (finance@oii.ox.ac.uk) , along with a brief email of support from the student's supervisor.

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

The University also operates a number of schemes, grants and awards designed to support students in travelling to a foreign country for any academic activity which will enhance their current programme of study, including conference attendance and thesis fieldwork. For further information please see https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding/international/scholarships-exchanges. Your college is also likely to have specific budget for supporting student activities. As these vary by college, please inquire with your college advisor.

9.3   Paid work

For full-time students 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 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 Immigration 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 https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/policies/paid-word-guidelines-graduate-students

For any queries about working during your studies, please speak to the MSc 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 the 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: https://finance.admin.ox.ac.uk/travel-insuranceYou 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.

9.6   Hardship funding

9.6.1   University and college funding

It is expected that students will secure the necessary funds to cover their fees and living costs before arriving at Oxford. However, the University and its colleges have a number of funds available to support students who find themselves in financial hardship while enrolled on their courses. For further guidance on hardship funding please see https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding/assistance/hardship

Students in financial difficulty should approach their college in the first instance. Colleges understand the financial constraints students experience and will be able to offer advice on the support that students may be eligible to apply for, including any relevant College Hardship Funds.

The University operates acentrally-administered Oxford Hardship Fund (OHF) , which offers financial support through grants and/or loans for students experiencing unexpected financial difficulties.

9.6.2   OII Hardship Fund

The OII operates a small fund to support students who experience financial hardship that could not have been anticipated at the start of their course.

The purpose of the fund is to provide support to students experiencing genuine and unforeseeable financial hardship. The fund is not intended to support discretionary or routine academic expenses such as conference or research travel, or book or equipment purchases.

Because resources are limited, students are asked, where eligible, to apply to their college hardship fund and the University Hardship Fund before applying to the OII's Hardship Fund.

Please see Appendix J: OII Student Hardship Funding Guidelines for full guidance on eligibility requirements and how to apply. For enquiries about the OII's Hardship Fund, please contact Graduate Studies Manager Christine Bunyan (christine.bunyan@oii.ox.ac.uk or 01865 287304).

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 (ICSS)
    (e) DPhil Programme Director (SDS)
    (f) Head of Administration and Finance
    (g) Graduate Studies Manager
    (h) MSc Coordinator
    (i) DPhil Coordinator
    (j) Graduate Studies Assistant
    (k) 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
    (l) two representatives of full-time postgraduate research (DPhil in Social Data Science) students of the Institute in accordance with paragraph 3 below
    (m) one representatives of part-time postgraduate research (DPhil) students of the Institute in accordance with paragraph 3 below
    (n) two representatives of full-time postgraduate taught (MSc Social Science of the Internet) students of the Institute in accordance with paragraph 3 below
    (o) two representatives of part-time postgraduate taught (MSc Social Science of the Internet) students of the Institute in accordance with paragraph 3 below
    (p) two representatives of full-time postgraduate taught (MSc Social Data Science) students of the Institute in accordance with paragraph 3 below
    (q) 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:

a) to implement all aspects of teaching policy for the OII as agreed by the Steering Committee
b) to decide on
   i. 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
   ii. suspension or removal of OII students from the register of graduate students,
   iii. applications for transfer and confirmation of status,
   iv. the examiners' recommendation regarding the award of the degrees of Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Science, and
   v. the award of scholarships
c) to approve:
   i. nominations of assessors for transfer and confirmation of status of research students
   ii. nominations for the board of examiners for the OII's MSc programme
d) 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 :
   i. induction materials,
   ii. OII graduate studies handbook,
   iii. student feedback questionnaires,
   iv. MSc courses and DPhil programmes,
   v. teaching methods and examination and marking schemes
e) to receive:
   i. supervisors' termly and annual progress reports on all research and MSc students at the OII,
   ii. reports of examiners and external examiners,
   iii. results of student feedback questionnaires,
   iv. statistics of success rates and details of complaints and academic appeals lodged and ensure that appropriate action is taken in the light of them.
f) to consider and approve applications for Visiting Student status.

Membership

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

- Director of Graduate Studies (*Chair*) (*ex officio*)
- Members of the department's staff who are engaged in teaching for the department
- Head of Administration and Finance (*ex officio*)
- Head of IT (*ex officio*)
- four representatives of postgraduate students of the department (one from each programme)
- 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:

   a)   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:
   - i.   research funding in the context of the Institute's overall finances
   - ii.   publication and dissemination of research findings
   - iii.   research related events, including the Bellwether series and OII colloquia
   - iv.   academic resources
   - v.   research policy including ethical issues
   b)   to consider and approve research funding proposals
   c)   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:

- Director of Research (*Chair*) (*ex officio*)
- research and academic staff on departmentally funded contracts
- Head of Administration and Finance (*ex officio*)
- Head of IT (*ex officio*)
- three representatives from the department's contract research staff
- 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.

Guidelines for MSc Thesis Supervision

MSc Social Science of the Internet

Background

This document outlines the typical level of supervision support provided to a student on *MSc Social Science of the Internet*. Its purpose is two-fold. Firstly, it provides supervisors with guidance on the type and level of support that they should normally expect to provide to a student. Secondly, it identifies a benchmark level of "typical supervision" for the purposes of ensuring fair treatment during examination. Significant departures from the typical level of supervision described below should be noted in the supervisor's declaration, to be provided to examiners along with the completed thesis.

Characterisation of typical supervision

The principle role of a supervisor is to meet regularly with a student and to provide guidance on all aspects of the design, implementation, and presentation of the MSc thesis. At least one meeting is typically held in each of the three terms, and students will normally meet with their supervisor between eight and twelve times during the course of the degree. As well as in-person meetings, supervisors typically provide timely written feedback on a completed draft of the student's thesis, and offer ad hoc advice outside of scheduled meetings (e.g., by email) as and when needed.

The role of a supervisor is an advisory one that is typically limited to providing guidance and feedback on a project that is the sole work of the student. As such, supervision typically stops short of making a substantive contribution to any part of that work.

The table below provides some examples of typical supervision arrangements and of the types of atypical supervisor involvement that merit declaration.

Examples of typical and atypical supervision

Dimension	Example of typical supervision	Example of atypical supervision (requiring declaration)
Frequency of meetings	8–10 meetings from Hilary Term onwards.	Significantly more than 10 or fewer than 8 meetings. One or more terms during which no meeting took place.
Framing of research topic/question	Providing feedback on student's suggested topic. Suggesting alternative angles on a topic identified by the student. Critiquing the proposed topic/research question (including suggestion of modifications or	Proposing the research topic. Playing a significant role in the formulation of a research question.

	refinements to a question proposed by the student).	
Literature review	Providing feedback and advice on the student's literature synthesis. Suggesting a small number of key readings either as a starting point or to complement the student's own bibliography.	Playing a significant and substantive role in the development of the literature synthesis. Suggesting a significant share of the readings that ultimately form the student's bibliography.
Data collection	Suggesting possible data sources for the student to consider. Providing high-level advice on appropriate data collection or sampling techniques. Providing more specific advice on students' data collection activities (e.g., critiquing a student's survey questions, interview protocol, or software programme).	Providing the student with a *proprietary* ready-collected data set. Providing *proprietary*, ready-built tools (such as software or survey instruments) that play a significant role in data collection or processing.
Analysis	Providing high-level advice on the analytical strategy. Offering a critique of completed analysis (whether empirical or theoretical) and suggesting follow-up analyses that might be considered.	Significant hands-on involvement in the process of analysis (whether empirical or theoretical). Providing *proprietary*, ready-made tools (such as software code or qualitative coding schemes) that are responsible for a significant portion of the analysis.
Writing	Providing overall advice on structure, academic style, and presentation. Offering comments on a draft of the thesis to include, for example, high-level critique of the quality of argument and precise suggestions on wording in isolated cases.	More frequent or extensive suggestions on the specific wording of passages in the thesis. Extensive intervention in the structure or presentation of the thesis. Comments on more than two drafts. Also, cases where no comments were provided on a complete draft.

Appendix D: Assessment Timetable

The following is the overall assessment timetable for 2022-2023. 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. Part-time students should refer to the part-time programme schedule in section 2.3.1 for details on which assessments are taken in Year 1 and Year 2 of the course.

Course	Term	Type of Assessment	Essay Submission Deadline / Date of Exam	Marks Available
Internet Technologies and Regulation	Michaelmas	Formative	Friday of Week 6	By Week 9 MT
Internet Technologies and Regulation	Michaelmas	Open-book written exam	0th Week of Hilary Term (early January)	End of March
Social Dynamics of the Internet	Michaelmas	Formative	Friday of Week 5	By Week 9 MT
Social Dynamics of the Internet	Michaelmas	Open-book written exam	0th Week of Hilary Term (early January)	End of March
Digital Social Research: Statistics Core	Michaelmas	Formative	Every Thursday Weeks 1-8	Ongoing feedback
Digital Social Research: Statistics Core	Michaelmas	In-person written exam	9th Week, Michaelmas Term (December)	End of March
Digital Social Research: Methods Core	Michaelmas	Formative	Friday Week 5 by noon	End of Week 6 MT
Digital Social Research: Methods Core	Michaelmas	Summative	Friday Week 8 by noon	End of March
Advanced Statistics for Internet Research	Hilary	Formative	Weekly	Weekly
Advanced Statistics for Internet Research	Hilary	In-person written exam	Week 10 Hilary Term (Date TBC)	End of June
Computational Methods for the Social Sciences	Hilary	Formative	Weekly	Weekly
Computational Methods for the Social Sciences	Hilary	Summative	Tuesday Week -1 Trinity Term by noon	End of June
Digital Interviewing and Qualitative Data Analysis	Hilary	Formative	TBC	TBC
Digital Interviewing and Qualitative Data Analysis	Hilary	Summative	Tuesday Week -1 Trinity Term by noon	End of June
Digital Ethnography	Hilary	Formative	TBC	TBC
Digital Ethnography	Hilary	Summative	Tuesday Week -1 Trinity Term by noon	End of June
Accessing Research Data from the Social Web	Hilary	Formative	Nothing official, only suggested assignments each week with answers provided in class	N/A
Accessing Research Data from the Social Web	Hilary	Summative	10th Week, Hilary Term	End of June
Digital Capitalism and its Inequalities	Hilary	Formative	Friday of Week 5	By Week 8
Digital Capitalism and its Inequalities	Hilary	Summative	12:00pm on Monday, 1st Week, Trinity Term	End of June
Internet Economics	Hilary	Formative	Middle of Week 7	By Week 9
Internet Economics	Hilary	Summative	12:00pm on Monday, 1st week, Trinity Term	End of June
Social Network Analysis and Interpretation	Hilary	Formative	TBC	TBC
Social Network Analysis and Interpretation	Hilary	Summative	12:00pm on Monday, 1st week, Trinity Term	End of June
Digital Era Government and Politics	Hilary	Formative	Collected in class in Week 8	By Week 9

Digital Era Government and Politics	Hilary	Summative	12:00pm on Monday, 1st week, Trinity Term	End of June
Digital Technologies and Economic Organization	Hilary	Formative	Weekly one page essay due the night before the next class	By the end each week
Digital Technologies and Economic Organization	Hilary	Summative	12:00pm on Monday, 1st week, Trinity Term	End of June
Education, the Internet, and Society	Hilary	Formative	Friday of Week 6	End of Week 8
Education, the Internet, and Society	Hilary	Summative	12:00pm on Monday, 1st week, Trinity Term	End of June
Law and the Internet	Hilary	Formative	Friday of Week 6	End of Week 8
Law and the Internet	Hilary	Summative	12:00pm on Monday, 1st Week, Trinity Term	End of June
Subversive Technologies	Hilary	Formative	Friday of Week 6	End of Week 8
Subversive Technologies	Hilary	Summative	12:00pm on Monday, 1st Week, Trinity Term	End of June
Cultural Analytics	Hilary	Formative	Friday of Week 6	End of Week 8
Cultural Analytics	Hilary	Summative	12:00pm on Monday, 1st Week, Trinity Term	End of June
The Philosophy and Ethics of Information	Hilary	Formative	Friday of Week 6	By Week 8
The Philosophy and Ethics of Information	Hilary	Summative	12:00pm on Monday, 1st Week, Trinity Term	End of June

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

Appendix E: 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 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 . 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 F: 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

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00 AM	**Compulsory** Social Dynamics of the Internet *Lecture* Examination Schools Room 11, Weeks 1-6 & 8 Examination Schools Room 7, Week 7	**Group B** Social Dynamics Seminar (Weeks 1, 3, 5, 7) Social Dynamics TA Workshop (Weeks 2, 4, 6, 8)		**Compulsory** Digital Social Research: Statistics Core *Lecture* Examination Schools Room 1	**Group B** Digital Social Research: Statistics Core Surgery
9:30 AM					
10:00 AM		**Group C** Social Dynamics Seminar (Weeks 1, 3, 5, 7) Social Dynamics TA Workshop (Weeks 2, 4, 6, 8)			**Group C** Digital Social Research: Statistics Core Surgery
10:30 AM					
11:00 AM	**Group A (PT Students)** Social Dynamics Seminar (Weeks 1, 3, 5, 7) Social Dynamics TA Workshop (Weeks 2, 4, 6, 8)	**Group D** Social Dynamics Seminar (Weeks 1, 3, 5, 7) Social Dynamics TA Workshop (Weeks 2, 4, 6, 8)			
11:30 AM				**Group A (inc. PT Students)** Digital Social Research: Statistics Core Surgery Examination Schools Room 1	
12:00 PM					*Optional* Introduction to Python Weeks 5-8 *Lecture*
12:30 PM					
1:00 PM					
1:30 PM					
2:00 PM	**Compulsory** Digital Social Research: Methods Core *Lecture* Examination Schools Room 1	**Group B** Methods Core Workshop		**Compulsory** Internet Technologies and Regulation *Lecture* Examination Schools Room 9	**Group B** Internet Technologies and Regulation Workshop
2:30 PM					
3:00 PM		**Group C** Methods Core Workshop			
3:30 PM					
4:00 PM	**Group A (PT Students)** Methods Core Workshop Examination Schools Room 1	**Group D** Methods Core Workshop		**Group A (inc. PT students)** Internet Technologies and Regulation Workshop Examination Schools Room 9	
4:30 PM					
5:00 PM					
5:30 PM					

Colour	Room
Yellow	Examination Schools
Blue	Seminar Room, 1 St Giles
Orange	Board Room, 41 St Giles
Green	Meeting Room, 1 St Giles

Hilary Term (Provisional)

Weeks 1-4 and 6-9

Time	Mon		Tue		Wed	Thu		Fri
9:00								
9:15	Digital Era Government and Politics		Digital Ethnography			Cultural Analytics		Subversive Technologies
9:30								
9:45								
10:00								
10:15								
10:30								
10:45								
11:00								
11:15								
11:30	Digital Interviewing and Qualitative Data Analysis		Computational Methods for the Social Sciences			Advanced Statistics for Internet Research		
11:45								
12:00								
12:15								
12:30								
12:45								
13:00								
13:15								
13:30								
13:45								
14:00			Digital Capitalism and its Inequalities	Education, Internet & Society		Social Network Analysis and Interpretation	Philosophy and Ethics of Information	Internet Economics
14:15								
14:30								
14:45								
15:00	Digital Technologies and Economic Oganization	Law and the Internet						
15:15								
15:30								
15:45								
16:00								
16:15								
16:30								
16:45								

Colour	Location
Blue	Seminar Room, 1 St Giles
Orange	Board Room, 41 St Giles
Green	Department of Education

Trinity Term (Provisional)

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00 AM					
9:30 AM					
10:00 AM					
10:30 AM					
11:00 AM		Research in Real Worlds - Thesis Seminar Weeks 1-8			
11:30 AM					
12:00 PM					
12:30 PM					
1:00 PM					
1:30 PM					
2:00 PM					
2:30 PM					
3:00 PM					
3:30 PM					
4:00 PM					
4:30 PM					
5:00 PM					
5:30 PM					

Appendix G: Draft Examining Conventions - MSc in Social Science of the Internet 2022-23

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 Resources for Students for further information on examination matters and plagiarism.

2.   Rubrics for individual papers

Information on the structure of individual examination papers, for example, number of questions, compulsory questions etc., and for online exams the mode of completion, any time allowance included in the exam duration for uploads, and word limits (see EAF sections 9.3 and **Error! Reference source not found.**). Also include any paper specific regulations on, for example, the use of calculators, permitted reference material etc.

This is a one-year (full-time) or two-year (part-time) taught course which is comprised of the following 9 parts. Full-time students will take all 9 parts in a single year. Part-time students will normally take parts 1, 3, 5 and 7 in their first year, and parts 2, 4, 6, 8 and 9 in their second year. Permission for exceptions to this schedule should be requested in writing to the Course Director.

Part 1:   Digital Social Research Methods: Methods Core
Examined through an assessed written submission consisting of one 2,500-word essay (excluding the bibliography, but including footnotes and tables, following the same guidelines as provided for thesis word counts in the MSc Handbook) plus additional supporting documents (not counted against the word limit) as specified in the assessment details which will be distributed in class and released via the University approved online submissions platform by the end of 4th week of Michaelmas Term. The essay is due to be submitted electronically via the University approved online submissions site by 12.00 noon on Friday of 8th week of Michaelmas Term.

Part 2: Digital Social Research Methods: Statistics Core
Examined by a three-hour unseen in-person written examination to be held in 9th week of Michaelmas Term. The examination will consist of a series of questions, all of which must be answered. The questions are weighted according to their relative difficulty, and the details of the weighting assigned to each question are provided in the examination paper. Failure to answer any individual question will result in the loss of marks for that question only.

Parts 3-4: Compulsory Papers (i) Social Dynamics of the Internet and (ii) Internet Technologies and Regulation
The two compulsory papers will each be examined by a three-hour unseen typed open-book online examination to be held in 0th week of Hilary term. Students must choose 3 questions from a list of 8 in each examination. The recommended essay length for each of the 3 questions in each examination is 800-1,200 words. Essays shorter than 800 words are unlikely to fully answer the question. The maximum response length for each of the 3 questions is 1,500 words, for a total of 4,500 words per examination. Text beyond 1,500 words for any of the 3 responses will be disregarded by the examiners, but no specific mark deduction penalties will be applied to under or over-length work. The response to each of the 3 questions carries equal weight in each examination. The total marks for each examination are determined by averaging the marks of each of the 3 questions to the nearest whole number (half rounded up).

Part 5 and 6: Two Methods Option Papers
Each of the methods option papers (chosen from a list available in the MSc Graduate Studies Handbook and on the OII website) will be examined through a combination of assessed written submission and/or by unseen written examinations, depending on the course. Assessment details for each module are provided in the reading lists available on the OII website and on Canvas not later than the end of week one of Michaelmas Term. In the case of written work, summative assessments are due to be submitted electronically via the University approved online submissions platform by 12:00 noon on Tuesday of Week -1 of Trinity Term. Unseen written examinations will be held during the week following the final teaching session for the module, as scheduled by the Examination Schools.

Part 7 and 8: Two Substantive Option Papers

Each of the substantive option papers (chosen from a list available in the MSc Graduate Studies Handbook and on the OII website from the start of the academic year) will be assessed by coursework, normally by one or two long essays and adding up to a total of not more than 5,000 words per option paper (excluding the bibliography, but including footnotes and tables, following the same guidelines as provided for thesis word counts in the MSc Handbook). Specific details for each option paper are provided in the reading lists available on the OII website and in the Canvas learning environment. Students must submit their essays for the option papers via the University approved online submissions platform by 12:00 noon on Monday of 1st Week in Trinity Term.

Part 9: Thesis

A thesis not to exceed 15,000 words (excluding the bibliography, but including footnotes and tables, see the Handbook for detailed guidance) must be submitted electronically via the University approved online submissions platform 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 and the Board of Examiners. The deadline for submitting the title and topic is by 12:00pm on Monday Week 2 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 Graduate Studies Handbook for the MSc, 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 marking 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, and thesis (henceforth submission) will be marked independently by two examiners or assessors; normally one marker will be a course convener.

After independently marking each submission, 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 and attempt to reach an agreement on a reconciled mark. If after discussion the original assessors are unable to reach consensus on the appropriate mark, the script will be sent to a third marker. In the case of a fail mark, a dispute in the mark, or where the marks from the first two assessors straddle a class border, the external examiner will normally review the work and the agreed mark. All marks will be reported to the Chair of Examiners.

For papers made up of a number of questions, 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. Averages are rounded to the nearest whole number (half rounded up).

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

3.4 Scaling [EAF 11.7]

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 in examinations

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 of submitted work

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 each weekend day counts as a full day for the purposes of mark deductions)*	-1 mark (- 1 percentage point)
Max. deducted marks up to 14 days late	-18 marks (- 18 percentage points)
More than 14 calendar days after the <u>deadline</u>	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 and departure from approved titles or subject-matter in submitted 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 The final decision on penalties to be applied rests with the Board of Examiners.

3.8 Penalties for poor academic practice in submitted work and open-book online examinations

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' i.e. 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.

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

Where assessment includes open-book examinations, candidates will be required to sign up to the University's honour code.

All assessed coursework that is submitted through the University approved online submissions platform will automatically be screened for poor academic practice through Turnitin.

3.9 Penalties for non-attendance at examinations

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

3.10 Penalties for late submission of online examination scripts

Candidates undertaking exams with a typed mode of completion have their exam responses automatically captured by the system and therefore are not able to submit late. If a student has chosen, against advice, to draft their answers outside of Inspera, anything not copied into Inspera prior to the end of the exam duration cannot be submitted late and will not be marked.

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 on first attempt.

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. In calculating the final degree mark, Part 1 has a weighting of 5%; Parts 2-8 each have a weighting of 10% and Part 9 (thesis) has a weighting of 25%.

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 element, 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 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 student who does not automatically qualify for that classification if the overall performance of a 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).

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 essays, examinations or thesis will be permitted one further attempt to resit the failed assessment(s). Examinations may normally only be resat in the following academic year at the usual examination times. Summative essays may normally be resubmitted within the same academic year, with the deadline determined by the Board of Examiners. Resubmission dates will normally fall during Trinity Term or the Long Vacation. The thesis may 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 assessment elements, and must do so within six terms of initial registration for full-time students and within twelve terms for part-time students. Candidates who have failed any assessment cannot normally be awarded a merit or distinction classification overall. Please see the Social Science of the Internet MSc Handbook for further information on resubmission.

6.   Consideration of mitigating circumstances

A candidate's final outcome will first be considered using the classification rules/final outcome rules as described above in section 4.2. The Exam Board will then consider any further information they have on individual circumstances.

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 *Examination and Assessment Framework, Annex E* and information for students on mitigating circumstances is provided on the Oxford Student portal.

Candidates who have indicated they wish to be considered for Declared to Deserve Masters (DDM) will first be considered for a classified degree, taking into account any individual MCE. If that is not possible and they meet the DDM eligibility criteria, they will be awarded DDM. Please refer to the declared awards page for detailed information on the DDM award.

7.   Details of examiners and rules on communicating with examiners

The External Examiner for the MSc in Social Science of the Internet for the 2023-24 academic year is Dr Ella McPherson. The internal examiners are Prof Viktor Mayer-Schönberger (Chair), Prof Rebecca Eynon and Prof Greg Taylor.

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

Appendix H: OII Student Hardship Fund Guidelines

The OII operates a small fund to support students who experience financial hardship that could not have been anticipated at the start of their course.

Students must demonstrate the following in their application:

- How their financial situation has changed since their studies began.
- Why these changes are unexpected and could not have been predicted at the start of their course.
- What steps they are taking to find alternative funding. Students in the early years of a multi-year course must demonstrate that they have thought about how they are going to fund the rest of their studies.

Eligibility

The purpose of the fund is to provide support to students experiencing genuine and unforeseeable financial hardship. The fund is not intended to support discretionary or routine academic expenses such as conference or research travel, or book or equipment purchases.

Because resources are limited, students are asked, where eligible, to apply to their college hardship fund (https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding/assistance/hardship/colleges?wssl=1) and the University Hardship Fund (https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding/assistance/hardship/uhf?wssl=1) before applying to the OII's Hardship Fund.

Awards will **not be made** to the following groups of students:

- students who have not convinced the committee that they are experiencing financial hardship;
- Recognised Students or visiting students;
- research students who have submitted their thesis. This includes students who are resubmitting;

Awards will **not normally be made** to the following groups of students unless there are exceptional circumstances:

- students who are not currently enrolled. This includes suspended and lapsed students;
- students whose situation is financially unsustainable. Students need to demonstrate that they have a plan to secure sufficient funding for the remainder of their course.
- students who have already received assistance from the OII Hardship Fund;
- students who are applying for assistance with a funding deficit in the next academic year. These students should apply at the start of the next academic year;
- research students who are beyond their fourth year of study.

How does the OII define unexpected circumstances?

The following circumstances are not considered unexpected and will not normally result in an award:

- research students whose funding has run out before they are ready to submit their thesis. The Committee does not normally consider this to be sufficient grounds for an award as it is expected that students will have made provision for the realistic length of their studies and to be making academic progress in accordance with expectations. However, the Committee is able to use its discretion in deciding individual cases where research has been disrupted for reasons beyond a student's control;
- students who have been affected by fluctuations in exchange rates. The Committee will generally only consider awards where this has been catastrophic or combined with other circumstances;
- students applying for financial assistance with their research and/or fieldwork. These are normally part of projected course costs so are not considered unexpected;
- students who are unable to obtain paid employment unless a contract was in place prior to commencing their studies;
- students who require assistance with childcare costs, where this has not been taken into account at the start of their studies. It is expected that all students will have made reasonable provision for themselves and their family before beginning their studies. Assistance cannot be given to students who need to increase their childcare because they have underestimated their study needs;
- students who need assistance in repaying debts which were in existence prior to start of their course. It is expected that students will have taken these into account when deciding whether they can afford their studies;
- assistance will not normally be given to support maternity or paternity leave for children born whilst a student is on course, unless there are exceptional circumstances;
- students who require funding to replace damaged or stolen belongings will be expected to report losses to the police and make any insurance claims before applying to the Hardship Fund. Please note that where an award is made to fund repair or replacement costs these are likely to be capped, and may not cover a like-for-like replacement;
- students whose parents or sponsors have allegedly withdrawn their support unless there are exceptional circumstances.

How to apply

Students should send their application in writing to the Graduate Studies Manager Christine Bunyan (christine.bunyan@oii.ox.ac.uk). In their application, the student should explain how their financial circumstances have changed since the start of their course, why this is a source of legitimate financial hardship, why these changes could not have been anticipated at the start of their course, and how they plan to ensure that the remainder of their studies are financially sustainable. Applications should also include supporting evidence to establish the case for hardship, and confirm that an application has already been made to the College and University hardship funds (or explain why not).

Awards and assessment

Applications are considered on a first-come, first-served basis by a committee consisting of the Director of Graduate Studies and the directors of each of the OII's four degree programmes. Applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria noted above.

Applications are assessed using all expected available savings and income for the current academic year, against the University's standard estimates of the lower range living costs for a single student studying at Oxford in the current academic year. The Committee regards these figures as a guideline and will treat them with as much latitude as it sees fit in any particular case. It is expected that students whose expenses are particularly heavy, for whatever reason, will clearly draw the Committee's attention to this fact in their application.

If appropriate and relevant to the case a student may need to provide medical evidence and details of any disability support.

The Committee has some flexibility over the level of award that can be offered to students. Awards will be made as a grant.