Graduate Studies Handbook

2025-2026

Notes of Guidance for students and supervisors of the *DPhil in Information, Communication and the Social Sciences* and *DPhil in Social Data Science* at the Oxford Internet Institute

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Issued by the Graduate Studies Committee
Oxford Internet Institute
The Stephen A. Schwarzman Centre
Centre for Humanities at Oxford Radcliffe Observatory Quarter
Woodstock Road
Oxford
OX1 6GG

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1. Introduction

1.1 Welcome from the Director of Graduate Studies

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 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 in the coming year 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!

Professor Bernie Hogan, Director of Graduate Studies, OII

1.2 Scope and purpose of this handbook

This handbook applies to students starting the DPhil programme in *Information Communication and the Social Sciences* and the *DPhil in Social Data Science* in 2025-26. 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 DPhil students in classes, seminars and lectures.

The information given here is an informal description and interpretation of some of the most relevant rules in the *Examination Regulations*. Any formal question has to be settled by reference to the Regulations and not this handbook. To keep it up to date, a copy of this handbook is available on Canvas.

Comments on this handbook are welcome and should be sent to the OII's DPhil Coordinator at dphil@oii.ox.ac.uk. The Canvas version will contain the most up-to-date information.

Disclaimer
The Examination Regulations relating to DPhil degrees at the OII are available online; please note there are OII-specific regulations, General Regulations for Research Degrees, and General Regulations for the DPhil. 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 DPhil Coordinator at dphil@oii.ox.ac.uk.

The information in this handbook is accurate as at 1 October 2025; however, it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges. If

such changes are made, the department will publish a new version of this handbook on Canvas and students will be notified.

1.3 Induction

OII Induction Programme

A general compulsory introductory meeting for all newly admitted graduates (Full and Part-Time) at the OII will be held at the beginning of the academic year in the week preceding the start of Michaelmas Term. During that first meeting they will be introduced to the OII's Director, Director of Graduate Studies, DPhil Programme Directors and the DPhil Coordinator. 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 then be followed by separate meetings dealing with induction matters for the DPhil and MSc courses. In addition, students will be given a tour of the OII and will be formally introduced to faculty members.

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 atthe Bodleian Libraries (see Section 12.6.3)It is also used to access the OII's premises at Schwarzman Centre.

Additional information covering non-academic matters and facilities at the OII is available on the OII Intranet site.

PGR Divisional Induction Event

 All doctoral students are strongly encouraged to attend the in person Social Sciences Divisional Induction and Welcome Event. The 2025/26 event will take place on Thursday, 9th October (Week 0), from 4:00-6:00pm at the Blavatnik School of Government in the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter on Woodstock Road, OX2 6GG.

This event discusses how the division can support you throughout your doctorate and provides the opportunity to meet fellow new students from other departments.

1.4 Laptop Specification for Students

All software taught on courses is either freely available open-source software, University site licenced software (available for download via https://register.it.ox.ac.uk) or available on the departmental servers. Students will be given instructions on how to access this software as part of the IT induction during Induction Week.

Students should also install the software on their own personal laptops, which will require that the laptop meet some minimum specifications. Most modern laptops (<5 years old) should work with the software used on the course, but as a guideline, you should have a laptop running Windows 11 and/or currently supported versions of OSX/Linux distros.

We also strongly recommend that you turn on encryption (Bitlocker or FileVault) and install reputable antimalware/virus software. The University has a site license for Sophos Antivirus which you will have access to when you arrive at Oxford.

1.5 Key sources of useful information

There are several key sources of information for OII DPhil students.

- The OII's **website**. There you will find lists of faculty and their research interests, which can help identify those working in fields similar to your own and a regularly updated events section, with information on OII activities.
- **Canvas:** The most up to date reading lists and course information are held on Oxford's Virtual Learning Environment, Canvas.
- The **OII Intranet site** for staff and students contains useful information on facilities, departmental governance and other matters.
- The **University's web pages** contain extensive information on numerous key aspects of graduate work. We note particularly useful ones below.
  - o International Students
  - o Student Health and Welfare
  - o Examination Regulations
  - o Policy on Research Degrees
  - o Dates of Term
- The **University Gazette**, published at least weekly in term time, contains a wide range of other university announcements, including forthcoming seminars and lectures. It can be read online, consulted in most libraries including the OII Library, and is distributed to all colleges.
- **College Handbooks**: Please refer to your own College's website - a list can be found here.
- Additionally, please check your **Oxford email** regularly as it will be used to send you important information about your course.

1.6 Academic Progress—Whom to Contact

The DPhil Coordinator is responsible for course administration, on-course student support and welfare matters, and is the person you should contact in the first instance with any queries (dphil@oii.ox.ac.uk).

Your supervisor is your main point of contact for academic progress and will serve as liaison between you and other faculty members.

DPhil Directors have immediate responsibility for students on these courses. Students should feel welcome to raise any issues with their DPhil Director that they prefer not to discuss with their supervisor. Students can also speak to the Director of Graduate Studies (dgs@oii.ox.ac.uk).

2. General programme structure and timetable

Students are expected to have completed at least a one- or two-year Master's degree before embarking on their doctoral studies. The minimum period in which the programme can be completed is two years (four years for part-time students). This may occur if you have completed an advanced degree of more than one year's duration. However, the normal expectation is that the DPhil will be completed in three to four years (six to eight years for part-time students).

Full-time students should plan to spend an average of 40 hours per week on their studies to ensure the timely completion of their degree (20 hours per week for part-time students).

At Oxford there are three terms per academic year. These are called Michaelmas Term (October–December), Hilary Term (January–March), and Trinity Term (April–June). Each term consists of eight weeks of *term-time* (or '*full term*') numbered Weeks 1 to 8. Each term starts on the Sunday of Week 1 and runs right up to Week 1 of the next term (even past the end of term-time). Reference is sometimes made to 'Week 0', which is simply the week preceding Week 1 (although it technically is part of the previous term).

The duration of the programme is as follows:
- Full-time DPhil students must submit a doctoral thesis within 12 terms from the date of admission as a graduate student. Part-time students are expected to submit their thesis within 24 terms.
- In special circumstances, students may apply to defer a milestone or for an extension of time to their maximum thesis submission date.
- For full-time students, the absolute maximum number of terms for completion is 18 terms; part-time students can have 27 terms.

Exceptional Circumstances	Number of additional terms allowed	
	DPhil (full-time)	DPhil (part-time)
Deferral of Transfer of status	2	4
Deferral of Confirmation of status	3	3
Extension to thesis submission	6	3
Suspension of student status	6	6

It should be noted that for both full-time and part-time students, extensions are not automatic and require the student to demonstrate a feasible plan for completion and evidence of active progress on their research.

Further extensions beyond the absolute maximum 18 terms (27 terms for part-time students) are possibly only in exceptional circumstances and requires special dispensation from the university's Education Committee.

Students are expected to be fully engaged in the intellectual life of the department throughout their studies, including attendance at DPhil workshops, participation in departmental seminars, OII research projects and the OII's events programme. Students are encouraged to make a significant contribution to a workshop or event, and they should consider ways throughout their studies to communicate about their work to the world at large.

2.1 Attendance for Part-Time Students

Part-time students will normally be expected to spend a minimum of **one day per week** in Oxford during term time attending seminars, meeting with faculty, and attending relevant talks and events.

Part-time students will also be encouraged to spend at least **two to four additional full days per term** (for a total of 30 days minimum annually) working in Oxford and participating in relevant research seminars and research events, so as to integrate more fully into the department. Each part-time student's supervisor should discuss their supervisees' attendance at research and training events (some of which may be done online). This will be monitored through the student self-reporting system, GSR.

During years 1 and 2, students may be required to take core courses as part of their probationary research student training. These courses take place one day per week in Weeks 1-8 of Michaelmas or Hilary term, and can normally only be attended in person in Oxford.

Please refer to the course-specific schedules for part-time students in ICSS (section 3.3) and SDS (section 4.3) for more details.

2.2 Coursework Requirements

DPhil students must satisfactorily complete the required coursework component of their programme as a necessary precondition for progressing from Probationer Research Student status to DPhil Student status. Further details on required coursework can be found in sections 3.2 (for the DPhil ICSS) and 4.2 (for the DPhil SDS).

Students may also wish to undertake additional methods training as appropriate to their topic of study, either at OII or across the University, such as those offered by the Social Sciences Division. Decisions about which courses and training sessions to attend should be made in consultation with supervisors.

2.2.1 Waiver of Core Course Requirements

The requirement to pass a course will automatically be waived for any student who has previously passed that course as part of an MSc at the OII. Please also see the core course waiver policies in section 3.2 or 4.2 for further details.

In some other circumstances a waiver of one or more of the taught requirements may be granted.
- If a student has previously completed training equivalent to that provided by one of the core courses, then a waiver of the requirement to complete the course in question may be considered.

- A waiver may also be considered for students who wish to replace one or more of the core taught courses with alternative arrangements more suited to their training needs. Such alternative arrangements might include taking an alternative advanced course taught at Oxford or submitting a more advanced piece of coursework for assessment to the course convenor.
- In all cases, students who wish to be considered for a waiver should discuss the matter with their supervisor and the course convenor at the earliest opportunity. Waivers must be received in writing from the DPhil Programme Director prior to the normal assessment deadline for the waived requirement.

2.2.2 Coursework Deadline Extension Requests

Extensions may be granted **in exceptional circumstances only** and must be obtained in writing from the DPhil Programme Director; please send all requests to the DPhil Coordinator (dphil@oii.ox.ac.uk). An extension must be obtained **in advance** of the submission deadline unless the circumstances giving rise to the extension make this impossible.

Students can only apply for extensions if there are clear medical or personal circumstances that have affected their ability to submit on time. Good justifications for an extension typically
1. are outside the student's control, and
2. could not reasonably have been anticipated and planned around.

In the case of a coursework essay, a revised extended deadline will be set that reflects the severity of the circumstances. This new deadline should be treated as strict unless a further extension has been obtained. In the case of a scheduled written exam, students with grounds for an extension will be offered alternative assessment arrangements.

2.2.3 Managing submission and milestone deadlines

You are strongly encouraged to implement the following steps, which will help you to manage your workload and be able to meet deadlines:
- Always plan ahead and ensure you know the key deadlines for your programme throughout the year.
- When taking on any additional responsibilities, consider the workload of these in relation to your assessment schedule. Don't take on responsibilities which will take significant time away from preparing for assessment.
- Make sure you know both when work will be set and due for submission so you know how much time you have to complete of each task – it may be helpful to map this out in your diary/calendar.
- If in doubt, always discuss requirements with your supervisor and/or Course Director.
- You may also find it helpful to seek informal peer support by talking to current DPhil students in later years of the programme.
- Making a start is often the hardest part so try to break down work into smaller sections and set yourself key milestones along the way, build in some contingency time, and always avoid leaving things to the last few weeks or days.
- If preparing written work for assessment (such as milestone documents or coursework essays), start writing as early as possible, don't wait until the reading and thinking is 'done'. Social

scientists often write to think, and you need to make sure you leave plenty of time for the thinking, as this is where your original insights will occur.

Try to also be conscious of when to stop - there will always be something which could be further researched, redrafted or refined, but try to understand when something is good enough.

2.2.4 Late Submission and Non-Attendance

If an extension or waiver has not been granted, a penalty for late essays will be enforced, with 5 marks out of the total 100 marks possible deducted every day after the deadline until the essay is handed in.

Students who fail to attend a scheduled written exam without obtaining an extension or waiver receive a failing mark of 0.

2.2.5 Failures and Resubmission of Coursework

A student who fails any required assessment will be permitted one further attempt. All resubmissions should be submitted by Monday of week 4 of Trinity Term by 12 noon. Extensions to the resubmission deadline may only be granted in exceptional circumstances by the DPhil Programme Director.

3. DPhil in Information, Communication and the Social Sciences

3.1 Aims of the programme

The DPhil programme is designed to help you:
- Develop exceptional research skills.
- Gain knowledge of information, communication and the social sciences, enabling you to place emerging technologies into a variety of historical and comparative contexts.
- Undertake original research which makes a significant and substantial contribution to knowledge of the subject.
- Communicate your ongoing and completed work to academic and non-academic audiences in verbal, written, and other formats.
- Produce a lucid and scholarly thesis including a satisfactory abstract for examination.

On completion of the DPhil programme, it is expected that you will have developed your knowledge and understanding of:
- The application of one or more of the social sciences to a detailed study of the Internet or related information and communication technologies and their societal implications.
- Practices and technologies relevant to the Internet and related information and communication technologies.
- Theories and techniques of social sciences research applicable to the field of information and communication and of emerging technologies in particular.
- Modes of communicating and applying research in the field of information and communication to such issues as the design of new technologies and the formation of public policy.
- The qualities and transferable skills necessary to excel in teaching, research, policymaking or business in your studied field.
- Leading-edge research methods relevant to investigating emerging information and communication technologies in the social sciences.

3.2 Core Courses: DPhil in Information, Communication and the Social Sciences

These are the four formal taught requirements for the OII DPhil in Information, Communication and the Social Sciences:
- **Digital Social Research: Methods Core** teaches essential research design and methods skills expected to undertake original research.
- **Digital Social Research: Statistics Core** teaches essential statistical interpretation skills.
- **Advanced Social Theory** focuses on how social scientists think.
- **DPhil Seminar**: The DPhil Programme Directors lead a weekly seminar series during term time. The seminars are an opportunity for students to present and receive feedback on their research, to receive training in various aspects of graduate skills, and to build and maintain a supportive peer-group network. Attendance is mandatory in years 1 and 2, but there is no formal assessment for this seminar.

3.2.1 Core course waiver policy

A student who has completed the MSc Social Science of the Internet or the MSc in Social Data Science is automatically granted a waiver for *Digital Social Research: Statistics Core* and *Digital Social Research: Methods Core*, but not for Advanced Social Theory.

A waiver absolves a student from the formal requirement to satisfactorily complete a course. Students in possession of a waiver are nevertheless welcome to continue to attend the course in question and are encouraged to discuss their wider training needs with their supervisor on a regular basis.

All DPhil students may apply for an ad hoc waiver of any required course on the basis that they have equivalent prior training. Such applications are considered by the DPhil programme director.

3.3 Part-Time DPhil ICSS Core Course Schedule

Part-time DPhil students will normally take the core classes over two years, which currently means taking *Methods Core* and *Advanced Social Theory* in Year 1, and *Statistics Core* in Year 2. In individual cases, permission may be granted to swap these; this should be discussed with the student's supervisor and the ICSS Programme Director.

The courses planned for Year 1 have been scheduled to allow part-time students to take them on a single day (currently Mondays). The *Statistics Core* course, planned for Year 2, is scheduled on Thursdays. Students may choose to switch this order upon consultation with their supervisor. Alternative combinations may require attendance of courses on two different days of the week.

Typical Timeline of Part Time Student

	Michaelmas	Hilary	Trinity
Year 1	2 Core Courses: Advanced Social Theory and Methods Core		Develop research proposal and begin drafting Transfer document
Year 2	1 Core Course: Stats Core		Submit Transfer application
Year 3	Progress to field work/data collection	*Final deadline for Transfer*	
Year 4			Submit Confirmation application
Year 5	Progress to writing up	*Final deadline for Confirmation*	
Year 6			Aim to submit final thesis
Year 7			
Year 8			*Final deadline for submission*

3.3.1 Digital Social Research: Methods Core

DPhil students are assessed through submission of a 1500-word essay due by noon on Wednesday of Week 10 Michaelmas Term. This should be submitted electronically via Canvas.

3.3.2 Digital Social Research: Statistics Core

DPhil students are assessed through two short 1500-word coursework submissions. These should be submitted electronically via Canvas. Deadlines and further instructions will be given early in Michaelmas term.

3.3.3 Advanced Social Theory

The course will be formally assessed by two short 2000-word essays. The first essay is due by 12:00pm on Friday of Week 5 Michaelmas term. The second essay is due by 12:00pm on Friday of Week 8 Michaelmas term. This should be submitted electronically via Canvas.

3.4 Summary of 2025-26 Coursework Deadlines

Course/Name of Assessment	Deadline
Advanced Social Theory coursework essay 1	Friday 12 noon, Week 5 (14th November) of Michaelmas Term
Advanced Social Theory coursework essay 2	Friday 12 noon, Week 8 (5th December) of Michaelmas Term
Digital Social Research: Methods Core coursework essay	Wednesday 12 noon, Week 10 (17th December) of Michaelmas Term
Digital Social Research: Statistics Core assessments	Friday 12 noon Week 8 (5th December) and Wednesday 12 noon Week 10 (19th December) of Michaelmas Term

4. DPhil in Social Data Science

4.1 Aims of the programme

The DPhil programme is designed to help you:
- Develop exceptional research skills.
- Develop and adapt advanced quantitative methods to analyse large, structured and unstructured, complex datasets in order to improve decision making and answer social science research questions.
- Undertake original research which makes a significant and substantial contribution to knowledge of the subject.
- Communicate your ongoing and completed work to academic and non-academic audiences in verbal, written, and other formats.
- Produce a lucid and scholarly thesis including a satisfactory abstract for examination.

On completion of the DPhil programme, it is expected that you will have developed the skills to:
- Demonstrate in-depth research experience in at least one of the social data science areas.
- Be able to generate impact on the policy and design of socio-technical systems based on social data science research.
- Have an in-depth knowledge of specific contemporary social and political science theories and data science approaches to tackling research questions related to these theories.
- Have made an original contribution to the current state-of-the art for analysing large-scale human behavioural data and either have developed new methods and/or adapted existing methods to the specific challenges of data related to human behaviour.
- Design, execute, document, and disseminate research that applies tools and methods from data science to address a social science research question.
- Have the qualities and transferable skills necessary to excel in teaching, research, policymaking or business in your studied field.

4.2 Core Courses: DPhil in Social Data Science

These are the four formal taught requirements for the OII DPhil in Social Data Science:
- **Data and Society I and II**:
  Providing an intellectual framework for Social Data Science within the landscape of scientific inquiry, including important external issues and challenges that shape the contexts in which Social Data Science takes place and how these influence what social data science is and is not.
- **Applied Analytical Statistics:**
  Focussing on the tools and techniques used by social scientists to understand, describe and analyse quantitative data. The focus will be on learning how to apply practical statistics in a social research context (rather than looking at fundamental mathematical foundations of statistical concepts).
- **Research Design for Social Data Science:**
  Core methods and understandings of data science—reliability, robustness, validity, reproducibility, predictive accuracy—effective research design, and ethical research. There will also be a separate DPhil Seminar run for this course.
- **Doctoral Seminar**:

The DPhil Programme Directors lead a weekly seminar series during term time. The seminars are an opportunity for students to present and receive feedback on their research, to receive training in various aspects of graduate skills, and to build and maintain a supportive peer-group network. Attendance is mandatory in years 1 and 2, but there is no formal assessment for this seminar.

4.2.1 Core course waiver policy

A student who has completed the MSc Social Data Science is automatically granted a waiver for all required DPhil Social Data Science courses.

A student who has completed the MSc in Social Science of the Internet will automatically be granted a waiver for Data and Society I and Research Design for Social Data Science, but not for Applied Analytical Statistics or Data and Society II.

A waiver absolves a student from the formal requirement to satisfactorily complete a course. Students in possession of a waiver are nevertheless welcome to continue to attend the course in question and are encouraged to discuss their wider training needs with their supervisor on a regular basis.

All DPhil students may apply for an ad hoc waiver of any required course on the basis that they have equivalent prior training. Such applications are considered by the DPhil programme director.

4.3 Part Time DPhil Schedule

Part-time students will be required to spend at least 30 days physically in Oxford each year, and will be expected to commit approximately 20 hours per week to their studies. Part-time DPhil students are encouraged to take all four core classes in their first year, as these are scheduled on the same day of the week. The exact order can vary depending on the exact needs and prior preparation of the student and will be agreed in discussion with their supervisor and the SDS Programme Director.

Typical Timeline of Part Time Student

	Michaelmas	Hilary	Trinity
Year 1	2 Core Courses: Data and Society I and Research Design for Social Data Science	2 Core Courses: Data and Society II and Applied Analytical Statistics	Develop research proposal and begin drafting Transfer document
Year 2			Submit Transfer application
Year 3	Progress to data collection	*Final deadline for Transfer*	
Year 4			Submit Confirmation application
Year 5	Progress to writing up	*Final deadline for Confirmation*	
Year 6			Aim to submit final thesis
Year 7			
Year 8			*Final deadline for submission*

4.4 Research Design for Social Data Science

Research Design for Social Data Science takes place during Michaelmas term and is examined via assessed written work, consisting of two 1,500-word essays.

4.5 Data and Society

This class is taught over two terms and will be assessed through the Data and Society I paper in Michaelmas Term and Data and Society II paper in Hilary Term.

Data and Society I will be examined through an assessed written submission consisting of one 3,000-word essay (excluding the bibliography, but including footnotes and tables, following the same guidelines as provided for thesis word counts in the Social Data Science MSc Handbook). The written materials are due to be submitted electronically via the University approved online submissions site by 12.00 noon on Thursday of week 0 of Hilary Term.

Data and Society II will be examined through an assessed written submission consisting of one 3,000-word essay (excluding the bibliography, but including footnotes and tables, following the same guidelines as provided for thesis word counts in the Social Data Science MSc Handbook). The written materials are due to be submitted electronically via the University approved online submissions site by 12.00 noon on Thursday of week 10 of Hilary Term.

4.6 Applied Analytical Statistics

Examined through an assessed written submission consisting of one essay not to exceed 4,000 words in length (excluding the bibliography but including footnotes and tables. The essay is due to be submitted electronically via the University approved online submissions site by 12.00 noon on Thursday of week -1 of Trinity Term.

4.7 Summary of 2025-26 Coursework Deadlines

Course/Name of Assessment	Deadline	Calendar date
Research Design for Social Data Science	Essay 1: 12 noon Thursday Week 8 Michaelmas Term Essay 2: 12 noon Thursday Week 0 Hilary Term	4th December 2025 15th January 2026
Data and Society I	12 noon, Thursday Week 0 Hilary Term	15th January 2026
Data and Society II	12 noon, Thursday Week 10 of Hilary Term	26th March 2026
Applied Analytical Statistics	12 noon, Thursday Week -1 of Trinity Term	1st April 2026

5.   DPhil training and development

5.1   DPhil Seminar

All OII DPhil students are expected to attend the weekly DPhil seminars held during term time until they reach Confirmed status; attendance is mandatory for those in year 1 and 2. After the first two years, students will be expected to attend on occasion, for instance to present a mock viva or talk and to give feedback to their colleagues doing likewise.

These seminars are an opportunity for students to present and receive feedback on their research, to receive training in various aspects of graduate skills, and to build and maintain a supportive peer-group network. Content covered in these seminars will vary each term, but all students should expect to present their research at least twice over the course of their programme.

All students are encouraged to present their work as part of their preparation for Transfer, Confirmation, and/or final submission. It is recommended that you contact the DPhil Coordinator the term **before** you wish to schedule in your presentation in the DPhil Seminar. If you are presenting as part of your milestone preparation, we recommend that you aim to present 2 weeks before your milestone submission in order to be able to integrate any feedback.

Students undertaking fieldwork or study outside Oxford will normally be given permission not to attend DPhil Seminar but will still be expected to present their research to the DPhil Seminar. All students may participate remotely.

5.1.1   Part-time Students in the DPhil Seminar

All Part-Time DPhil students will be required to attend regularly during their first three years. After the first three years, students will be expected to attend on occasion, for instance to present a mock viva or talk and to give feedback to their colleagues doing likewise.

Recognizing that part-time students may have difficulty arranging attendance of DPhil seminars every week, the following schedule outlines their minimum expected attendance:

- In the first and fourth terms (Michaelmas years 1 and 2), when part-time DPhil students have their heaviest class load, part-time students will only be required to attend at least two out of eight weeks although more regular attendance is encouraged.
- In the remaining terms of the first three years, part-time students will normally be expected to arrange to attend a minimum of four out of the eight sessions per term, although more regular attendance is encouraged.

5.2   Auditing Optional Courses

DPhil students may choose to gain further methods training and/or theoretical grounding by auditing option courses offered on the MSc in Social Science of the Internet or the MSc in Social Data Science

during Hilary Term. Auditors will be expected to attend all the lectures, any additional workshops and to fully participate and engage in the course. Auditors will also be expected to submit all formative assignments. No summative assignment at the end of the term is required of auditors.

Doctoral students must discuss which optional courses they wish to take during Hilary Term with their supervisor in the first instance. Once they have reached agreement, the student must complete an Audit Request Form.

An Audit Request Form must be submitted by Friday Week 8 in Michaelmas Term. Priority will be given to students who can demonstrate the relevance of a particular course in their Training Needs Assessment. Please note it is strongly recommended that students do not audit more than one course at a time.

5.3 Researcher Development

5.3.1 How do I get help to develop as a researcher?

As a doctoral student in the social sciences, you are expected to develop your expertise in relevant research methods and techniques, as well as a range of professional skills. The right combination of training and experience will help your research and make you more employable, within and beyond academia.

You have access to a wide range of training, including
1. Research methods training within your department, and other departments as appropriate.
2. Researcher development courses and opportunities delivered by the Social Sciences Division and open to all doctoral students.
3. Training provided by the University such as the Careers Service, IT Services, the Language Centre, and the Bodleian Library.

5.3.2 Research and Skills Training at OII and the Social Science Division

The training programmes available to students are not limited to the single purpose of helping them to produce a better thesis, but also impart skills that will be valuable to throughout their life. The personal and professional skills that are developed in all aspects of the degree course are not only about how to conduct research, but also about project management, personal effectiveness, communication and networking skills and career management.

Research and Skills in the Social Sciences is the Social Science Division's programme of research training and skills development for all social science doctoral students. To support your broader development as a researcher, the Social Sciences Division organises a skills training programme covering a range of training to help with completing the DPhil and to prepare you for your future career. Please see their website Researcher support for DPhil students for further information.

Students can access specialist and advanced research methods training in other Departments and across the University. Oxford's participation in the ESRC's Advanced Training Network gives you access to

selected advanced research methods training offered at other UK universities. Further information is available online where you can also browse and search for courses.

At the OII, DPhil students are encouraged to attend weekly seminars and events in which Department research is presented, as well as training seminars organised specifically for each student group. This will help students to develop presentational skills, and to give and receive feedback. Students will also be encouraged where possible to present their work at relevant seminars, conferences etc. outside Oxford.

5.3.3 How do I find the training I need?

You are likely to want to extend and develop the research training that your department offers or expects you to undertake. To find what you need, start by looking at the Social Sciences Researcher Development website for a full programme of the courses and opportunities the Division offers to doctoral students, and a curated list of relevant courses and resources from across the University. Oxford offers a wide range of training opportunities and resources for graduate students. In addition to the Social Science Division's research methods training and the skills development programme, there are also University-wide courses and career development opportunities available.

The Bodleian Library provides training in information skills and information literacy. The Careers Service has a range of events and resources for doctoral students. Through its IT Learning Programme, IT Services offers a range of computing courses. Several online courses are available, including the Research Integrity course for social science researchers. The Centre for Learning and Teaching has a useful set of resources on supervision.

The Language centre offers specialist and difficult languages training. Please note that you should discuss attending courses run by the Language Centre with your supervisor and departmental graduate administrator before signing up for or attending any course.

A full list of useful links is given below:

- Research and Skills Training in the Social Sciences
- Vitae Researcher Development
- ESRC Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines:
- Researcher Development Framework
- Bodleian Library
- Careers Service
- IT Learning Programme
- Research Integrity Online Course
- Centre for Learning and Teaching
- Language Centre

5.3.4 What is a Training Needs Analysis?

Throughout your degree, you are encouraged to reflect and think strategically about your ongoing development as a researcher. Students are expected to complete the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) at

the start of their studies and thereafter on an annual basis. The form and guidance can be found inside the Graduate Student Reporting system (note that your access to the TNA is not limited to the GSR reporting windows). This will help students work with their supervisors to develop bespoke training and development objectives each year. These are not formally assessed by the department, but students' training and development are discussed during the Transfer of Status and Confirmation of Status interviews to ensure that the examiners are satisfied with the student's training.

5.3.5 How can I get teaching experience?

As a second- or third-year doctoral student, you may wish to attend the *Preparation for Teaching and Learning at Oxford* (PLTO), which provides an introduction to teaching in higher education. The Divisional PLTO runs once a term and is advertised on the [Social Sciences Researcher Development website.](#) In addition, teaching and learning is one of the topics covered in DPhil Seminars and materials are available on Canvas from previous seminars.

The OII relies on teaching assistants to support the course convenors to deliver seminars and workshops. Many DPhil students have enjoyed this experience in the past, and the experience is a valuable addition to your CV if you want to pursue a career in academia. It gives students the opportunity to collaborate with a faculty member and insight into what work of academia might entail. OII TA positions are paid and have oversight with training and mentoring support. These positions are typically open to second- and third-year students, but first year DPhil students may apply with their supervisor's support. This is most likely to be relevant for first year students who have previously completed an MSc at the OII or have received a waiver from one or more required courses. Please see the OII's [Notes of Guidance for Teaching Assistants](#) for further information about the expectations.

5.4 Additional Talks and Seminars

You will also have the opportunity to attend other public seminars and talks at the OII where registration is on a first come first served basis. Subject to space and funding, you may be able to take part in other private workshops and seminars within your research area.

In your time at Oxford, you should take full advantage of Oxford's rich range of offerings to develop both general and specialist skills that will be of great value to you in your subsequent work and career. Courses offered by other departments can be found in the [Lecture Lists](#)) and attendance arranged with the relevant department by contacting the lecture list administrator. Open lectures are listed in the *University Gazette* and on the Oxford Talks website.

5.5 Training in Research Ethics in the Social Sciences

All University of Oxford research projects involving human participants or personal data, conducted by Oxford students or staff (including academic and research staff), require research ethics scrutiny and approval before the research starts.

Why is ethics scrutiny and approval important?
- It is part of the responsible conduct of research.

- It demonstrates that your research has been conducted according to the highest ethical standards. It is important to protect the dignity, rights and welfare of all those involved in the research (whether they are participants, researchers or third parties).
- It is a University requirement.
- It is now the expectation - and in some cases formal requirement - of funding bodies and academic journals.
- As a DPhil student, you will have to answer a series of questions regarding ethical scrutiny of your research in your Transfer and Confirmation of Status application forms.

You need ethics approval if...
- Your research requires human subjects to participate directly by, for example:
  - answering questions about themselves or their opinions, whether as members of the public or in elite interviews.
  - performing tasks, or being observed - such as completing an online survey, participating in an experiment in a computer lab, reading words aloud for linguistic analysis.
- *OR* your research involves data (collected by you or others) about identified or identifiable people.

5.5.1 What you need to do

All students are required to complete the research integrity online training offered by Research Support Services, prior to applying for ethical approval. The course takes about three hours to complete, and upon completion, you will receive an email confirmation that you have passed the course.

It is strongly recommended to complete the Research Integrity course during Michaelmas term, as it is also a prerequisite for several option courses taught in Hilary term that DPhil students may wish to audit.

Ethics approval must be obtained before a research project begins, and confirmation that you have submitted your form for approval is a mandatory part of the Transfer of Status application. It cannot be provided retrospectively.

Details of the procedure and application forms can be found on the OII's Research Ethics Intranet page. Here you will find further advice about the process and how it is managed within the OII, as well as links to the university's pages where the most up-to-date forms are located.

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.

5.6   Travel and Fieldwork Safety

Many students will undertake fieldwork as part of their research and almost all will travel on University business at some stage of their degree, for example to attend a conference or to undertake an overseas institutional visit.

5.6.1   Risk assessment and approval for travel

All students and staff should have adequate travel insurance for all trips, which is available free of charge to those travelling on University business. Applications need to be submitted via the University's travel insurance system (TIRS) and should be accompanied by a risk assessment, which will be sent to your supervisor for sign-off. Please provide at least two weeks' notice when making an application.

Further guidance can be found on the OII intranet travel insurance page and any queries can be sent to travel@oii.ox.ac.uk.

In summary, all students must do the following prior to any travel:
- Watch the mandatory overseas travel training
- Discuss any plans for overseas travel with your supervisor at an early stage, particularly for longer-term overseas trips or fieldwork
- Complete a written risk assessment for all trips
- Take out University travel insurance for the activity in question
- Register all trips on University business via the TIRS system, regardless of whether or not you intend to take out travel insurance
- Consult the advice to travellers as issued by the FCO, and/or from your own foreign ministry or other national agency if you are an overseas student

5.6.2   Safety in 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. Please note that fieldwork cannot be conducted before they have passed transfer of status at the earliest.

If a student is proposing to undertake fieldwork or research overseas, they should read the University's policy on:
- *Foreign Travel (University Policy Statement S1/03)*
- *Safety in Fieldwork (Guidance Note S7/95)*

The *Safety in Fieldwork* document contains advice on practical work carried out by staff or students of the University for the purpose of teaching and/or research in places which are not under University

control, but where the University is responsible for the safety of its staff and/or students and others exposed to their activities.

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, which can be found on Canvas. 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. More information on fieldwork and a number of useful links can be found on the Social Sciences divisional website, including accounts of fieldwork experiences.

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

Social Sciences Division Research and Skills Training (termly):
- **Preparation for Safe Fieldwork**: A half day course for those carrying out social science research in rural and urban contexts
- **Fieldworkers' Sessions**: A safe and productive space for talking about the joys and challenges of field-based research for DPhil students
- **Vicarious trauma workshops:** For research on traumatic or distressing topic areas or contexts.

Safety Office courses (termly):
- Fieldwork and overseas travel risk assessment for Fieldworkers and Travellers - Pre-recorded online training presentation
- Emergency First Aid for Fieldworkers
- Fieldwork Safety Overseas

6. Examinations and progress through the DPhil

6.1 Overview of Progression

The DPhil programme involves a series of stages through which doctoral students progress. Details of the expectations for these stages are below. The typical DPhil at OII takes three to four years for full-time students, and six to eight years for part-time students.

DPhil students start with Probationary Research Student (PRS) status. During this period, students take courses and work with their supervisors to develop their research proposal, which is submitted as part of the Transfer of Status application. Transfer of Status is the process by which students progress from Probationary Research Student status to DPhil Student status.

After successfully passing the Transfer of Status to full DPhil student, the student then begins work on their doctoral research in preparation for the next milestone, Confirmation of Status. This is the process by which a student progresses from DPhil Student status to Confirmed DPhil Student status.

Finally, Confirmed DPhil Students work on completing their thesis for final examination.

Roughly speaking, full-time students should expect to spend one year in each of these three statuses (two years for part-time students). The Transfer of Status, Confirmation of Status, and final examination processes are described in detail later in this section.

For further information on Research degree stages, please refer to the University website.

6.2 Transfer to DPhil status

DPhil students will normally commence the degree as a Probationer Research Student (PRS). Probationer Research students usually focus on the development of, and early work on, a thesis topic; on improving knowledge of research methods; on attendance at relevant lectures, seminars and classes; and in preparing their transfer to DPhil status.

You should meet the requirements for residency in Oxford for your particular degree in term time throughout the probationary period, and you should not normally undertake any fieldwork until after you have successfully transferred to full DPhil status.

Probationer Research students must apply for 'transfer' to the status of a DPhil student (DPhil status) before the end of the fourth term (eighth term for part-time students).

For full details, students should refer to the General Regulations Governing Research Degrees.

6.2.1 Purpose of Transfer of Status

The Probationer Research Student (PRS) status is intended to be used constructively, permitting a wise choice of the research topic to be made in the context of broader reading as well as preliminary research, helping the student to become accustomed to the rhythm of graduate work, and allowing for the acquisition of any specific skills appropriate to the research.

The Transfer of Status assessment is to ensure that the student is making satisfactory progress in the development of the research, to ensure that the work is of potential D.Phil. quality, and that the methodology of the research is appropriate and practicable.

The transfer process provides the opportunity for the student to discuss their work with two independent members of staff and to receive feedback. Broadly the assessment should show a plan for the thesis, which locates the research in the context of earlier work in the field, sets out the questions, hypotheses or issues on which it will focus, and describes and explains the methods by which these will be answered, tested or addressed.

The assessment procedures are intended to remove the risk of failure and to reduce the risk of referral at the final examination of thesis as far as possible, and must therefore be as rigorous as is necessary to achieve this.

The formal Regulations for Transfer of Status are set out in:
- General Regulations Governing Research Degrees
- Regulations for research degrees at the Oxford Internet Institute

Further information is also available in the Policy and Guidance on Research Degrees, issued by Education Committee.

6.2.2 Timing of Transfer of Status

The *Examination Regulations* state that PRS status can be held for a maximum of four terms for full-time students (eight terms for part-time students). This means that full-time students should submit their materials for assessment during Michaelmas term Year 2 at the latest, and part-time students by Hilary term Year 3. If feasible and supported by the supervisor, both full- and part-time students are encouraged to apply for Transfer of Status before the maximum time limit.

Illustrative timetable for Transfer of Status

Term Transfer is due:	Michaelmas Year 2
Deadline to submit the online application:	Monday Week 2 MT
Deadline to upload your Transfer document:	Monday Week 4 MT
Milestone interview expected:	2-4 weeks following submission
Assessors' report expected:	2 weeks following the viva
Transfer of Status approved:	By mid-January (last day before Week 1 of the following term)

Please note that completion of the requirement to transfer involves both the submission *and the assessment* of the Transfer of Status document. Thus, submissions should be made by the department deadlines for submissions to ensure enough time for the transfer submission to be read and assessed by the end of the term.

The deadlines for submitting the Transfer of Status assessment materials are Monday of Week 4 of Michaelmas and Hilary and Week 6 for Trinity Term. Note that these deadlines are the latest possible dates in order for the milestone to be completed within that same term, but you can start the Transfer process at any time before these dates: it is not necessary to wait until the termly deadlines.

Students who fail to submit by these deadlines will not be assessed until the next term. If this would cause the student to hold PRS status for more than the maximum time outlined above then the student must also apply for a deferral, as explained below.

6.2.2.1   *Deferral of Transfer of Status*

If a student has not been able to attempt Transfer of Status within the normal maximum number of terms (fourth for full-time students, eighth for part-time students), it will be necessary to make an application for deferral of transfer of status (GSO.2b) via [Student Self-Service.](#)

Students must submit deferral applications by **Monday of Week 5** of the term during which they are scheduled to submit their transfer materials. Applications for deferral must be submitted electronically, including an outline of thesis progress and timeline until submission of confirmation application. The application will then be considered by the student's supervisor and College, with the final decision being made by the OII's Graduate Studies Committee.

The Exam Regulations permit a maximum of two additional terms (four additional terms for part-time students) prior to attempting Transfer. Deferrals of Transfer of Status do not affect the total amount of time permitted to complete the doctorate, which remains at 12 terms (or 24 terms for part-time students).

Further extensions beyond the maxima described here are not permitted by the Examination Regulations and can be granted only in exceptional cases through application to the University's Education Committee for special dispensation. This process should be regarded as truly exceptional, may take longer to be approved, and may require the submission of detailed evidence and planning in support of the application.

Dealing with the unexpected
Even with the best planning occasionally something unexpected may happen which disrupts your progress. Always be ready to re-prioritise and if you are unsure how to proceed, discuss with your supervisor and/or Course Director and they will be able to help you re-plan and decide how best to prioritise.

While a deferral may be necessary in some cases where you have genuinely lost sufficient time that you are unable to complete a piece of work, be cognisant of the potential knock-on effects of extension also. There may include:
- Delays in receiving feedback which will support your further studies.
- Reduced time to complete other work due to clustering of deadlines.

- Delayed completion of your programme could impact on being able to progress to take up offers of employment.

If you do think you will need additional time to reach programme milestones, be sure to discuss this as early as possible with your supervisor and/or Course Director. They will be well placed to help you to consider the academic impacts, and as noted above, may be able to provide alternative suggestions for how to reprioritise your work to enable you to meet the original deadline.

6.2.1 How to Apply for Transfer of Status

Applications for transfer of status should be made using the online Transfer of Status application accessible via the My Student Record tab in [Student Self Service](#).

Students are required to complete and submit the form online and to upload supplementary information on development of both research specific and personal and professional skills during their time as a Probationer Research Student. Students are also required to indicate whether their work requires research ethics approval and to provide evidence that they have successfully completed the University's online researcher integrity training course.

Once the student submits the application, it will then be considered by the student's supervisor. Supervisors are asked at this point, in consultation with their student, to suggest names of appropriate assessors. The student's supervisor is responsible for making the necessary arrangements to obtain agreement to assess from these assessors. The application will then be considered by the College, and then by the Director of Graduate Studies and OII's Graduate Studies Committee.

6.2.2 Content of Transfer of Status Application

Students must submit the following materials as part of their Transfer of Status application.

1. **The GSO.2 online application** containing your request to Transfer which includes:

   - Details of the **nominated assessors**, provided by your supervisor
   - Confirmation that the **Research Integrity online training** has been completed and passed
   - Confirmation that **research ethics approval** has been granted or applied for
   - A record of your **skills training and development activities** since admission, including compulsory core courses taken at the OII

2. **A detailed research plan** of no more than 15,000 words, to include:

   - An outline of your research of no more than 500 words, summarising your thesis topic;
   - A literature review section that draws upon relevant literature to discuss the background to the research, theoretical perspectives, and possible outcomes to the research;
   - A statement of key research questions;

- A discussion of the overall methodological approach and specific strategies to answering these research questions, paying particular attention to practical and ethical issues relevant to the research;
- A preliminary timetable for the research;
- A list of references;
- Any other optional appendices which you think will help the assessors evaluate your candidacy, for example a Development Needs Assessment Form or a more detailed Gantt Chart

Before submission, students should discuss their full draft research plan with their supervisor(s).

The Transfer of Status document will be no more than 15,000 words. Therefore, the **account of existing scholarship and research**, or the literature survey, will necessarily be brief. It should, however, be very focused and show the assessors which literature will be **most important in guiding your research.**

The following is a **suggested structure** for a Research Plan. However, it is not an invariable pattern. In particular, research projects vary in their emphasis (theory, the literature, the methods of data gathering, the methods of analysis, the results of the analysis, etc.) so the relative lengths and the order of these sections can vary:
a. State your **research topic**, research question or hypothesis to be tested as succinctly and clearly as you can.
b. The research topic, question or hypothesis must be put into the context of existing **literature**. It may be that the existing literature has a gap, or that the accepted findings are controversial or open to doubt, or that you think that the dominant theoretical framework(s) should be questioned, or that there is a continuing conflict between two or more 'camps', or that the methods used in existing literature should be improved, or that you think of the question in a different way from that of most published authors. In a brief section you need to outline your interpretation of the existing literature and explain how your research project 'fits' or will make a contribution.
c. **Data gathering**. 'Data' includes a wide range of material. Your 'data gathering' section must outline your sampling strategy (how many of what chosen how from what population?), your data gathering and data handling methods, and your plans for data analysis. This applies to empirical projects of all sorts: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods.
d. **Data analysis:** statistical analysis (what kinds of modeling, descriptive or hypothesis-testing techniques?), discourse analysis (what kind?), or formal model building? Constructing historical chronologies? Analytic narratives? Applying game theory? At this point, you are aiming not to anticipate what the results of your analysis will be, but to be clear about what questions you will be asking of your data and to think about these questions in such a way that you are clear about the relevance of your **method** to your **theory** and hypothesis.
e. **Ethical issues:** These should be identified and addressed (and a CUREC questionnaire completed and enclosed if the research involves human subjects)
f. Finally, you need to wrap the thing up by discussing briefly how the data analysis you propose should bear on the question you start out with in such a way as to make a meaningful contribution to the field you have described in your literature review. (Again, this can seem so obvious as to be not worth stating, but assessors often criticise work because the research proposed is not relevant to the question asked).

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6.2.3 Appointment of assessors and arranging the interview

Each Transfer of Status is assessed by two assessors, who should be internal to the OII or the University of Oxford. In order to minimise delays, supervisors are expected to identify appropriate assessors and seek their informal agreement not later than the beginning of the term in which transfer materials are to be submitted. Assessors should then be nominated by the supervisor as part of their approval of the student's the online Transfer of Status application form.

Assessors will normally be academic members of staff working in the University of Oxford and only in exceptional circumstances will an external assessor be appointed. It is permissible for the same assessors to be used for both Transfer and Confirmation, and one of these assessors may also act as the internal examiner for the final viva.

Once the Graduate Studies Committee has confirmed and approved the assessors, the DPhil Coordinator contacts the assessors to organise a mutual convenient time for the interview. Students should not contact the assessors directly but may of course respond to their communications about dates etc.

Students should normally expect to be interviewed within **2-4 weeks of submission of their Transfer application**, though this may be longer during the vacation periods depending on the availability of assessors. Students who submit an application in late June or July should be aware that the interview with the assessors may not be held until September because of the long vacation and the assessors' availability.

Please note that interviews can be conducted remotely (online) without requiring approval from the Proctors, by applying for permission to the Director of Graduate Studies. The Transfer assessment is a formal requirement, but the interview is not an official examination or viva, and so *sub fusc* is not worn. Please see the *[Policy and Guidance on Research Degrees](#)*, for further information.

6.2.4 Instructions to Transfer assessors

Once assessors are provided access to the student's uploaded work on eVision, they are asked to contact students as soon as reasonably possible to arrange a time for the interview, or to explain problems in doing so. Students may sometimes find it an anxious wait, and may have good reasons for wanting the assessment completed as soon as possible. Students should let the DPhil Coordinator know if there is a problem in this respect at the time of application.

Assessors are invited to consider whether the student is capable of carrying out advanced research, and that the subject of the thesis and the manner of its treatment proposed by the student are acceptable for transfer to D.Phil. Assessors should judge the application against the criteria for success defined below. They should aim to provide constructive criticism and advice to the student to identify and address deficiencies and thereby strengthen their proposed research project, rather than presenting a judgemental verdict. Dismissive or aggressive remarks are not appropriate.

An application to transfer to D.Phil. status must provide evidence that the applicant can construct an argument, can present material in a scholarly manner, has a viable subject to work on, and can be reasonably expected to complete it in 3-4 years (6-8 years for a part-time student). However, the assessors should judge the submissions in the light of the fact that they usually reflect 3 terms' work and are made at the early stages of the research project. The written work will not necessarily read like a final thesis. Omissions, unpersuasive arguments, or missing perspectives are not fatal unless they seem to indicate an inability to reach the necessary standard. The research proposal and thesis structure need not be completely finalised, but the student should have clearly defined ideas of what the research questions are, and have possible ways to answer them.

The joint assessors' report should be 1-2 pages in length, providing a permanent record of advice given to the student at this stage and an indication of the student's progress. It should normally include a summary of the points raised in the interview, comments on the positive aspects of the student's work, as well as any concerns about the student's progress and suggestions for the research going forward. Finally, for non-native English speakers, the report should indicate the assessors' view of the student's ability to present and defend the work in English.

Once the nominated assessors have been approved, the DPhil Coordinator will contact them to arrange a date for the interview and give the assessors access to the student's application and submitted materials on eVision. Please see the OII Intranet for further instructions for accessing milestone applications on eVision.

6.2.5 Criteria for Success

The assessors will judge the application to Transfer to DPhil status against the following eight criteria:
1. **Expression** (competency in both written and spoken English, and ability to demonstrate the progression of an argument).
2. **Expertise** (the written work and interview demonstrate a good overall knowledge and understanding of the subject, and a wide and critical reading of the literature).
3. **Feasibility** (the aims of the research are realistic given the candidate's skills, training plan and supervision; limitations to the research are addressed).
4. **Methodology** (appropriate methodology and research techniques are proposed).
5. **Ethics** (Scholarly and rigorous approach to research issues; the research topic and treatment meet the Division's ethical standards).
6. **Timeline** (the proposed schedule of work can be completed within the time allowed for the DPhil).
7. **Facilities and supervision** (The University has adequate facilities, including supervision capacity, to enable the research to progress).
8. **Training plan** (the candidate and supervisor(s) have developed a plan to support research and career development)

6.2.6 **Outcomes of Transfer of Status**

Following the interview, the assessors will write a joint report and submit their recommendation on the outcome of the assessment to the Graduate Studies Committee. Students should normally expect to receive the report of their assessment within 3 weeks.

The assessors may recommend one of the following four outcomes, which must be considered and approved by the Graduate Studies Committee:

1. Pass (outright or following completion of further minor revisions)
2. Referral for a second attempt at Transfer
3. Transfer to MLitt or MSc (Res)
4. Reject the application

At the first attempt at Transfer only options 1 or 2 should normally be chosen. At the second attempt, options 1, 3 or 4 can be considered. The Graduate Studies Committee may also request additional work or other evidence, or appoint an additional assessor to help in making a final decision. Further details about each of the four outcomes are given below.

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1. **Pass (outright)**

   Suggestions and advice for future progress should accompany this outcome, but no specific revisions are required at this time.

   Conditional Pass (following completion of minor clarifications)

   Assessors may request further minor revisions before making a first recommendation. In such cases, it should normally be possible to complete the additional work within one month of the assessment. A second interview is not normally required.

   Conditional Pass (following receipt of a written response to this report, signed by both the student and supervisor)

   Assessors may agree to recommend a Pass subject to receipt of a satisfactory written response which details how the student intends to address the issues raised in the assessors' report in their future work. In such cases, the written response should normally be returned within one month of the assessors' report. A second interview is not normally required.

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2. **Referral for a second attempt at Transfer**

   This should normally involve the same assessors and take place <u>within one term</u> of the first attempt. In such cases, it should normally be possible to complete the additional work within 3 months of the assessment. This process of re-assessment <u>must always include an interview,</u> and the student will need to submit a fresh online application. The assessors should provide clear guidance on what needs to be done to improve the application before the second attempt at Transfer is submitted.

   Referral for a second attempt is intended to ensure that the student's research is feasible within the time limits for the DPhil and can be set on the best possible course. This outcome

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	should not be seen as a failure: it is akin to the revise and resubmit process in submitting a paper for publication.
3.	**Transfer to MLitt or MSc (Res)**
	Although the work presented was not suitable for transfer to DPhil status, nonetheless, the assessors felt it was still strong enough for the lower award which is a less demanding and shorter-timescale research degree.
4.	**Reject the application**
	The assessors cannot recommend transfer to either DPhil status or the lower award, and thus it is recommended that the student should withdraw from the course.

Significant differences of opinion between the assessors will be adjudicated by the Graduate Studies Committee, in consultation with the assessors.

If at the first attempt a student is transferred to the lower degree they may accept this, or may choose to retain PRS status and make a second transfer application the following term. If a student accepts transfer to the lower degree at the first attempt, or is transferred to the lower degree at the second attempt, they may exceptionally be permitted one further opportunity to transfer to DPhil status provided that sufficient time has elapsed (normally at least six months) to allow the possibility of significant improvement, that significant progress has been made, and that the student's supervisor supports the application. In addition, the student's college and Director of Graduate Studies would also need to endorse the application.

If a student fails to transfer to DPhil status or to the status of the applicable lower degree after two transfer applications, they shall cease to hold the status of a PRS student and their name shall be removed from the Register of Graduate Students. In such circumstances, informal counselling, often involving the student's college, should be an integral part of the procedures.

6.3 Confirmation of DPhil status

Confirmation of DPhil status is an essential stage on the way to the doctorate. The confirmation of status process enables the student to have an assessment of their work by one or more assessors, other than the supervisor(s). If confirmation of status is approved, this is an indication that, if work on the thesis continues to develop satisfactorily, submission within the course of three further terms might reasonably be expected. It should be noted that a successful completion of confirmation of status provides an indicator only for readiness for submission, not for the final outcome of the examination of the thesis.

The University expects that sufficient time should be allowed for assimilation of the experience and feedback from Confirmation prior to submission of the final thesis. For this reason, the Policy and Guidance on Research Degrees states that there should be a gap between completion of confirmation of status and submission, normally of not less than three months.

6.3.1 The Purpose of Confirmation of Status

The Confirmation of Status process allows the student to have an assessment of their thesis progress by two assessors to give an indication of whether it would be reasonable to consider submission of the thesis within the course of a further three terms (six terms for part-time students), given the continuation of satisfactory work. Successful Confirmation of Status should not be seen as explicitly linked to the final outcome of the examination of the thesis.

The confirmation assessment is different to the transfer assessment. The assessor*s* focus on how the research is progressing, the quality of the draft chapters, and on the plan for completion. The assessors look to ensure that the student is making the appropriate amount of progress in the development of the thesis, so that submission will be achieved within three or at most four years (or six to eight years for part-time students). In doing so, assessors are also required to ensure that the student is not attempting to deal with an impossibly or unnecessarily large scope of thesis work or material. The student should benefit from independent assessment of their work and should receive authoritative comments and suggestions on problems and how to address them. The assessors may be able provide guidance on how to better present the material and on the use of concepts and methods. Even if the thesis is in good shape, the assessors often stimulate valuable improvements to it. However, the assessors may also identify any weaknesses in theory, research design, data collection and analysis that may compromise the final thesis. The confirmation interview is a good opportunity to prepare for the *viva voce* examination of the thesis.

The confirmation assessment is also a formal test that is possible to fail. Critical comments from the assessors are meant to be constructive, and are aimed at helping students refine and improve their work in anticipation of their final submission. Students are strongly recommended to discuss such comments with their supervisor to ensure that they are adequately addressed.

The formal Regulations for Confirmation of Status are set out in the general regulations of the *Examination Regulations.* Further information is also available in the Policy on Research Degrees.

6.3.2 **Timing of Confirmation of Status**

Students are required to achieve Confirmation of Status within nine terms (eighteen terms for part-time students). The earliest applications for Confirmation of Status can be made is from the sixth term from admission for full-time and not earlier than the 12th term for part-time students. Students should normally achieve Confirmation of Status at the latest three months before submission of their thesis for full-time students, and six months before submission of their thesis for part-time students.

As with the Transfer of Status, the department has set deadlines for each term for submission of Confirmation of Status applications. This is to ensure that there is enough time for assessors to read the submission, schedule an interview, assess the transfer application, and file their report in that term. Students must submit their Confirmation of Status materials by midday on the following dates:
- o   Michaelmas Term, Monday of week 5
- o   Hilary Term, Monday of week 5
- o   Trinity Term, Monday of week 6

Note that these dates are deadlines, and materials may be submitted earlier. Typically, full-time students submit a Confirmation application in Trinity Term of their second year or Michaelmas of their third year, and at the latest must have passed Confirmation of Status before the end of their ninth term.

Students who fail to submit by these deadlines must wait until the next term. If waiting would cause the student to exceed the maximum number of terms on course prior to confirmation (nine terms for full-time students, eighteen for part-time students) then the student must also apply for a deferral.

6.3.2.1   *Deferral of Confirmation of Status*

If a student is unable to apply for Confirmation of Status within nine terms (18th terms for part-time students) of admission as a graduate student, they must apply for a deferral of Confirmation of Status, which is an online application accessed via the Student Self-Service. The application will then be considered by the student's supervisor and College. Students must submit deferral applications by **Monday of Week 5** of the term during which they are scheduled to submit their Confirmation materials.

The Exam Regulations permit a maximum of three additional terms (whether full- or part-time) prior to attempting Confirmation. Deferrals of Confirmation of Status do not affect the total amount of time permitted to complete the doctorate, which remains at 12 terms (or 24 terms for part-time students).

The Director of Graduate Studies will then assess the application for deferral. If Confirmation of Status is not achieved within nine terms of admission as a graduate student, or approval given for a deferral of confirmation of status, their status will lapse. In exceptional cases only, a fourth term of deferral may be granted; however, this requires approval by the Director of Graduate Studies, DPhil Programme Director and the University's Education Committee as it requires formal dispensation from the *Examination Regulations*.

Dealing with the unexpected

Even with the best planning occasionally something unexpected may happen which disrupts your progress. Always be ready to re-prioritise and if you are unsure how to proceed, discuss with your supervisor and/or Course Director and they will be able to help you re-plan and decide how best to prioritise.

While a deferral may be necessary in some cases where you have genuinely lost sufficient time that you are unable to complete a piece of work, be cognisant of the potential knock-on effects of extension also. There may include:
- Delays in receiving feedback which will support your further studies.
- Reduced time to complete other work due to clustering of deadlines.
- Delayed completion of your programme could impact on being able to progress to take up offers of employment.

If you do think you will need additional time to reach programme milestones, be sure to discuss this as early as possible with your supervisor and/or Course Director. They will be well placed to help you to consider the academic impacts, and as noted above, may be able to provide alternative suggestions for how to reprioritise your work to enable you to meet the original deadline.

6.3.1 How to Apply for Confirmation of Status

Applications for confirmation of status should be made using the online Confirmation of Status application accessible via the My Student Record tab in Student Self Service. Students are required to complete and submit the form online, and include details of any research specific and/or personal and professional skills acquired, or further training needed in, and also information on any other related activities undertaken, e.g. presentation of posters, attendance at conferences etc.

Students are required to state whether their work required research ethics approval (and if appropriate, was granted). Students are also required to provide evidence that they have successfully completed the University's online researcher integrity training course (unless already provided when applying for Transfer of Status).

Once the student submits the application, it will then be considered by the student's supervisor. Supervisors are asked at this point in consultation with their student to suggest names of appropriate assessors. The application will then be considered by the College, and then by the Director of Graduate Studies/Graduate Studies Committee.

6.3.2 Content of Confirmation of Status application

Students must submit the following papers as part of their Confirmation of Status documentation:

1.   The online **GSO.14 application** containing your request to Confirm which includes:

     o   Details of the nominated assessors, provided by your supervisor
     o   Confirmation that the **Research Integrity online training** has been completed and passed

- o Confirmation of **research ethics approval**
- o A **self-assessment report** on your progress of not more than 300 words
- o Your proposed **timetable for submission** detailing what work has already been carried out and what activities are planned for the remaining stages
- o A record of **skills training and development activities** since Transfer of Status

2. The **Confirmation of Status document*** which must include:

- o An **abstract** of the thesis;
- o An **outline structure** of the thesis, consisting of chapter headings, and a brief statement of the intended content;
- o For **integrated theses**: one completed paper and either a fully developed literature review or a second completed paper
- o For **monograph theses**: two completed draft chapters intended to form part of the final thesis;
- o Any other optional appendices which you think will help the assessors evaluate your candidacy, for example a Development Needs Assessment Form or a more detailed Gantt Chart

 * *There is no maximum word limit for the Confirmation of Status document; however, considering the document is to consist of two chapters or two papers of the overall doctoral thesis which must not exceed 100,000 words, 30,000 words can be taken as a sensible upper limit. Candidates may not submit more than two chapters or papers for assessment at Confirmation of Status.*

Before submission, students should discuss drafts of all of these items with their supervisor.

6.3.3 Appointment of Assessors and Arranging the Interview

In order to minimise delays, supervisors are expected to identify appropriate assessors and seek their informal agreement not later than the beginning of the term in which transfer materials are to be submitted. Assessors should then be nominated via the submission of the online confirmation application via Student Self Service, which contains a section for nomination of assessors. Assessor nominations will be reviewed on a weekly basis by the Director of Graduate Studies, who approves appointment of assessors by Chair's action on behalf of the Graduate Studies Committee.

Assessors will normally be academic members of staff working in the University of Oxford and only in exceptional circumstances will an external assessor be appointed. It is permissible for the same assessors to be used for both Transfer and Confirmation, and one of these assessors may also act as the internal examiner for the final viva. Where an external Confirmation assessor is exceptionally approved, that assessor will not be eligible to act as external examiner of the DPhil *viva voce* examination.

Once the Graduate Studies Committee has confirmed and approved the assessors, the DPhil Coordinator contacts the assessors to organise a mutually convenient time for the interview. Students should not contact the assessors directly but may of course respond to their communications about dates etc.

Students should normally expect to be interviewed within **4-6 weeks** of submission of their Confirmation application, though this may be longer during the vacation periods depending on the availability of assessors. Students who submit an application in late June or July should be aware that the interview

with the assessors may not be held until September because of the long vacation and the assessors' availability.

The Confirmation assessment is a formal requirement, but the interview is not an official examination or viva, and *sub fusc* is not worn. Please note that interviews can be conducted remotely (online) without requiring approval from the Proctors, by applying for permission to the Director of Graduate Studies. Please see the *[Policy and Guidance on Research Degrees](#)*, for further information.

6.3.4 Instructions to Confirmation Assessors

Once assessors are provided access to the student's uploaded work on eVision, they are asked to contact students as soon as reasonably possible to arrange a time for the interview, or to explain problems in doing so. Students may sometimes find it an anxious wait, and may have good reasons for wanting the assessment completed as soon as possible. Student should please let the DPhil Coordinator know if there is a problem in this respect at the time of application.

An applicant for confirmation of status should be close to having a complete thesis plan, and the work submitted should be close to reading as a complete thesis chapter. In contrast to the transfer assessment, omissions and missing perspectives are much more serious at this stage, but if the student can satisfy the assessors at interview that matters will improve, this should not be a reason to decline recommending confirmation of status.

The work should be presented in a scholarly fashion and should be essentially of the standard expected of a D.Phil. thesis in the final examination, though it is not expected that every footnote should be in place yet etc. The assessors should judge the application against the criteria for success defined below.

As with the transfer assessment, the assessors should aim to provide constructive criticism and advice to the student to identify and address deficiencies and thereby strengthen their thesis, rather than presenting a judgemental verdict. Dismissive or aggressive remarks are not appropriate. If it is unclear during the assessment how the research will be completed, or the proposal is over-large, the assessors may request a revised thesis outline or further written work before submitting the initial report.

The joint assessors' report should be 1-2 pages in length, providing a permanent record of advice given to the student at this stage and indication of the student's progress. It should normally include a summary of the points raised in the interview, feedback on the written work submitted prior to the interview, comments on the positive aspects of the student's work, as well as any concerns about the student's progress and suggestions for the research going forward.

In particular, the assessors are asked to consider the clarity of the goals, the chapter structure, the timetable for completion and progress to date, and the significance to the existing literature and field. They should also provide an evaluation of the written work submitted by testing whether the work is presented in a scholarly and lucid manner.

More specifically, the assessors should consider commenting on whether the student has presented evidence of being able to undertake research that provides a significant and substantial contribution in the particular field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls. Also, they should consider

whether the student has developed a systematic acquisition and understanding of the substantial body of knowledge at the forefront of their field and a thorough understanding of the techniques for research needed for advanced academic enquiry.

Furthermore, the student should show the capacity to design, carry through and defend the thesis within three or at most four years. Finally, for non-native English speakers, the report should indicate the assessors' view of the student's ability to present and defend the work in English.

Once the nominated assessors have been approved, the DPhil Coordinator will contact them to arrange a date for the interview and give the assessors access to the student's application and submitted materials on eVision. Please see the OII Intranet for further instructions for accessing milestone applications on eVision.

Significant differences of opinion between the assessors will be adjudicated by the Graduate Studies Committee, in consultation with the assessors.

6.3.5 Criteria for Success

For Confirmation of Status to be approved, the student will need to be able to show that the research already accomplished shows promise of the ability to produce a satisfactory thesis on the intended topic, the work submitted for assessment is of the standard expected of a DPhil thesis in the final exam, the bulk of any fieldwork has been completed and the analysis is well developed, and the research schedule is viable so that the thesis can be completed within three or at most four years from admission (four to eight years for part-time students).

Students must also show that they are able to present and defend their work in English. Assessors will judge the application against the following eight criteria:

A. **Contribution** (clear indication that the thesis will make an original contribution to the field of study)
B. **Quality** (the draft chapters are of the quality expected for a final DPhil thesis; evidence of progression of logic and argument throughout the thesis)
C. **Expression** (competency in both written and spoken English; ability to articulate and defend the argument in the interview)
D. **Expertise** (the written work and interview demonstrate excellent overall knowledge and understanding of the subject, and a wide and critical reading of the literature)
E. **Feasibility** (the bulk of any fieldwork or computational research has been completed and the analysis is well developed)
F. **Methodology** (appropriate methodology and research techniques have been proposed and used)
G. **Ethics** (scholarly and rigorous approach to research issues; the research topic and treatment meet the Division's ethical standards)
H. **Timeline** (clear timetable for the completion of the research within three or at most four years from admission—six to eight years for part-time students)

6.3.6 **Outcomes of Confirmation of Status**

The assessors may recommend one of the following four outcomes, which must be considered and approved by the Graduate Studies Committee:

5. Pass (outright or following completion of further minor revisions)
6. Referral for a second attempt at Confirmation
7. Transfer to MLitt or MSc (Res)
8. Reject the application

At the first attempt at confirmation only options 1 or 2 should normally be chosen. At the second attempt, options 1, 3 or exceptionally 4 should be considered. The Graduate Studies Committee may also request additional work or other evidence, or appoint an additional assessor to help in making a final decision. Further details about each of the four outcomes are given below.

1.	**Pass (outright)**
	Suggestions and advice for future progress should accompany this outcome, but no specific revisions are required at this time.
	Conditional Pass (following completion of minor clarifications)
	Assessors may request further minor revisions before making a first recommendation. In such cases, it should normally be possible to complete the additional work within one month of the assessment. A second interview is not normally required.
	Conditional Pass (following receipt of a written response to this report, signed by both the student and supervisor)
	Assessors may agree to recommend a Pass subject to receipt of a satisfactory written response which details how the student intends to address the issues raised in the assessors' report in their future work. In such cases, the written response should normally be returned within one month of the assessors' report. A second interview is not normally required.
2.	**Referral for a second attempt at Confirmation**
	This should take place within one term (or two for part-time students) of the first attempt and normally involve the same assessors. A fresh application form should be completed and an interview should always be held. If the first attempt is made in the final term permitted, a one-term extension (up to two terms for part-time students) is automatically granted to allow the second attempt.
	The assessors should provide clear guidance on what needs to be done to improve the application before the second attempt at confirmation is submitted. This may require additional written work or other evidence, and possibly the appointment of an additional assessor.
3.	**Transfer to MLitt or MSc (Res)**
	Although the work presented was not suitable for confirmation of D.Phil. status, nonetheless, the assessors felt it was still strong enough for the lower award which is a less demanding and shorter-timescale research degree. In cases where transfer to a lower award is approved, if the student is already in their ninth term or beyond, a formal extension of time will also be needed to allow the

student to stay on the graduate register for the lower degree, otherwise their status will lapse, and they will have to subsequently apply for reinstatement to the Register of Graduate Students.
4. **Reject the application** The assessors cannot recommend confirmation of status, or transfer to the lower award. This exceptional outcome should only be used if the quality of the student's work has regressed to below the standard previously achieved for transfer of status.

At the first attempt at confirmation only options 1, 2 and 3 should be chosen. At the second attempt, options 1, 3 & 4 should be considered. The Graduate Studies Committee may also request additional work or other evidence, or appoint an additional assessor to help in making a final decision.

Referral for a second attempt is intended to ensure that the student's work is improved and set on the best possible course, and should not be seen as a failure. It is intended to ensure the student will be able to reach the standard required for the award of DPhil, and reduce the risk of a far more time-consuming referral at the final viva stage.

If a student fails to confirm DPhil status or to transfer to the status of the applicable lower degree after two attempts, then their student status will lapse and their name will be removed from the Register of Graduate Students. In such circumstances, informal counselling, often involving the student's college, should be an integral part of the procedures.

6.4   The final viva

The final stage of the DPhil is submitting a complete thesis, which is then examined at a formal *viva voce*. Detailed instructions for thesis submission and the process for requesting extensions of time are covered in section 7.

6.4.1   Examination criteria

The examiners of a DPhil thesis are asked to certify whether:
- the candidate possesses a good general knowledge of the particular field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls;
- the candidate has made a significant and substantial contribution in the particular field of learning within which the thesis falls;
- the thesis is presented in a lucid and scholarly manner;
- it merits the degree of Doctor of Philosophy;
- the candidate has presented a satisfactory abstract of the thesis.

DPhil examiners are asked to bear in mind that their judgement of the substantial significance of the work should take into account what may reasonably be expected of a capable and diligent graduate student after three or at most four years of full-time study (or the equivalent durations for part-time students).

6.4.2 Application process

A few months before a thesis is to be submitted for examination, a student can access the Application for Appointment of Examiners (GSO.3) form through an online application available via Student Self-Service. If your thesis title has changed, it is possible to request approval of your new title on the same application. Students should also read carefully the Notes of Guidance for students submitting their thesis (GSO.20a).

It is strongly advised that student submit the Application for Appointment of Examiners 4-6 weeks prior to the submission of the thesis. The examiners have to be approved by the Graduate Studies Committee and the examiners' formal acceptance received before a thesis can be sent out by the Examination Schools (which are responsible for sending theses to the examiners), even if the thesis has already been submitted.

Students must submit their digital examiners' copy of their thesis online, via Student Self-Service no later than the last day of the vacation immediately following the term in which their application for the appointment of examiners was made.

Students may submit the digital examiner's copy of their thesis at the same time as applying for the appointment of examiners, but as noted above, their examiners will not be sent a link to download the thesis until the Application for Appointment of Examiners has been approved and the examiners have formally confirmed their appointment to the Research Degree Team at the Examination Schools.

The Internal Examiner will arrange the date of the oral examination, the *viva voce* (or viva for short). On no account should the candidate submit their thesis directly to the examiners or contact the examiners directly, although students may of course respond to their communications about dates, etc.

6.4.3 Timing of the viva

The viva typically takes place 6-10 weeks following thesis submission, assuming that there have been no delays in the appointment of examiners.

Students may apply to the OII's Graduate Studies Committee for the oral examination to be held not later than a certain date, provided that this date is not less than one calendar month after the date on which the thesis has been submitted **or** after the date on which the examiners have agreed to act, whichever is the later. The minimum time between both examiners receiving the official digital copy of the thesis and a viva date remains at **four weeks.**

Applications for time-limited vivas can be made on the Application for Appointment of Examiners form at the same time as the main submission; please notify the DPhil Coordinator (dphil@oii.ox.ac.uk) if you are making such an application. If the committee is satisfied that there are special circumstances justifying this application, it will ask the examiners to make arrangements to enable the oral examination to be held within the period specified.

If students wish to submit during Trinity Term, they should remember that potential examiners often have heavy commitments in the summer months. Students should, therefore, make their application for the appointment of examiners no later than the start of Trinity and give a firm date for the planned thesis submission during Trinity. There remains a risk that the *viva* will not be held until September or the following Michaelmas Term.

6.4.4 Selection of examiners

Supervisors are asked to suggest on the Application for Appointment of Examiners form the names of at least two proposed examiners (one internal from the University, one external) to examine the thesis, and to consult with the student to check if they have any reasonable objection to any of the names proposed.

Neither examiner will be the student's supervisor, or have given significant help or advice to the student in the preparation of the thesis, or have a connection to the candidate that would impair their ability to act as an impartial examiner. In the case of in-person exams, examiners should in principle be based in the UK or Europe, or planning to visit the UK in any case, as there is only limited funding available to pay the travel costs of external examiners. For approved remote (online) vivas, no restrictions on the examiner's location exist.

It is helpful if the supervisor can check informally with the proposed examiners whether they would in principle be willing to act before they indicate their names on the form. A backup examiner can also be indicated in case the proposed examiner is unable to attend.

6.4.5 Oral examination arrangements

The oral examination will normally be held in Oxford. Please note that the final viva can be conducted online or hybrid by applying for permission to the Director of Graduate Studies. Please see the *Policy and Guidance on Research Degrees,* Annex D, for further information.

In particular, the Education Committee would remind candidates, supervisors, and examiners of the following:

- Requests for early *vivas* should be reasonable: it should be noted that the regulations do not permit a candidate to request an examination date that is earlier than one month after receipt of their thesis at the Examination Schools. External examiners should be advised not to make their travel arrangements in advance of early *viva* requests being agreed. Requests from examiners to hold the *viva* sooner than one month after receipt of the thesis, which will involve an application to the Proctors for dispensation from the regulations, will be considered only in exceptional circumstances.
- Electronic copies of theses should not be sent direct to examiners by supervisors or candidates. The version of the thesis to be examined must be the version submitted via Student self-service
- In accordance with the provisions of the Examination Regulations, students with disabilities may apply for adjustments to be made to their transfer and confirmation and final viva

examinations using form GSO.19. Adjustments can be requested at any point from offer of a place to submission; at the point of applying for transfer, at the point of applying for confirmation or at the point of applying for final viva/appointment of examiners. The relevant Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), using guidance issued by the Proctors, will determine whether the requested adjustment is one that they can approve, or one that must be approved by the Proctors. The relevant department is then responsible for making the necessary arrangements once approved.

- All requests for dispensations from regulations should be well planned and made in good time.

6.4.6 Possible outcomes of the DPhil viva

The report and recommendation of the examiners is submitted to the OII's Graduate Studies Committee. Examiners for the DPhil must choose one of the following outcome recommendations:

A. Award the DPhil (without corrections)
B. Award the DPhil (with minor corrections)
C. Potentially award the DPhil (following resubmission after major corrections)
D. Potentially award the DPhil (following resubmission after major corrections and a mandatory viva)
E. Student choice: to reference back for further work on the thesis and re-examination for the DPhil, or supplicate for MLitt/MSc (Res)
F. Student choice: to reference back for further work on the thesis and either re-examination for the DPhil, or re-examination for MLitt/MSc (Res)
G. Reference back for further work on the thesis and re-examination for MLitt/MSc (Res)
H. Award the MLitt/MSc (Res)
I. Award the MLitt/MSc (Res) (with minor corrections)
J. No award (fail)

For a first DPhil examination, examiners can only select from recommendations A-F.

For a second examination, examiners can select from recommendations A-J.

For a third examination, examiners can select A, B, H, I, J.

All examiners must agree on the merits of the thesis when awarding the DPhil and be satisfied that the student has:
- demonstrated a good general knowledge of the thesis subject;
- made a significant contribution to that particular field of learning;
- presented in a coherent and scholarly manner; and
- provided a satisfactory abstract of the thesis.

The Graduate Studies Committee will usually accept the examiners' recommendations but have the power to appoint one or more fresh examiners if they do not accept the examiners' recommendation or the examiners are unable to agree on a recommendation.

Formal confirmation of the Committee's decision is sent to the student by the Examination Schools as soon as possible. Examiners are required to return the examiners' joint report within one month of the date of the candidate's viva, or within one month of receipt of any required corrections.

6.4.6.1 *Minor DPhil corrections*

If, at the time of the *viva*, the students' examiners require any minor corrections or amendments, the examiners should provide list of these minor corrections to the student within two weeks of viva.

A period of **two months** (from the date of receipt of the corrections list) is available for the student to resubmit with the necessary corrections, which should be sent directly to the examiners. It is not possible to obtain an extension to the deadline for completion of minor corrections, but students may apply to suspend for a period of 1 to 12 months if required (see 6.4.6.4 below).

The form of such minor corrections is normally that they are incorporated in the finalised copy of the thesis. Examiners must ensure student corrects thesis to their satisfaction and will then submit their report.

6.4.6.2 *Major Corrections*

If the student's examiners require major corrections (outcome C or D), these are due to be completed **within 6 months** from receiving the list of corrections. It is not possible to obtain an extension to this time period, but students may apply to suspend for a period of 1 to 12 months if required (see 6.4.6.4 below).

6.4.6.3 *Reference Back*

If the student's examiners' decision reference back for revision and re-submission (outcomes E, F or G) then a student must supply these **within 1 year** from which they receive the statement of required revisions.

6.4.6.4 *Supervision following examination*

Students whose outcome is minor corrections should expect to receive supervisory guidance on the changes required to facilitate a successful resubmission of their thesis.

Students who receive a major corrections outcome either with or without a mandatory viva, or a reference back decision (Outcomes C-G) should expect a similar level of supervision as they had prior to the examination. This should be with the explicit purpose of supporting the student to complete the necessary work as detailed in the examination report. This supervisory guidance will usually include regular meetings between the supervisor and the student until the time of resubmission. At this point the examiners will receive the updated thesis and then report their recommendation to the board.

Students should not expect to receive supervision while suspended (see below).

6.4.6.5 *Suspension following examination*

Students whose outcome is minor corrections cannot request a period of suspension.

Students whose outcome is major corrections (with or without re-examination), or reference back, can request a period of suspension from the board of up to 12 months (with a minimum period of suspension of 4 weeks). Periods of suspension which were granted to the student prior to examination for the DPhil are **NOT** included in this calculation.

Approval of a post-outcome suspension follows the same process as pre-examination, i.e. it must be approved by the supervisor, department and college. However, conditions may not be placed on the student's return to study. In exceptional circumstances, students can request further periods of suspension; such requests will be considered on their merits on behalf of the Council's Education Committee.

At the end of the period of suspension, the student will be considered to have returned to study, i.e. there is no return to study approval process. It is important that students are aware of this, as the time allowances for the completion of work start again immediately (once the agreed suspension period ends).

The period of suspension is intended to give the student time away from their studies for a fixed period and they are not expected to be working on their thesis nor to be receiving supervision. However, if a student does use the period of suspension to work on their thesis and decides to submit their thesis before the end of the period of suspension, their suspension will automatically end and the submission of the corrected thesis will be considered valid.

6.4.7 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 on the University website.

DPhil students will not be able to take their degree until the Bodleian Library (ORA) copy of their thesis has been received (see section 7.5 on library copies for full details).

7.   Thesis Preparation & Submission

This section reflects and expands upon the provisions of the *Examination Regulations*, which should always be consulted and supersede this section in case of any conflicts. 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 profundity or originality of interpretation, and by clarity of presentation.

Students should also consult the [guidance notes](#) issued by the Graduate Office and the [General Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy](#).

7.1   Thesis preparation

7.1.1   Choice of thesis topic

The exact topic and title of your thesis require careful thought. It should be a topic which:
- is of interest to you
- addresses interesting questions
- is researchable (in the sense that there is information in respect of the subject – preferably neither too little nor too much)
- can be supervised and researched in Oxford (in terms of the resources available, such as supervisors and libraries)
- hasn't been covered before (check through lists of previously accepted theses in the Oxford Research Archive (ORA), www.theses.com, and a full literature search)
- doesn't 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 practical, data and results will be published online.

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.

7.1.2 Thesis title

Thesis titles should be concise, clear and specific. They should be comprehensible to a non-specialist. 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.

7.1.3 Change of title

Should the focus of the 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 a DPhil student wishes to revise their thesis title, they must make an application to do so by completing a Change of Thesis Title form available online through the [Student Self-Service](). It is also possible to indicate a change of thesis title on the final submission form (Application for Appointment of Examiners, also through the Student Self-Service), so no separate application of the Change of Thesis Title form needs to be made for this at the point of submission.

DPhil students should also note that if the research area changes dramatically that they may also need to resubmit another CUREC form to seek ethical approval.

7.1.4 Notifying funders of changes of title or topic

If you have funding from external bodies such as the ESRC, you must check the terms of their funding to determine whether you need the funding body's approval for a change of title. Normally such approval is needed for a change of research topic, but not for a minor change of title. If approval is required it is likely to be the responsibility of your supervisor to ensure that the relevant body is contacted and its approval sought.

7.1.5 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.
- 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.

7.1.6 Writing

Habits and timetable
It is essential to keep in the habit of writing, and not to procrastinate on the grounds that further sources are 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.

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 ensure that your computer is automatically saving work and that backups are copied to an online location (Dropbox, OneDrive, iCloud, etc.).

English
A thesis must be in the English language and should, as far as 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.

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.

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 contain at least brief guidance on style and footnoting.

Headings and subheadings

In most theses it is important not only that each chapter 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. Chapters, sections, sub-sections, etc. should be numbered in a systematic and consistent way. For example, Section 3.5.2 might be the second subsection of Section 5, which is itself inside Chapter 3.

7.1.7 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.

Particularly for theses in some domains of research, it may be appropriate to give references in footnotes. 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 footnote referencing 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.

Modern software packages exist that will automate the procedure of compiling lists of references and inserting properly formatted citations and references into your thesis. Examples of such software

packages include Endnote, Mendeley, and BibTeX. The use of such software minimises the chance of improper or inconsistent citation practice and is recommended.

7.1.8 Thesis length

The maximum length of a DPhil thesis is 100,000 words, excluding the bibliography. 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 Graduate Studies Committee for your DPhil to exceed the limits. Such permission is granted only very exceptionally.

In calculating the DPhil thesis length, please note the following points:
- The only item excluded from calculations of the number of words is the bibliography.
- Tables in the text are counted in terms of their word equivalents.
- Footnotes and appendices are included in calculations of word length.

7.1.9 Integrated Thesis

An Oxford DPhil thesis has traditionally been submitted in monograph format, as a series of chapters presented in the style of a book.

However, it is increasingly common in some fields for theses to include published papers, or papers intended for future publication, within the main body of the text; this type of work is known as an 'integrated thesis'. Whether a thesis is integrated or conventional in format, the content of the thesis should reflect the amount, originality and level of work expected for a DPhil thesis.

To ensure the thesis constitutes a thematically coherent whole, an integrated thesis must include an introduction, a literature survey and a conclusion. Any included papers should relate directly to the candidate's approved field of study, and should have been written whilst holding the status of PRS or a student for an Oxford MSc, MPhil, MLitt, or DPhil. Students are expected to clarify in the introduction and/or conclusion how the chapters are integrated as a complete text or how the papers relate to one another. In some cases, students may wish to rewrite portions of the published material to make it fit the structure of their thesis. If they have done so, this should be clearly indicated, normally with a footnote or endnote. The original sources of published papers should always be clearly cited.

There is no minimum or maximum number of papers written for publication that can be submitted as part of the DPhil thesis, but the thesis must address an overarching research question, represent a coherent and focused body of research, and be of the appropriate standard and scope to pass a doctoral examination.

Requests to submit an integrated thesis should be made with the support of the student's supervisor(s) prior to applying for either Transfer of Status or Confirmation of Status, via the GSO.31 Application to submit an integrated thesis. Applications to submit an integrated thesis will normally not be considered for students who have already passed Confirmation of Status. Students who wish to change back to a monograph thesis format are required to make this request in writing to the Graduate Studies Committee prior to applying for their next assessment milestone or final thesis submission. Ideally

students must clarify when they submit their transfer application if they plan to submit an integrated thesis.

A thesis submitted under this rubric may include co-authored articles. In the case of co-authored articles, students must submit to the Graduate Studies Committee a description of their contribution to the article and demonstrate that their work represents the majority contribution. Additionally, the student must be able to defend all papers written in collaboration in their entirety. If the Graduate Studies Committee is not satisfied that the greater part of the work included in the thesis is the student's own, the committee will not proceed to appoint examiners.

Where papers form part of an integrated thesis, they should be incorporated in accordance with the General Regulations Governing Research Degrees (particularly 7.1).

Students should note that an integrated thesis is not an easier option than a conventional thesis. The inclusion of one or more papers which have been accepted for publication or have been published does not constitute proof that the work is of sufficient quality or significance to merit the award of the degree concerned; this remains a judgement of the Graduate Studies Committee on the recommendation of its examiners. Additionally, it is not permitted for articles published prior to the start of the DPhil to be used as part of an integrated thesis (see 7.2.2 for further details).

7.2   Intellectual Property Rights and Plagiarism

7.2.1   Intellectual property rights

As someone undertaking research and writing, every student needs 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 the Bodleian Libraries' Guide to Copyright.

7.2.2   Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the presentation by a student of any part, or the substance of any part, of another person's work (including the work of other students) as if it were their 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 plagiarized material. This includes essays and presentations as well as material submitted as coursework or as part of a formal examination. Additionally, you must not submit work for assessment that you have already submitted (partially or in full), either for your current course or for another qualification at this, or any other, university (this is known as auto-plagiarism). The only exception to this rule is that work submitted for assessment in the MSc in Social Science of the Internet or the MSc in Social Data Science may be used as the basis for work submitted for assessment

in the DPhil, under the provision that such work is expanded and improved to suit the scope and level of the DPhil. As such, it is permitted to include improved sections of an OII MSc thesis or coursework as part of an expanded chapter or paper in the DPhil, but not to submit wholesale any OII MSc coursework as (for example) an entire paper in an integrated thesis.

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

The University employs a series of sophisticated software applications and other methods to assess plagiarism in submitted work. They regularly monitor online essay banks, essay-writing services, and other potential sources of material. The OII reserves the right to check samples of submitted essays for plagiarism. All students are required to keep electronic copies of their written work, and may be required to produce these in order to facilitate this process. These checks may take place on randomly selected essays or theses as well as on material identified as suspect by Tutors, Assessors, or Examiners.

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:
1. 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.
2. 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 Students skills webpage for further information on advice on academic good practice and plagiarism.

7.3   Thesis submission

The thesis must:
- be of no more than the maximum word count (100,000 words for DPhil), not counting bibliography
- include a title page (see below)
- include an abstract (see below)
- be submitted in English

7.3.1 Title page

The title page (i.e. the first printed page after the front cover etc.) should contain the following information:
- Title, and subtitle (if any).
- Author, college and words to the effect of 'Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of DPhil in [Information, Communication and the Social Sciences/Social Data Science] in 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 but exclude the bibliography.

7.3.2 Abstract

DPhil theses must have an abstract of up to 300 words, which should be on one side of a single sheet of A4 paper, and 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'.

7.3.3 Style and formatting

- The typewritten part of the thesis must be saved as a pdf. Additional files (images, recordings, annexes, etc.) should be saved to a single zip file and uploaded under "Additional Documents".
- Your thesis must be submitted in English, apart from quotations and recognised technical formulae, or where the Divisional or Faculty Board has determined otherwise.
- Your thesis may be scanned with text-matching software (e.g. TurnItIn) should the examiners question the authenticity of the work, but such theses will NOT be saved to the software databases.
- Pages of the thesis must be numbered.
- The main body of your thesis should be in double spacing with quotations and footnotes in single spacing.
- Portrait would usually be expected; landscape may be permitted by agreement with the relevant board.
- Select an easily readable font.
- Font size 12pt is preferred, but a minimum font size 11pt is recommended for text and 10pt for footnotes.
- You should allow a margin of 3 to 3.5cms on the left-hand edge of each page.
- Footnotes should normally be placed at the bottom of each page. Where they are given at the end of the thesis, a separate copy of footnotes should also be submitted under "Additional Documents", for the convenience of the examiners.

7.4   Technical instructions for submission

You must submit your digital examiners' copy of your thesis online, via Student Self-Service, no later than your maximum submission date. Full guidance on the functionality and instructions on how to submit your thesis can be found in the Research examinations page.

7.4.1   Deadlines and extensions of time

If exceptional circumstances have prevented you from completing your thesis within 12 terms of becoming a graduate student (24 terms for Part-Time), you must apply for an extension through the **Extension of Time** form on the Student Self-Service. This application must be submitted no later than the term in which you were due to submit. The application will require the support of the student's supervisor and their college.

The maximum number of terms' extension which may be approved is six terms for full-time DPhil students. For part-time students, extensions of time can be given for up to three terms. Normally only one term of extension will be approved at a time.

7.5   Library copies

Students do not need to submit a hardbound copy of their DPhil thesis to the Examination Schools in order to graduate, following being granted leave to supplicate.

However, all candidates need to submit an electronic copy to the Oxford University Research Archive (ORA) a minimum of five working days prior to their graduation date. Students will not be able to attend a degree ceremony (even in absentia) without doing so.

ORA provides high visibility and digital preservation for Oxford digital theses. Students should contact ORA@bodleian.ox.ac.uk if they require further information or have any queries regarding deposit of their digital thesis. Please see Appendix I for further information on submitting to ORA.

Candidates for the degrees of DPhil, MLitt and MSc by Research are also required to deposit a copy of their thesis with the Oxford Research Archive (ORA). Information regarding this process can be found on the Bodleian website and will be sent with your result letter.

If access to a student's thesis needs to be restricted, you may apply for dispensation from consultation of thesis using form GSO.3c.

7.5.1   DPhil student research data and records management

All DPhil students who collect data that they utilise in their thesis are also required by University of Oxford to submit that data to ORA (Research Data Archive). Please see the ORA website for further information.

8.   Supervision and Teaching

8.1   Supervision

All graduate students have a University supervisor. The University supervisor guides the student through their course of study. The supervisor reports on the student's progress to the Graduate Studies Committee via Graduate Supervisor Reporting 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, which can be particularly helpful if the student has any academic or other difficulties that they do not feel able to discuss with the University supervisor.

8.1.1   Appointment of supervisor(s)

DPhil students will be allocated a supervisor based on their original submitted research proposal. This choice will normally be confirmed before the start of the first term. The supervisor will have the overall responsibility for the direction of the student's research. This primary supervisor is assigned by the OII's Graduate Studies Committee and may be in a different college from the student.

Students are also encouraged to consider asking a second member of the faculty to serve as a co-supervisor. This is a requirement for ESRC-funded students, but many students find the inclusion of a second supervisor to be very useful in terms of support and guidance. The second supervisor may be identified and involved from the start of a DPhil student's time at the OII, or as is frequently done, the second supervisor may be added after the Transfer of Status.

The following groups are usually required to have secondary supervisors:
* Students who have specific conditions attached to their funding which requires a departmental advisor (who, in fact, may be rather more passive than a primary supervisor),
* All students whose main supervisor is yet to see a DPhil to completion,
* Where there is a clearly identified need for additional expertise in the supervision team.

Co-supervisors will be normally appointed if the student's area of research requires expertise in areas outside the primary supervisor's research interests or to cover during a period of leave. What is said below about primary supervisors applies also to joint supervisors. The second supervisor may be in a different department or might be an external supervisor (for example if your research project involves collaboration with another university).

8.1.2   Role of supervisors

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

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

- planning the framework of the student's research programme
- advising students about lecture courses, both specialist and broadening
- advising students about skills-training courses including research techniques
- advising students about literature sources
- meeting regularly with the student to discuss their work (see below)
- keeping the student informed about their progress (both informally and through the formal termly report)

There should be at least three points at which you review your skills training needs with your supervisor: in your initial supervision, in preparation for Transfer of Status (where the transfer of status form has been amended accordingly) and at Confirmation of Status.

Please note that supervisors' availability in Oxford during the summer vacation months may be limited and therefore it is important that students send drafts in a timely manner. Good practice would be to ask students to submit drafts to their supervisor more than 4 weeks before any 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. Supervisors should warn students of any extended period of unavailability during the month before the submission dates for key milestones.

Please see [Appendix H: Divisional Code of Practice on Supervision](#) for full details of the roles and responsibilities of students and supervisors.

8.1.3 Contact with supervisors

The tradition of graduate work at Oxford is one of individual supervision of each student, combined with small seminars and classes. **DPhil students should expect to have the equivalent of between 9 and 12 one-hour supervision meetings per academic year**. The frequency of supervision meetings may vary term to term depending on what stage you have reached in writing your thesis, but you will meet your supervisor **at least once every term**. Students who have co-supervisors should have the opportunity to meet with both supervisors at the same time at least once per year.

It is essential for you to keep in regular contact with your supervisor, irrespective of whether you are resident in Oxford or researching elsewhere. It would be a great help to your supervisors if you would contact them at or before the beginning of each term.

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.

Part-time students will also be expected to set up regular meetings with their supervisor(s). Depending on the supervisor and student, meetings may be as frequent as weekly but also may be less frequent: **the departmental minimum standard for part-time DPhil supervisory meetings is for at least once per term.** These meetings may be face to face, but they can also be held remotely.

8.1.4 Supervision reports

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

Continuation on the course depends on your satisfactory progress, so you should take very seriously any warnings expressed by your supervisor(s) that you are not progressing at the expected rate. 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 Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) please refer to Appendix G.

8.1.5 Change of supervisor

There are a number of reasons why a change of supervisor may become necessary or desirable. The department and all University supervisors recognise that occasionally there can arise incompatibilities of temperament or approach between supervisor and student, and that in such circumstances a change of supervisor may be desirable, not least because of the central importance Oxford attaches to the relationship between supervisor and student. Students are urged to discuss any problem of this kind freely and in full confidence with any of the following:
- The Director of Graduate Studies
- The DPhil Programme Director
- Any other member of the OII's Graduate Studies Committee
- Their College Adviser or the College's Tutor for Graduates

In all cases it is important that any definite proposal for change of supervisor be made in writing on **form GSO.25** for DPhil students.

8.1.6 Periods of supervisor absence

If a supervisor is to be on leave and away from Oxford, or is leaving Oxford permanently, they are 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. **Form GSO.25** should be used. If you find problems regarding any such arrangements you should take the matter up directly and promptly with those listed above.

8.1.7 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.

8.2 Responsibilities of Graduate students

Students are expected to take ultimate responsibility for their research programme and to develop an appropriate working relationship with their supervisor(s).

In relation to the research programme, it is important for the student:
- to take responsibility for the development of subject-specific research training and personal and professional skills, and to make positive use of the University's teaching and learning facilities, and opportunities for this development;
- to carry out research with proper regard to good health and safety and research integrity practices, and to be aware of the need for adequate health insurance and health precautions when travelling abroad;
- to devote sufficient time to study to make satisfactory progress and to complete each stage of the degree by the deadlines set out in the Examination Regulations.

In working with supervisors or other academic staff, students should also:

- discuss with their supervisor the type of guidance and comment which they find most helpful, and agree a schedule of meetings;
- be aware of their joint responsibility with the supervisor to ensure that regular and frequent contact is maintained, and to be encouraged to take the initiative to maintain contact when necessary;
- recognise the demands made on the supervisor's time and the need to prepare adequately for meetings and to observe deadlines;
- co-operate with the supervisor to produce detailed parallel reports on progress at the end of each term via Graduate Supervision Reporting;
- discuss their skills training needs with the supervisor, both informally during regular supervisory contacts and formally at particular times as detailed in subject handbooks;
- accept the importance of constructive criticism within the academic support relationship, and seek a full assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of any work; and
- inform the supervisor as soon as possible of any circumstance which might lead to interruption of study.

Full information on the role and responsibilities of graduate students and supervisors are detailed in Appendix H.

8.3 Teaching by graduate students

The OII welcomes the development of teaching skills and experience that tutorial teaching can bring to graduate students, provided the number of hours does not exceed 20 per week in term time, including time spent on preparation and marking.

The OII offers all DPhil students the opportunity to apply for paid Teaching Assistant positions to help on the MSc courses. The available positions are advertised in July (Michaelmas teaching) and November (Hilary teaching). Please contact the HR Manager and/or DPhil Coordinator for further information.

The Teaching Assistant experience can be used towards an award, Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (HEA), which is recognised at universities across the UK. Please see Appendix G for more information on the award. Students should contact the Director of Graduate Studies in the first instance to discuss the possibility of working towards the HEA award.

Depending on a student's disciplinary background, opportunities to teach undergraduates may also exist through departments other than the OII. In order to provide teaching, you must first:
- attend a half-day course in Tutorial Teaching or in Small-Group teaching provided by the Centre for Teaching and Learning.
- obtain the written agreement of your supervisor and your college.

Before accepting an offer, you should make sure that you have a simple written statement setting out the expectations on both sides (hours of work, conditions, length of contract and rates of pay). All paid work should be approved by your supervisor.

8.3.1 Training and development for educators

The Advancing Teaching and Learning (ATL) programme is designed for those who have sustained teaching experience (i.e. teaching more than a just a few sessions) and who wish to develop their teaching or learning support practice in higher education. It is open to DPhil students, postdoctoral and early career researchers, academics new to teaching and professional learning support staff, amongst others. Full details of staff eligible to apply are given below.

The ATL programme is a voluntary programme designed for those engaged in teaching or supporting learning whilst undertaking the programme. The ATL programme is externally accredited by Advance HE and integrates the requirements for Descriptor 1 of the UK Professional Standards Framework (PSF) for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education within the programme's activities and assessment process. By passing the ATL, participants will simultaneously be judged to have fulfilled the requirements for Descriptor 1 of the PSF and can be designated as an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (AFHEA).

DPhil students are eligible to join as long as they have:
1. attended a Preparation for Learning and Teaching at Oxford (PLTO) session; and
2. have **confirmed** teaching or learning support responsibilities during the ATL programme. This can include being a teaching assistant on any course taught by the university, running revision sessions for undergraduate finalists, teaching a series of workshops/tutorials/classes, lab demonstrations, etc.

N.B. If you have substantial university teaching experience across different contexts and your current teaching role amounts to more than 15 hours across the academic year you may want to apply for the PGCert in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

Further details and how to apply can be found on the CTL website.

9. Feedback, concerns and queries

9.1 Feedback from students

9.1.1 Opportunities to provide evaluation and feedback

The OII ensures that students 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 evaluation forms at the end of each lecture or seminar series, and can also be given to the student representatives (see 9.3 below), who provide termly feedback directly to the Programme Directors at Graduate Joint Consultative Committee (GJCC). The feedback received from students is anonymous. The evaluations are reviewed at the Graduate Studies Committee and addressed as appropriate, and students are notified of how this will be either resolved or changed for the next academic year.

Further to this we also offer regular feedback sessions which give DPhil students the opportunity to provide constructive feedback through discussion on the programmes in general. These are usually scheduled as part of the DPhil Seminar.

In addition, students are asked to complete a Student Experience Survey at the end of Trinity Term, providing feedback on more general aspects of the student and learning experience throughout the year, with a focus on issues of equality, diversity and inclusion.

9.1.2 Student representation

Student 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 sabbatical officers to improve student experience across the university.

Students elect 5 DPhil representatives by the start of Michaelmas term, who act for one academic year:
- First year representative for DPhil Social Data Science
- First year representative for DPhil Info, Comm, and Soc Sci
- Later stage representative for DPhil Social Data Science (students in Year 2+)
- Later stage representative for DPhil Info, Comm, and Soc Sci (students in Year 2+)
- One representative of part-time DPhil students (from either programme)

These elected student reps sit on the following committees:
- Graduate Joint Consultative Committee
- Graduate Studies Committee

If you wish to contact any of the DPhil student reps they can be contacted at dphil.reps@oii.ox.ac.uk.

The Graduate Joint Consultative Committee (GJCC) 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). The Graduate Studies Committee membership 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. Departmental Committee is for general departmental business and updates.

The Chair of the GJCC will normally 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. The Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee is the Director of Graduate Studies.

Many of the OII's other committees also have student members to ensure full representation and involvement in decision-making. Membership is usually for one academic year, although previous committee members can reapply. These positions are advertised openly to all students in Michaelmas term each year:
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee
- IT Committee
- Research Committee
- Safety Advisory and Buildings Committee

Details on course representatives and student committee members will be added to Canvas in Michaelmas Term.

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 PGR 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.

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. Please see the Policy and Guidance on student engagement and representation for full information on the role and responsibilities of student representatives.

9.2 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). However, we recognise that occasionally things can go wrong and the University has procedures in place to support students in raising concerns.

General areas of concern about provision affecting students as a whole should be raised through by speaking to the relevant programme director or the Director of Graduate Studies, or reported to the student reps to be raised in the Graduate Joint Consultative Committee.

For individual concerns or complaints about any academic, administrative or support provision, as a first step the OII encourages students to raise this with a member of departmental staff who has responsibility for the area in question, if it feels appropriate to do so. This could be someone on the administrative side, for example the DPhil Coordinator, the Graduate Studies Manager or the Head of IT; or a member of academic staff such as your supervisor, programme director or the DGS.

As a department we strive to be open to hearing student feedback both positive and negative, supporting students through difficult circumstances, and taking action to achieve a satisfactory resolution wherever possible.

The University has three main procedures for formal complaints raised by students:

- Complaints about university services including teaching and supervision - handled by the Proctors under the Complaints Procedure
- Academic appeals against assessment outcomes and Exam Board decisions – handled by the Proctors under the Academic Appeals Procedure
- Complaints about behaviour of others under the Harassment Policy and Procedure:
    - If relating to a member of staff, this is handled by the Head of Department and University Director of HR under the Staff Harassment Procedure
    - If relating to another student, this is handled by the Proctors under the Student Harassment Procedure

The next sections provide further details of the three types of complaints listed above.

9.2.1 Complaints about university services and academic matters

Informal options for raising your concern
If your concern relates to teaching or other provision made by the department, wherever possible we encourage students to raise it directly with the course provider or staff member responsible.

In the case of concerns about how an individual is providing a service, such as teaching a class or giving supervision, an informal discussion with the person immediately responsible for the issue is often the simplest way to achieve a satisfactory resolution. Staff and faculty should expect to receive constructive feedback on the services they provide, and are expected to respond professionally to such feedback.

You may also raise such concerns with the Director of Graduate Studies or your Programme Director if they relate to general teaching provision. 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 the issue informally. The more information you can give about the problem, the easier it will be to deal with.

If your concern or complaint relates to teaching or another provision made by your college, you should raise it either with your tutor or with one of the college officers, Senior Tutor or 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.

Formal complaints about academic matters
If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the informal route, you may take your concern further by making a formal complaint to the Proctors under the [University Student Complaints Procedure](). To do so, you should [submit a complaint to the Proctors' Office]() using the appropriate form. This should normally be done as soon as possible and in any event within 3 months of when the matters you are complaining about occurred.

You may contact a caseworker in the Proctors' Office to discuss (in confidence and without committing yourself to any action) before the formal complaints procedure is followed. You can also seek advice from your college tutor, college advisor or Senior Tutor.

Many other 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. Many students have had felt well supported in particular by Student Welfare and Support Services.

9.2.2 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 with your subject or college tutor, Senior Tutor, Programme Director, Director of Graduate Studies, Supervisor, 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]().

9.2.3 Complaints about staff or student behaviour

All members of the University are expected to treat each other fairly and with respect, courtesy and consideration. Harassment or victimisation is regarded as unacceptable behaviour and is not tolerated in any form. 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.

There are formal and informal routes for raising concerns or making a complaint about staff or student conduct, which are detailed further in section 10.5 (Bullying and Harassment).

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. 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.

The OII has 3 trained Harassment Advisors who are part of the University's confidential harassment advisors network:

Karen Mead (lead advisor)   karen.mead@oii.ox.ac.uk

Prof Kathryn Eccles   kathryn.eccles@oii.ox.ac.uk

Prof Sandra Wachter   sandra.wachter@oii.ox.ac.uk

Further details on the role of the harassment advisor can be found on the Harassment Advisor Network page.

10. Welfare and Support

10.1 Sources of advice, help, and counselling

If a student has concerns, academic or administrative, they have several possible courses of action open to them.

For academic issues:
- Within the OII students can consult their supervisor, the Programme Director, the Director of Graduate Studies, who will if necessary, consult the appropriate authorities on the student's behalf.
- At their college, students 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 DPhil Coordinator who can advise on all logistic and administrative matters relating to DPhil milestones and other Oxford processes etc.

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 appointment booking and enquiries, please email counselling@admin.ox.ac.uk.
- 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.
- Every department also has at least one Welfare Contact, who acts as a first point of contact for students with welfare concerns, offering a listening ear and signposting to other sources of informal and professional support as appropriate. The OII's Welfare Contacts are Laura Maynard (laura.maynard@oii.ox.ac.uk) and David Pepper (david.pepper@oii.ox.ac.uk).
- 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 via instant message.

For community and peer support:

- A range of services led by students are available to help provide support to other students, including the peer supporter network and the Oxford SU's Student Advice Service.
- Oxford SU runs a series of campaigns to raise awareness and promote causes that matter to students.
- There are also a wide range of student clubs and societies to get involved in.

Details of the wide range of sources of support are available more widely in the University are available from the Oxford Students Welfare pages, including in relation to mental and physical health and disability.

Details of the wide range of [sources of support](#) are available more widely in the University are available from the Oxford Students website, including in relation to mental and physical health and disability.

10.2 Problems completing the DPhil

10.2.1 Illness

The University records should show correctly for how many terms a student has been actively working on a thesis. A short period of illness, normally taken to mean lasting less than 4 weeks, does not necessarily have to lead to a change in student status, students should keep their supervisors apprised when illness has affected progress. If a student's work is seriously interrupted by illness, they will be encouraged to apply for suspension of status.

Students with long-term physical or mental health conditions are encouraged to register with the Disability Advisory Service for ongoing support.

10.2.2 Suspension of status as a postgraduate student

Suspension of status as a postgraduate student enables students to suspend their research studies for one or more terms if there is good reason for a student to do so. If the application is approved, the student will not be liable to pay fees during the period of suspension. Please see the Oxford [changes in student status](#) page for more information about access to facilities and services during suspension.

You may apply to the Graduate Studies Committee for suspension of status for a specified period. Any such application should be submitted online via Student self-service. This form requests details of the anticipated period required and the reason for the request, and will then be sent to both the student's supervisor and college for supporting comments.

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, or
    c. parental leave;
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.

For further guidance on changes in circumstances and other supportive adjustments, including supervision, deferrals of milestones, changing mode of study and extensions of time, please see the [Guidance on changes of circumstance for postgraduate research students.](#)

10.3 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.

If you have a disability and may require additional support during your studies, you are encouraged to let the department 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.

Students who require support of this nature are also advised to register with 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.
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.

10.4 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. The University does not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation.

10.4.1 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, diversity and inclusion, and ensure that this is reflected in all University processes.

The EDU 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. The EDU website contains further information about the [University's equality work](#) around each of these thematic areas, together with information about resources to support individuals from different backgrounds.

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 further details or advice, visit the EDU website at edu.web.ox.ac.uk or contact: equality@admin.ox.ac.uk

10.4.2 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. Please see the [Student Union website](#) to find more about how to get involved with the SU's work.

10.4.3 EDI at the Social Sciences Division

The 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.

Departments across the Division are taking steps to tackle racism, advance equality, and create a more inclusive and equitable culture. The Divisional EDI Panel meets twice termly to coordinate these efforts and advance proposals to the central University (Equality and Diversity Panel and other governing bodies as appropriate.

More information about the [Division's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work](#) can be found on the Social Sciences website.

10.4.4 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. Dr Janaki Srinivasan chairs the group, with administrative support from Dr Ilka Vari-Lavoisier, EDI Officer and Billy Fan, HR Manager.

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 Week 6. Meetings are open, meaning all students and staff members are welcome to attend. Meeting papers and minutes of previous meetings will be made available on the OII Intranet.

For any queries or comments about the work of the OII's EDI Committee, please email edi@oii.ox.ac.uk.

10.4.5 OII Code of Conduct and Values and Behaviours Framework

The Oxford Internet Institute has a Professional Code of Conduct and a Values and Behaviours Framework which are designed to help all students and staff make the most of working and studying at the OII.

These documents set out our expectations of OII members in their behaviour and conduct in what is first and foremost a place of work and study, and describe the resources and support available to help you to make the most of your experience in the department

10.5 Bullying and Harassment

All members of the University are expected to treat each other fairly and with respect, courtesy and consideration. Harassment or victimisation is regarded as unacceptable behaviour and is not tolerated in any form.

Harassing behaviours can take a variety of forms as defined in the University Harassment Policy:

- violating another person's dignity;
- creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for another person;
- Bullying is a form of harassment and may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

The University recognises that experiencing or witnessing harassment or sexual misconduct can have a significant impact, whether a student has been directly affected, witnessed something happen, or has been named in a report.

Many experiences of harassment can be difficult for victims and survivors to process or articulate. Likewise, reporting incidents can prove a challenging and distressing process. At all points, whether or not you choose to report your experience, please prioritise your wellbeing by seeking support, factoring in your mental health and emotional resources, and knowing your options. Support is available to students regardless of whether the incident(s) occurred within the collegiate University or elsewhere.

For full information about the University's approach to preventing and responding to harassment and sexual misconduct involving students and the support available for students, please see the University's

[Single Comprehensive Source of Information](#), published in line with the Office for Students Condition of Registration E6.

10.5.1 Support within the University

Student Welfare and Support Services
The University has a range of welfare services that may be of help to you. You can contact the Director of the Student Welfare and Support Services' Office who can advise you about selecting the most appropriate form of support. The Director can be emailed at this address: director.swss@admin.ox.ac.uk.

Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service (SHVSS)
The Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service is a service that provides professional support to students who have experienced sexual harassment and/or sexual violence, along with a safe place to be heard independent of your college or department. It works with all students whether the experience of sexual harassment or violence happened in Oxford or elsewhere, and whether it was recent or in the past.

Its advisors are specially trained in responding to incidents of sexual harassment and violence, including domestic abuse. All specialist advisors at the service are trained to support survivors at their own pace, free of charge and in confidence. Current students looking to speak to one of our advisors can email: supportservice@admin.ox.ac.uk. More information is available on the SHVSS website.

At the OII
At the OII, you can contact a range of people about issues relating to bullying and harassment. These include the Graduate Studies Support Team, your Programme Directors, your Director of Graduate Studies, and the OII's Harassment Advisors.

The OII currently has 3 trained **Harassment Advisors** who are part of the University's confidential harassment advisor network. An up-to-date list of the OII advisors can always be found on the OII Intranet. Further details on the role of the harassment advisor can be found on the Harassment Advisor Network webpage.

If you do not feel comfortable contacting a local advisor in your college or department, you can contact the Harassment Line for details of another advisor.

At College
Help and advice is available from your college Dean, tutor, senior tutor, academic administrator, Middle Common Room or Student Union representative. All colleges also have a dedicated welfare contact. Your college may also have a published complaints procedure, which is usually found in your college handbook.

Harassment Advisory Service
Members of the University community who feel that they have been subject to harassment can contact the Harassment Advisory Service, or their local harassment advisor for support. The Service is also available to those against whom an allegation of harassment has been made. To speak to one of the University advisors, please call 01865 270760 or email harassment.line@admin.ox.ac.uk.

Student Union Advice Service

Oxford SU Student Advice also provides a confidential and impartial listening and advice service for students. More information is available on the Oxford SU website. Students looking to speak to an advisor from the Student Union can email this address: advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk, or call one of the numbers given on the website.

Peer Support

Student peer supporters are available in colleges and departments to talk with students informally about any issues or problems they might be experiencing. At any one time there are around 350 peer supporters, who are carefully selected and trained to take up this role, and receive ongoing support and supervision from the University Counselling Service. You can find a full list of Peer Supporters here.

Peers of Colour

Peers of Colour are Peer Supporters who identify as people of colour and attend 2 further supervisions per term to discuss supporting Oxford students of colour and to explore themes around race, identity, racism, inclusivity, belonging, society, Peer Support and the University. If you wish to speak to a Peer of Colour, then please email peersupport@admin.ox.ac.uk.

Rainbow Peers

Rainbow Peers are Peer Supporters who identify as LGBTQ+ and attend 2 further supervisions per term to discuss supporting Oxford LGBTQ+ students and explore themes around sexuality, sexual identity, prejudice, inclusivity, belonging, society, Peer Support and the University. If you wish to speak to a Rainbow Peer, then please email peersupport@admin.ox.ac.uk.

10.5.2 What to do if you hear about or witness bullying or harassment

We all have a role in keeping our community safe and creating a supportive, harassment-free culture. The current University Harassment Policy states that "All members of the University community have a personal responsibility... [to support] any member of the University who feels they have been subject to harassment, including supporting them to make a formal complaint if appropriate." (University Harassment Policy, item 5.3).

How to intervene as a bystander

Bystander intervention is a vital component in tackling bullying and harassment. Through our everyday interactions we have the ability to challenge or reinforce social norms, and to lead by example and model considerate and respectful behaviour.

Broadly speaking there are four types of intervention an individual can take when they are a bystander to inappropriate behaviour or language: Direct, Distract, Delegate and Delay.   You may need to use more than one intervention, depending on the situation. For further information, please see the Equality and Diversity Unit's webpage on Bystander Intervention.

How to support peers who have experienced bullying or harassment

Students are often likely to look to each other first for help in thinking through issues and for emotional support, but there are times when this can leave peers feeling overwhelmed, out of their depth and unsure how best to help, especially if the experiences described are particularly sensitive or traumatic.

When hearing about difficult situations, it may help to bear in mind the following:
- Be realistic about what you can offer: a listening ear, a friendly face, and help with reaching out to other support services, if appropriate.
- Remember your responsibility to look after yourself. You cannot effectively support others if you yourself are struggling; if you do not have the bandwidth to support someone, be upfront and try to direct them to other resources.
- Ensure that you also have support. Hearing about difficult situations can be emotionally challenging, it is important that you too have someone to confer with when needed, while also maintaining confidentiality.

What to do if you are worried about someone
- Encourage them to speak to their GP, to consult their college welfare team, and/or to make an appointment with the University's Counselling Service.
- For help with academic matters, encourage them to speak to their programme coordinator, programme director or supervisor.
- If you feel comfortable, you can offer to help them draft the email to the relevant party
- In a welfare emergency, where you consider that there is a significant risk of harm, please call 999. If you are not sure whether an urgent welfare situation is an emergency, please call the Counselling Service on 01865 270300 or call the Police non-emergency line 101.

General reminders
- Listen actively and compassionately
- Be sensitive of others' struggles
- Maintain confidentiality, except in an emergency
- Respect others' boundaries
- Encourage reaching out to university and professional support services when necessary
- Promote inclusivity, anti-racism and diversity awareness, including pointing out assumptions and unconscious bias, and avoiding stereotypes and microaggressions in your own responses

Further training and resources

The Oxford University SU runs a variety of training for students including:
- Sexual Consent workshops
- Queer Consent workshops
- Bystander Intervention training
- Sexual Violence training
- First Responder training.

For more information, please visit their website: www.oxfordsu.org

11. Regulations and Policies

11.1 Examination Regulations

Examination Regulations are published in July each year covering the academic year from October to September. They are available online at 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 version of the *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 Teaching Office in the OII.

The University's framework document for graduate students undertaking research degrees which has been developed by the University's Education Committee is the Policy and Guidance on Research Degrees.

11.2 Fee regulations

University fees are paid termly through the student's College. In virtually all circumstances, students are liable for 9 terms (18 for part-time) of fee payment (the exception being students who start the DPhil at the OII having already obtained an Oxford MPhil).

Beyond these terms, the University Continuation Charge applies for each additional term the student is enrolled. Fees are charged whether or not a student is working in Oxford. Fees are not charged for any term during which a student's status is formally suspended by the Graduate Studies Committee, provided the application to suspend was made prior to the start of that term. For in-term or retrospective suspensions, applications can be made to the Joint Panel for Remission of Fees (JPRF) by the student's college. A successful application normally applies the value of the fees for the relevant suspended term(s) to the term in which the student returns from suspension. See also 10.2.2 for further information on suspension of status.

11.3 Residence requirements (Full-Time Students only)

Full Time Students are required by the University's regulations to be in residence in Oxford during term time. That means a commitment to be in Oxford for at least the full eight weeks of all three terms of each academic year. The dates of full term are published on the Oxford University website.

Students will also need to be available in Oxford for several events outside full term, from the induction programme to *viva voce* examinations (although please note that, with approval of the Graduate Studies Committee, examinations may be held remotely). Research away from Oxford should be discussed with your supervisor.

The minimum residence requirement for the degree of DPhil is 6 terms (including any period in PRS student status), unless a student already holds an MLitt, MRes, MPhil or MSc degree from Oxford

University, when a minimum of 3 terms residence is required. From this period of residence a DPhil student may apply for dispensation of up to 3 terms. After transfer to DPhil status, students are not required to reside continuously, and may indeed need to be away from Oxford to conduct their fieldwork. Although no formal permission is then required from the department for absences of this kind, students are reminded that they should keep their supervisor(s) and college aware of their plans, and that they should maintain regular contact with their supervisor(s) at all times while a student is away.

Formal dispensations from residence requirements have to be approved by the Graduate Studies Committee and the student's college. For further information please see: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/residency

11.4 University Statutes and Regulations

The Oxford University Statutes and Regulations cover virtually all aspects of university governance, including complaints and disciplinary procedures, degree conferral, and miscellaneous regulations about student matters.

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 on their website. Sanctions include removal from the register of graduate students and fines.

11.5 Disability

The OII supports the University's Common Framework for Supporting Disabled Students.
For full information on University policy on matters relating to disabilities, see the Disability Advisory Service website at https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability.

11.6 Equality

The University has a comprehensive Equality Policy which details the University's commitments advancement of equality through all its activities, and the expectations on all staff and students in helping to co-create an inclusive working, research and learning environment.

- University Policy and Procedures on Harassment: edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/university-policy-on-harassment
- Transgender Policy: edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/transgender-policy
- Staff Social Media Guidelines: hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/using-social-media
- Student Social Media Guidelines: www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/it/socialmedia
- Code of Practice on Meetings and Events: compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/prevent/meetings-and-events

11.7 Freedom of speech

Free speech is the lifeblood of a university.

It enables the pursuit of knowledge. It helps us approach truth. It allows students, teachers and researchers to become better acquainted with the variety of beliefs, theories and opinions in the world. Recognising the vital importance of free expression for the life of the mind, a university may make rules concerning the conduct of debate but should never prevent speech that is lawful.

Inevitably, this will mean that members of the University are confronted with views that some find unsettling, extreme or offensive. The University must therefore foster freedom of expression within a framework of robust civility. Not all theories deserve equal respect. A university values expertise and intellectual achievement as well as openness. But, within the bounds set by law, all voices or views which any member of our community considers relevant should be given the chance of a hearing. Wherever possible, they should also be exposed to evidence, questioning and argument. As an integral part of this commitment to freedom of expression, we will take steps to ensure that all such exchanges happen peacefully. With appropriate regulation of the time, place and manner of events, neither speakers nor listeners should have any reasonable grounds to feel intimidated or censored.

It is this understanding of the central importance and specific roles of free speech in a university that underlies the detailed procedures of the University of Oxford. For further information, please see the University code of practice on Freedom of Speech.

11.8 Health and safety

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

- Make sure that your work is carried out in the approved way and in accordance with best possible practice.
- Obey all instructions from a Safety Officer or the Head of Administration and Finance in respect of health and safety.
- Inform the Facilities 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 Facilities Officer.
- Familiarise yourself with the location of firefighting equipment, alarm points and escape routes, together with the fire procedures.

Further details about health and safety will be given in Induction Week.

11.9 University Policy on Student Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave

Please see the university's page for student parents, which includes a link to the Student Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave Policy. Students who give birth may choose to suspend their status, normally for up to one year.

11.10 Fieldwork safety and training

Many students will, as part of their course, be required to undertake fieldwork providing it is safe and practical to do so. Fieldwork is considered as any research activity contributing to your academic studies which is carried out away from university premises, and must be approved by your department. 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. If you are travelling overseas there is an expectation that you will take out suitable travel insurance, which in the majority of cases can be obtained free of charge via the university. Your department also needs accurate information on where you are, and when and how to contact you while you are away. The following website contains some fieldwork experiences which might be useful to refer to https://www.socsci.ox.ac.uk/fieldworker-experiences

Training

Training is highly recommended for all students 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. In May 2025 the university issued a safety instruction to require that all students undertaking either medium or high-risk overseas travel or fieldwork need to have received a minimum level of suitable training. Attendance at any of the courses below with an Asterix (*) will meet this requirement.

Social Sciences Division Researcher Development Fieldwork Training (termly) DPhil students | Social Sciences Division (ox.ac.uk)
- **Overseas Fieldwork Safety***. *This course is aimed at those conducting Qualitative and Ethnographic research, and those conducting their research in higher risk locations, for example where the* FCDO *advise against travel or all but essential travel.*
- **Vicarious trauma workshops.** For research on traumatic or distressing topic areas or contexts.

Safety Office courses [Overseas Travel and Fieldwork | Safety Office](#) **(termly)**
- Emergency First Aid for Fieldworkers.
- Fieldwork Safety Overseas*: A half day course geared to expedition-based fieldwork, which covers planning and preparation, managing safety, including personal safety in the field, and how to deal with emergencies
- Fieldwork and overseas travel risk assessment for fieldworkers and travellers: A pre-recorded online training presentation*
- Travel insurance presentation for fieldworkers and overseas travellers

Useful Links
- [Fieldwork | Social Sciences Division (ox.ac.uk)](#)
- [Overseas Travel and Fieldwork | Safety Office (ox.ac.uk)](#)

11.11   OII Framework of Expectations for Inclusive Teaching

The OII has a [framework of expectations for Inclusive Teaching](#), which details the principles all convenors have agreed to adopt to support inclusive education, in relation to norms of communication, provision of teaching materials, reading lists and best practice in provision of recordings.

11.12   Educational Recordings Policy

The University adopted its current [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 OII does not have a blanket policy on making lecture recordings available to all students, in light of the sensitivity of much subject matter covered and the discussion-based format of many sessions. The decision as to whether to make recordings available to all students as standard rests with each convenor.

If recordings are not available as standard, students who are registered with the Disability Advisory Service have permission to make their own recordings of presenter-led teaching sessions, if required as a reasonable adjustment. The OII provides students with recording equipment for this purpose.
The OII's framework of expectations for inclusive teaching describes other anticipatory approaches to disability support, in addition to recommendations for best practice.

11.13   Academic Integrity in Research

The university policy on [Academic Integrity in Research](#) sets out the Code of Practice on research carried out in Oxford, together with procedures in the case of suspected misconduct, including plagiarism.

11.14   Conflicts of Interest

Oxford's Conflict of Interest Policy requires all staff and students 'to recognise and disclose activities that might give rise to conflicts of interest or the perception of conflicts and to ensure that such conflicts are seen to be properly managed or avoided'.

A conflict of interest can occur when your duties to the University compete with your personal interests or your duties to other people or organisations. Actual or perceived conflicts can arise from external activities that are undertaken in addition to your University role, personal relationships, or conflicting roles within the collegiate University. They can be financial, non-financial or both. See the University's Conflicts of Interest policy for full information on recognising, managing and declaring these.

11.15   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.

12. 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.

12.1 The OII as a department

12.1.1 Organisation

Details of the organisation of the department, contact information and photographs of are available for both faculty and support staff at the OII People pages.

Key people related to the DPhil Programme include:
- OII Director: Professor Vicki Nash
- Director of Graduate Studies: Professor Bernie Hogan
- DPhil Programme Directors: Prof Carl Frey (ICSS) and Prof Chris Russell (SDS)
- DPhil Coordinator: Laura Maynard
- Welfare contacts: Laura Maynard and David Pepper
- Head of Graduate Studies Support: Christine Bunyan

12.1.2 OII facilities

The OII is currently located at the Stephen Schwarzman Centre for Humanities at the Oxford Radcliffe Observatory Quarter off Woodstock Road in Oxford. The department is split over the 2nd and 3rd floors, with the 2nd floor being home to the main entrance, teaching spaces and student workspaces. There are two graduate study spaces within the OII area, one for DPhils and the other is for all students (DPhil & MSc). In addition to this space, there is graduate workspace around the great hall and in the onsite library.

There are other several meeting spaces and seminar rooms within the OII space in the Schwarzman centre which are available for students to use but must be booked 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.

The Schwarzman Centre is fully accessible to all areas including accessible toilets and a changing places room. The OII has a common room, three seminar rooms, a meeting room and two one-to-one rooms.

DPhil students will have card access to the OII space in the Schwarzman Centre, 7am-10pm, 7 days a week. DPhil students can apply for 24-hour access to this space from the Building Operations team and must complete a lone working induction before this will be granted. For further information about buildings, health and safety, and how to apply for extended building access, please see the OII Facilities Intranet page.

12.2 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.

Further details can be found on the University's website.

12.3 Social Science Graduate Office

At the Social Sciences Divisional Offices, the main office dealing with the organization of graduate studies is the Graduate Office (GO). Academic records of all students registered for higher degrees and diplomas of the University are maintained centrally on a student database. Each student's record is opened on receipt of the student contract. All information is updated as student's progress on their courses. They can be contacted at graduate-studies-2@socsci.ox.ac.uk.

12.4 Research Services

The university's Research Support team facilitates research by providing guidance on funding applications (for projects such as conference or workshops, not course funding) and best practice in research (for CUREC see below).

The CUREC team is concerned with ethical issues involved in research involving human subjects. It includes a step-by-step guide to seeking ethical approval for research projects. CUREC approval is a key requirement for the Transfer of Status application. For more help with CUREC, including questions on how to apply for it, please contact the OII's departmental Research Ethics Committee on drec@oii.ox.ac.uk.

12.5 Proctors' Office

The Proctors' Office conducts oversight over university statutes and policy, which includes many aspects of complaints procedures, disciplinary matters, and student welfare, particularly pertaining to examinations. Their website provides contact information and resources for students, particularly on academic appeals, student complaints, examinations and assessments, and residency requirements.

12.6 Library and IT Facilities

12.6.1 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 collection in the Schwarzman Library, as well as the Bodleian Libraries more broadly. 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 the [Bodleian Libraries](#).

12.6.2 The Schwarzman Library

This is mainly a Humanities library but also houses the OII's collection as our department is located within the Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities building. The OII collection includes many volumes on information and communication technologies, as well as OII faculty publications.

12.6.3 The Bodleian Social Science Library

The [Social Science Library (SSL)](#) is located in the Manor Road Building and 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](#).

12.6.4 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, which you will always have as an on-course student. It is not possible to borrow books received under Legal Deposit, only to consult them in the Bodleian Libraries' reading rooms. Photocopying of material in the Bodleian Libraries is permitted, subject to copyright laws; detailed arrangements for photocopying vary. Computing Facilities

12.6.5 University IT 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:
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.

For full information on the facilities and services available at Oxford, please see the [IT Services website](#).

12.6.6 OII IT facilities

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.

The following are also available to students if required:

- specialist software (e.g., visualization and design software) if already licensed to the OII or the University and agreed with the Head of IT
- access to OII servers;
- 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 Head of IT.

For full details of the OII's computing facilities and support please see the [OII intranet.](#)

12.6.7 Canvas

The most up to date reading lists and course information are available through the relevant course page on [Canvas](#). All DPhil students normally have access to their compulsory courses, as well as any courses they audit. The [DPhil Programmes](#) page contains key course information, including seminar schedules for the term, forms and guidance documents, and other helpful links.

12.7 Centre for Teaching and Learning

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

Further details can be found on the [CTL website](#).

12.8 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 various modern languages.

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 on their website.

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.

12.9 Careers guidance

The University's Careers Service provides a comprehensive 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 the Careers Service website for full information.

13. Financial matters

13.1 OII DPhil Student Research Budget

The DPhil student research budget is available to all student to help towards research-related expenses. The maximum funding available is **£1500 per student** for the duration of the degree. We recommend that you also explore funding through your college as most will operate a similar fund for graduate students. Approved types of expenditure under the OII student research budget include:

- Conference-related expenses (fees, travel, accommodation are fine but memberships cannot be covered)
- Software licenses (where not already available through Oxford)
- Compensation for interviews/participants or crowdsourced labour such as data tagging
- Researcher travel expenses to conduct interviews/carry out fieldwork
- Library resources (where not available as online resources through SOLO)

How to use the allowance

1. Please fill in the [online application form](#)

2. Finance and supervisors review application form (value for money etc.) and give approval.

3. If approval is given, Finance will send email to confirm this and provide instructions on how to claim reimbursement (normally by student buying the item and then completing university expenses claim).

Please be aware that the budget is not intended to be used for IT hardware or office equipment, and under University policy all durable items purchased with the research budget remain property of the University and must be returned to the department at the end of your studies. Further, the student research budget cannot cover anticipated study expenses such as travel to classes, laptop purchase or emergency funding for day-to-day living expenses. In case of financial hardship, an application should be submitted for hardship funding instead.

Any requests for further information should be directed to finance@oii.ox.ac.uk.

13.2 DPhil Cohort-building Budget

The OII has made £2400 available for the financial year 2025-26 (Aug to July) towards social or training activities for DPhil students. It is the responsibility of the student representatives to manage this budget and use it towards anything social or training related for the DPhil cohort.

This budget can be used for lunches or other day-time socials to take place at the OII (note that this requires liaising with events@oii.ox.ac.uk and facilities@oii.ox.ac.uk on dates and risk assessment); evening events outside the OII like dinner or pub nights as long as these include food as well as drinks; or activities like city tours, crazy golf, bowling etc. Previous cohorts have also organised things like termly picnics, subsidised tickets for college dinners, and even networking trips/industry visits in

London. The main requirement is that funding should be used for activities which are open to the whole cohort.

How to use the allowance
In order to make use of the social budget, please discuss and agree upon a social activity as a cohort and then one or two nominated students should take responsibility for organising this activity. To obtain the funds, the student organisers should email details of the planned activity to Finance Officer Duncan Passey on finance@oii.ox.ac.uk and CC dphil@oii.ox.ac.uk.

13.3 Disability Support Funding

Students who are registered with the Disability Advisory Service may be able to claim funding to help cover costs incurred as a result of their disability while at university. Please see the Disability Advisory Service funding pages for advice on how to apply for these schemes.

In the event that DAS funding cannot cover or can only partially cover costs, DAS-registered students can also submit a request to the **OII's Disability Support Fund**. This fund is designed to contribute towards costs incurred for recommended adjustments that are detailed in a student's support plan, such as human support (note-taking, proof-reading), or specialist equipment and software.

How to apply
Students should send their application in writing to the Graduate Studies Manager Christine Bunyan (christine.bunyan@oii.ox.ac.uk). Applications should include (a) the nature of the expenses and (b) details of the contribution already sought from DAS and if applicable, college support funds.

13.4 Carers' Support Fund

This scheme has been established as part of our efforts to support equal access to professional development opportunities, recognising that staff and students with caring responsibilities may incur additional costs in order to attend events and training, including conferences, research visits, or work-related training activities and events that fall on evenings and weekends. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis and we welcome feedback on any aspect of this scheme. Please contact hr@oii.ox.ac.uk with any queries.

How to apply
Fill out the online form on the OII Intranet: Carers' Support Fund

13.5 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.

Further details about University grants and funding can be found at: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding. There may also be various college funds and awards available and students should speak with the college adviser about such opportunities.

The University also has a number of prizes and awards available for academic achievement.

13.6 Assistance with financial difficulties

13.6.1 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. Please see the Oxford student website for further information on centrally available financial assistance.

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 a centrally-administered Oxford Assistance Fund (OAF), which offers financial support through grants and/or loans for students experiencing unexpected financial difficulties. grants and/or loans of up to £8,000 are available, with applications assessed via the University Financial Assistance Committee on a termly basis. Please note that complete applications including supporting documentation should be submitted by week 3 of Michaelmas and Hilary term and by week 1 of Trinity term.

13.6.2 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.
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.

However, students should not feel apprehensive about inquiring where hardship is imminent. For full guidance on eligibility and the assessment process, please see the OII Student Hardship Fund Guidelines.

How to apply
Students should send their application in writing to the Graduate Studies Manager, Christine Bunyan (christine.bunyan@oii.ox.ac.uk).
Applications should include:

(a) a short statement of the circumstances,
(b) supporting evidence to establish the case for hardship, and
(c) confirmation that an application has already been made to the College and University hardship funds
(or explain why not).

13.7 Paid Work

A student's first commitment must be their Oxford degree work, which is demanding and intensive. If full-time students 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.

Overseas students should also check with the Student Immigration Team (student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk) if they are eligible to work; further guidance can be found on the Working while Studying page.

The OII from time to time may advertise research or teaching assistantships for DPhil students close to an area of study for which they may apply, subject to the approval of their supervisor.

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 be comfortably combined with study.

Please see the University Guidance on Paid Work for Oxford graduate students for further information.

For any queries about working during your studies, please speak to the DPhil Coordinator, or the OII HR Manager (hrmanager@oii.ox.ac.uk).

13.8 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 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 should register your travel details on TIRS 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.

Appendix A: Graduate Joint Consultative Committee

1. The terms of reference of the Graduate Joint Consultative Committee of the Oxford Internet Institute are:

   a) 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.

   b) To refer matters raised through the representation system to the relevant department committee.

   c) 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.

   d) 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.

   e) To comment upon safety within the department.

   f) 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.

   g) 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.

   h) To review on an annual basis the effectiveness of the student representation system in the department including identifying any changes to the system.

   i) To discuss follow-up action resulting from previous GJCC meetings, in particular any matter which was referred to other department committees

   j) 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 Admissions Coordinator

   (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 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 (GSC)

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*)
- IT Manager (*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

        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*)
- IT Manager (*ex officio*)
- three representatives from the department's contract research staff
- at least one representative 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.

The student representatives shall be entitled to contribute to discussion of any unreserved business described at paragraph (a) above but may not take part in any other business except by leave of the chair. Apart from *ex officio* members, members shall serve for three years and be eligible for reappointment.

Meetings:

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

Appendix C: Guidance on MLitt

Terms and conditions
A thesis for the degree of MLitt can normally be submitted by a student of full MLitt status after 6 terms of residence (12 terms for part-time) and after not more than 9 terms (15 for part-time) from their first registration. MLitt students whose work is likely to exceed 9 terms (15 for part-time) must apply for an extension of time. Boards can grant up to 3 terms of extension in total for a full-time student or a part-time student.

The normal maximum length of an MLitt thesis is 50,000 words. This maximum is taken seriously and permission to exceed it is rarely given. On thesis preparation generally, see section 6.4.6 of the Handbook.

MLitt students should also consult the [Regulations for the Degree of Master of Letters](#).

Requirements for award of MLitt
The examiners of an MLitt thesis are asked to certify that:
> (i) the student possesses a good general knowledge of the particular field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls;
> (ii) that the candidate has shown competence in investigating the chosen topic;
> (iii) the student has made a worthwhile contribution in the particular field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls;
> (iv) the thesis is presented in a lucid and scholarly manner;
> (v) in their opinion the thesis merits the Degree of Master of Letters;
> (vi) the student has presented a satisfactory abstract of the thesis

MLitt examiners are asked to bear in mind that their judgement of the extent of the candidate's contribution to knowledge or understanding of the relevant field of learning should take into account what may reasonably be expected of a capable and diligent student after two years of full-time study, for four years in the case of the part-time student.

Examination outcomes for the MLitt

Examiners for the MLitt must choose one of the following outcome recommendations:

A. Award of the MLitt (without corrections)

B. Award of the MLitt (with minor corrections)

C. Potentially award the MLitt (following resubmission after major corrections)

D. Potentially award the MLitt (following resubmission after major corrections and a mandatory viva)

E. Reference back for further work on thesis and re-examination for MLitt

F. No award (fail)

For a first MLitt examination, examiners may only select from recommendations A, B, C, D or E; for a subsequent examination, examiners may select any one of A-F. Full explanation of these recommendations is available in the relevant Memorandum of Guidance for Examiners (GSO.7 and GSO.7a).

Appendix D: Guidance on MSc by Research (MRes)

The MRes is typically only offered for PRS students or post-Transfer DPhil students as an alternative to completing the DPhil.

An MRes thesis has a maximum word limit of 25,000 words (excluding the bibliography and any appendices, but including footnotes and tables). This maximum is taken seriously and permission to exceed it is rarely given. On thesis preparation generally, see section 6.4.6 of the Handbook.

A thesis for the degree of MRes can normally be submitted by a student of full MRes status after 3 terms of residence (6 terms for part-time) and after not more than 9 terms (15 for part-time) from their first registration. MLitt students whose work is likely to exceed 9 terms (15 for part-time) must apply for an extension of time. Boards can grant up to 3 terms of extension in total for a full-time student or a part-time student.

Viva

The examination process and final viva arrangements for an MRes thesis is the same as for DPhil students, with two examiners, at least one of whom shall be an external. MRes students do not apply for Transfer or Confirmation of Status. A candidate who has been awarded an MRes cannot use the same topic for a DPhil.

Requirements for award of MRes

The examiners of an MRes thesis are asked to certify that:
   (i) the student possesses a good general knowledge of the particular field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls;
   (ii) that the candidate has shown competence in investigating the chosen topic;
   (iii) the student has made a worthwhile contribution in the particular field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls;
   (iv) the thesis is presented in a lucid and scholarly manner;
   (v) in their opinion the thesis merits the Degree of Master of Science by Research;
   (vi) the student has presented a satisfactory abstract of the thesis.

MRes examiners are asked to bear in mind that their judgement of the extent of the candidate's contribution to knowledge or understanding of the relevant field of learning should take into account what may reasonably be expected of a capable and diligent student after two years of full-time study in the case of a full-time student, or four years in the case of a part-time student.

Examination outcomes for the MRes

Examiners for MSc (Res) must choose one of the following outcome recommendations:

   A. Award of the MSc (Res) (without corrections)

   B. Award of the MSc (Res) (with minor corrections)

   C. Potentially award the MSc (Res) (following resubmission after major corrections)

D. Potentially award the MSc (Res) (following resubmission after major corrections and a mandatory viva)

E. Reference back for further work on thesis and re-examination for MSc (Res)

F. No award (fail)

For a first MSc (Res) examination, examiners may only select from recommendations A, B, C, D or E; for a subsequent examination, examiners may select any one of A-F. Full explanation of these recommendations is available in the relevant Memorandum of Guidance for Examiners (GSO.7 and GSO.7a).

Appendix E: OII Marking Scales

70-100	Distinction	For exams: a very good answer that has a well-structured argument, is lucidly written, shows strong familiarity with relevant literature or theory, and includes necessary command of empirical material. Theses should also display strong analytical power, and originality either in a fresh approach to texts and literature or in generating new evidence.
65-69	Merit	Work of high standard that covers the major points and shows familiarity with relevant literature or theory. It will include some elements of distinction quality, but is either not sufficiently original, or less well-written, or has a less well-structured argument, or includes inaccuracies. The marks of 68 and 69 should indicate an examiner's preparedness to move up to a distinction if a co-assessor or panel of examiners so recommend.
50-65	Pass	Work of solid scholarly standard that shows some analytical capacity and a reasonable coverage of relevant empirical material. It may include a well-structured argument, but be marred by omissions and/or some inaccuracies.
49 and below	Fail	An examination answer or dissertation that fails to display the criteria necessary for a pass. It may have some or all of the following weaknesses: the standard of writing is too poor; it is without sufficiently clear structure and argument; it does not cover the literature and empirical material adequately; it does not focus on the topic; it contains serious omissions and inaccuracies. The marks of 48 and 49 should indicate an examiner's preparedness to move up to a pass if a co-assessor or panel of examiners so recommend.

Appendix F: Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR)

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 the online Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) system. 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 encouraged** to take the opportunity to review and comment on their academic progress, any skills training they have undertaken or may need to the future, and on 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.

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 DPhil 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 and 8 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).

It is strongly recommended to complete a self-assessment report every reporting period. If you have any difficulty completing this you must speak to your supervisor or Director of Graduate Studies.

Your self-assessment report will be used by your supervisor(s) as a basis to complete a report on your performance this reporting period, for identifying areas where further work may be required, and for reviewing your progress against agreed timetables and plans for the term ahead. GSR will alert you by email when your supervisor or DGS has completed your report and it is available for you to view.

Use this opportunity to:

- Review and comment on your academic progress during the current reporting period
- Measure your progress against the requirements and agreed timetable for your programme of study
- Identify skills developed and training undertaken or required (taught programmes only)
- List your engagement with the academic community
- Raise concerns or issues regarding your academic progress to your supervisor
- Outline your plans for the next term (where applicable)

Students and supervisors are reminded that having a positive student-supervisor relationship is an important factor in student success. Research suggests that one of the strongest predictors of postgraduate completion is having expectations met within the student-supervisor relationship

To access GSR, please visit the Student Self-Service. Students will be able to log on to the site using their single sign-on details. Full details of how to use the site are provided online; however, should a student need additional support, they should contact the OII's Divisional Graduate Studies Assistant at graduate-studies-2@socsci.ox.ac.uk in the first instance.

Appendix G: Brief Guide to Research Supervision

The role of the supervisor is to:

- Organise an initial meeting with the student as soon as possible at the beginning of the doctorate to agree working arrangements, including for contact when either the supervisor or student is away from Oxford.

- Where there is co-supervision or a supervisory team, the primary supervisor should coordinate advice and guidance, and ensure that respective responsibilities (such as oversight of fieldwork) are clearly understood by academic colleagues and the student.

- Establish a timetable of regular meetings for detailed discussion of the student's work and progress (normally a minimum of nine one-hour meetings (or equivalent) per year). A prompt meeting with the student on return from their fieldwork or a period of suspension should also always be arranged. Supervisors are asked to take a flexible approach when scheduling meeting and setting deadlines for students with disabilities and/or caring responsibilities.

- Agree a research plan and programme of work with clearly established academic expectations and deadlines, aligned with the formal requirements for Transfer and Confirmation of Status and final submission.

- Agree a timetable for the submission of written work and for the return of feedback within a reasonable timeframe.

- Discuss with the student, and submit in Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR), a detailed report on the student's academic progress at the end of each term and during the long vacation.

- Undertake an annual Training/Development Needs Analysis (to be uploaded into GSR/Canvas)

- Help to identify and support the development of subject-specific and personal/professional researcher development skills and ensure that these are met.

- Discuss any ethical, legal, intellectual property, conflicts of interest and health and safety aspects of the student's research (including fieldwork) and approve any risk assessments required

- Advise the student on the need to avoid plagiarism and discuss any issues related to third party copyright for the thesis

- Ensure that the student is familiar with the research facilities and activities of the department, advise the student on appropriate financial support available, encourage the student to explore career opportunities, and where necessary direct the student to other services provided by the University e.g. health, disabilities and counselling

Your role as a student is to:

- Attend an initial meeting with the supervisor as soon as possible at the beginning of their degree, and maintain regular contact with the supervisor, responding to him/her in good time

- Meet with the supervisor regularly (normally a minimum of nine one-hour meetings (or equivalent) per year) keeping a written record of discussions, giving due weight to any guidance or corrective action proposed. In addition, always arrange to meet promptly with the supervisor upon return from fieldwork or any period of suspension.

- Where more than one supervisor is appointed, students may request a meeting with all supervisors together at least once per year.

- Draw up a research plan and timetable of work in consultation with the supervisor, and keep relevant records of all aspects of work

- Discuss with the supervisor a detailed report on academic progress for submission Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) at the end of each term and in the long vacation

- Working with the supervisor, take responsibility for their research programme, including the development of subject-specific, research, and personal and professional skills

- Take responsibility for (i) the preparation and content of their thesis, giving due regard to any advice from the supervisor, and (ii) its timely submission in accordance with the timetable agreed

- Be aware of the University's guidance on plagiarism and of any ethical or legal issues, health and safety requirements, or intellectual property issues arising from the research project

- Pursue opportunities to engage with the wider academic community at the departmental, University, national and international levels

Appendix H: Divisional Code of Practice on Supervision

Appointment of supervisors for Graduate Research Students

Patterns of supervision differ in the Social Sciences Division according to the nature of the subject or research project. In some subjects there is typically a sole supervisor; others may have two or more supervisors (particularly those with an interdisciplinary element), with one designated as the "primary supervisor". Joint supervision is possible at the OII and, especially for strongly interdisciplinary research, sometimes encouraged.

Departments and faculties should ensure that expectations with regard to the supervisor role, including regular meetings with students, are spelled out clearly and are understood by all supervisors. In the case of joint supervision, the respective roles and responsibilities of the supervisors concerned should be clearly established from the outset (for example, managing responsibility for fieldwork).

The department or faculty shall ensure that each graduate student has access to one or more named persons to whom they can turn for support, such as a Primary or Co-Supervisor(s), Secondary Supervisor, Programme Director or the Director of Graduate Studies. Where there is a sole supervisor, these other sources of support, and the arrangements for providing cover during the absence of the supervisor referred to below, are especially important.

Students should also expect to be able to approach a college adviser, appointed by the student's college (the college advisor must not be the same person as the department supervisor). The college may also have procedures in place to monitor the overall well-being of graduate research student, including a discussion of academic reports. If the college identifies any concerns which might impact on the academic progress of the student concerned, and which may not already have been recognised in departmental/faculty reports, it may refer these in confidence to the Director of Graduate Studies in the department/faculty concerned, who will take appropriate action.

Who can supervise?

- Someone of sufficient standing who is be able to operate with credibility on behalf of the department/faculty.
- Someone who has sufficient experience to be able to provide appropriate guidance to the student about the necessary procedures and, in particular, the academic expectations associated with an Oxford doctorate in their subject area.
- Someone who is able to undertake the tasks assigned to the supervisor in the Education Committee's *Policy and Guidance on Research Degrees*, including integrating students into the national and international network in their subject.
- Someone who has sufficient security of tenure to make it likely that they will see the student's research through to successful conclusion. Particular care should be taken when appointing supervisors for part-time research degrees.
- In accordance with the University's Policy concerning relationship between students and staff, relationships between a doctoral supervisor and their student are prohibited. Please refer to the 'Conflicts of Interest' section below.

The primary supervisor

A student may have one or more supervisors, but there must be one who is responsible for overall academic progress and pastoral needs, and who is responsible for signing progression forms.

The primary supervisor shall normally be:

- A member of staff based in the student's home department (including college fellows) on a permanent contract and who is an associate professor, reader, or professor, OR
- A researcher based in the student's home department with an independent fellowship that lasts for the duration of the student's degree.
- Members of staff who meet one of the above criteria but who are employed an open-ended contract may also act as a primary supervisor where the department has a reasonable expectation that their employment will last for the duration of the student's degree, and there is confidence that an appropriate alternative supervisor could be appointed should the postholder leave before the completion of the student's degree.

The primary supervisor will be currently engaged in research in the relevant discipline(s) so as to ensure the direction and monitoring of the student's progress is informed by up-to-date subject knowledge, methods, and research developments.

Nobody should be appointed as the primary supervisor if it is known at the time of appointment that they will not be in post for the normal duration of the student's programme.

A person appointed to supervise alongside the primary supervisor shall normally be:

- An associate professor, reader, or professor.
- A member of research staff who is grade 8 or above.
- An independent research fellow (those with fellowships secured from an external learned society, research council or equivalent). The fellow should have at least three years' experience as a post-doctoral researcher before becoming a supervisor.
- A postdoctoral researcher with at least three years of experience of research.
- A Department Lecturer at grade 8 or above who is research-active and has at least three years of experience of research.
- An employee of an external organisation who has both a relevant doctorate (or equivalent research expertise) in the subject of the student's DPhil, and who has at least three years of experience of working in research and development.
- A postdoctoral researcher who has done less than three years' postdoctoral research should not normally be appointed as a supervisor; however, this should not preclude informal support as part of a supervisory team.

For a student following an interdisciplinary DPhil who has two equally senior supervisors in two different departments, there should still be a single primary supervisor, who will be based in the department where the student is registered for administrative purposes. For the purposes for signing off Transfer, Confirmation and submission forms, the primary supervisor should liaise with their counterpart in the other department, and where this is any disagreement between the two, the DGS in the department where the student is registered will make the final decision.

A candidate should not be admitted if there is no suitable specialist supervision available.

New supervisors

Appropriate support and training will be given to new supervisors and all appointees new to supervision are required to undertake the online supervision course *DPhil Supervision at Oxford (Humanities and Social Sciences)* developed by the Division in association with the CTL.
For members of academic staff in their initial period of office, departments will appoint a Mentor who will, amongst their other duties, provide advice, support, and guidance on teaching, and supervision of research students. New academic staff will also have access to general support and advice from the Director(s) of Graduate Studies in their department/faculty. The supervision record of a new member of academic staff is included in the review prior to appointment to retiring age, and a high standard of supervision is expected.

Quality assurance for supervision

Departments should put in place mechanisms to ensure that the quality of supervision is not put at risk as a result of the excessive volume and range of other duties assigned to individual supervisors.

Normally Associate Professors will supervise **four students**, and Associate Professors with Tutorial Fellowships and joint (cross-departmental) post-holders will supervise **three students** (the notional maxima being eight and six respectively).

These norms and notional maxima are based on sole supervision and, where staff are engaged in joint supervision, would be adjusted to reflect the level of commitment involved. In addition, the norms may also need to be adjusted where staff take up significant research or administrative posts (including departmental and/or college officer roles) in terms of both their capacity to supervise new students and any impacts on their current supervisory load.

The Division emphasizes the importance of adhering to the the the UK Quality Code for Higher Education indicators of sound practice in the provision of supervision, which state that higher education providers will:
- appoint supervisors with the appropriate skills and subject knowledge to support and encourage research students, and to monitor their progress effectively;
- ensure each research student has a supervisory team containing a main supervisor who is the clearly identified point of contact;
- ensure that the responsibilities of research student supervisors are readily available and clearly communicated to supervisors and students;
- ensure that individual supervisors have sufficient time to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

Frequency of meetings

The Division normally expects a full-time research student to have a minimum of nine one-hour meetings (or equivalent) per year (part-time students pro rata). Where possible meetings should be held face-to-face, but may also be held virtually e.g. via MS Teams with the agreement of both the supervisor and student. In particular, supervisors are asked to take a flexible approach when scheduling meetings and setting deadlines for students with disabilities and/or caring responsibilities.

In addition, students with more than one supervisor may request at least one meeting with all of their supervisors together per year.

The frequency of meetings may vary according to the stage of the research programme. It follows that, alongside their other duties, a supervisor should be able to provide this typical level of support for each of their research students.

Departments are responsible for making appropriate arrangements to cover for a supervisor's absence on leave or for other reasons and should ensure that students are not disadvantaged by appointing a supervisor who is about to go on leave.

Change of supervisor

Where a student's research changes focus such that their current supervisor may no longer be the most appropriate person to provide guidance on the revised topic, the department/faculty, in consultation with the supervisor concerned, should consider whether an additional or alternative supervisor should be appointed. It should be noted that such a change of research focus is unusual and requires prior permission from the department or faculty concerned.

Where a student feels that there are good grounds for contemplating a change of supervisor, this should first be discussed with the supervisor concerned, or if this seems difficult, with the appropriate head of department, Director of Graduate Studies or their deputies, or the college adviser.

If this involves concerns over the quality of supervision, students should be encouraged to seek to resolve the matter by informal means where possible but should be made aware of the University's formal complaint procedures.

At the OII we encourage students to speak to either the Director of Graduate Studies, the DPhil Programme Directors, or the Graduate Studies Manager if they have any concerns with their supervisor.

Supervisor checklist
This document provides a checklist of the main areas of responsibility of supervisors:

General responsibilities
- provide academic leadership to the student, and clarification of expectations;
- advise the student about all aspects of the research programme: standards, planning, literature, sources, attendance at classes/ lectures, techniques and skills*;*
- undertake a regular Training Needs Analysis/Skills Review with the student;
- (where acting as a co-supervisor or part of a supervisory team) co-ordinate advice and guidance, and ensure that respective responsibilities (such as managing fieldwork etc) are clear both to academic colleagues and to the student;
- avoid absence on leave without appropriate temporary supervision having been arranged for the student. [Leave will not normally be approved without such arrangements being in place.]
- have reasonable familiarity with institutional, national and international expectations relating to research environments, research supervision and research training (see the section B11 of the UK Quality Code Quality-Code-Chapter-B11.pdf (ioe.ac.uk)).

Meetings and feedback
- arrange an initial meeting with the student as soon as possible at the beginning of the degree, and agree with the student expected frequency, format, and duration of future meetings, and arrangements for contact when either the supervisor or student is away from Oxford,
- meet with the student regularly;
- where students have more than one supervisor, they may request at least one meeting with all of their supervisors together per year;
- contact the student ahead of return from suspension and arrange to formally meet as soon as possible upon the student's return to study;
- always arrange a meeting with the student as soon as possible upon their return from fieldwork;
- keep written records of the meetings to ensure both student and supervisor are clear on action to be taken and to help in monitoring progress;
- consider providing dedicated time in supervision meetings to discuss any personal issues or external commitments which may be impacting on the students' academic progress.
- be flexible when scheduling meetings to accommodate disabilities and/or caring responsibilities.

Student Research
- assist the student in defining the topic of research which can be completed and written up within the prescribed period;
- advise at an early stage on research design and the effective collection and storage of data;
- provide an overview and guidance on the structure of the completed thesis and guide the student through to completion;
- give guidance on:
  - the nature of research and the standard expected (including advice on presentation and writing style);
  - the planning of the research, literature and sources;
  - attendance on appropriate research training and professional skills training courses, including fieldwork safety courses;
  - techniques that may be needed;
  - other sources of advice and expertise;
  - ethical issues, and the procedures for seeking ethical approval through the Social Sciences and Humanities Inter-Divisional Research Ethics Committee (IDREC), where appropriate;
- refer the student to the University's Research Practice Guidance (at Research Practice Guidance | University of Oxford) and encourage them to take the introductory Research Practice Training modules (at Research Practice Training | University of Oxford).
- ensure that the student is aware of, and has taken appropriate action with respect to:
  - any ethical, research integrity and legal issues connected with the research and data storage;
  - any health and safety issues connected with the research, including lab-based research and/or fieldwork (see below – Supervisors' responsibilities for students undertaking fieldwork). This includes identifying and ensuring appropriate risk assessment and training;
  - completion of the mandatory online Research Integrity training (ideally before starting their research but before Transfer of Status when they will be required to provide evidence of this)
  - issues concerning intellectual property;
  - issues related to third party copyright for the hard copy and digital thesis

- issues concerning conflict of interest ([Conflicts of interest | Compliance (ox.ac.uk)](#)
- the need to avoid plagiarism and to be aware of [University guidance on plagiarism](#).

Student progress, monitoring and performance
- assist the student to work within a planned framework and timetable;
- monitor the student's ability to write a coherent account of their work in good English;
- review student feedback and make termly reports on the student's work using Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR), including reviewing and updating training requirements. The supervisor should discuss the contents of the report with the student; in particular, any concerns should be discussed with the student before being flagged in GSR;
- provide the student with regular information as to the student's progress, and, where problems arise, provide guidance and assistance in relation to necessary, corrective action;
- provide relevant information on students' attendance, academic progression, and performance to the department;
- assist the student with the preparation, timetable and submission of material relating to applications for Transfer of Status, and for Confirmation of Status, and to provide appropriate feed-back, especially where the student has failed to meet the required standards;
- ensure the student is familiar with all examination procedures and requirements;
- advise the student on the timing of submission of the thesis and consult with the student in order to make recommendations for the appointment of examiners;
- to encourage the student to apply for any adaptations needed in response to disabilities ahead of milestones assessments or the final oral examination;

Resources
- ensure that the student is familiar with the research facilities and activities of a department or faculty;
- advise as appropriate on financial support available, for example, funding for conferences, field trips, or other research travel;
- encourage the student to obtain knowledge and information about career opportunities
- alert the student, where necessary to other services provided within the University, for example, health, disabilities, and counselling;

Development and training
- assist the student during the course of the first term, and at least annually thereafter, with the identification and subsequent development of skills for subject specific research training and for personal and professional purposes, including advice on teaching opportunities and appropriate training and ensure that the Training Needs Analysis/Skills Review is uploaded onto GSR;
- encourage the student to attend the Divisional student induction event provided through the Grand Union Doctoral Training Partnership and the appropriate courses offered through Divisional Skills Training Programme;
- pursue opportunities for the student to take part in the intellectual life of the department and to discuss his or her work with peers and others in the wider academic community (including the presentation, and possible publication, of research outcomes where relevant) at divisional, university, national and international level.

Discussion prompts for first meetings with students

To help clarify mutual expectations and establish good communication between supervisors and students, it may be useful to consider the following questions:

Research Direction
- How much direction do you expect to provide as a supervisor?
- How much direction does your student expect you to provide?

Knowledge and skills
- What skills do you expect your student to have or to acquire? (Use the Training/Development Needs Analysis/Skills Review document to support this discussion.)

Time management and meetings
- How often do you expect to meet with your students and how?
- How much time do they expect from you?
- Are there any considerations which should be taken into account regarding disabilities and/or caring responsibilities?

Feedback and constructive criticism
- How often do you expect to receive work from students?
- What sort of feedback will you provide?
- What are your student's expectations?

Turnaround times
- How quickly do you expect to provide feedback on work that students have submitted for review?
- How quickly does your student anticipate you being able to provide feedback?

Communication between meetings
- What medium do you prefer to communicate with students: by phone, e-mail, MS Teams/Skype, in writing?
- How quickly do you expect to respond to messages from students?
- What do they prefer and expect?

Expectations for written work
- Do you expect to receive students' work all at once, or in smaller chunks?
- Do you expect their drafts to be 'works in progress' or more polished pieces?
- At what intervals do you expect students to submit work?
- Would you prefer to receive documents in hard copy or electronically?

Research student checklist
This document provides a checklist of the main areas of responsibility of research students:

General responsibilities
- an obligation to act as a responsible member of the University's academic community*;*
- responsibility for his or her own research activity, for satisfying the requirements of the D.Phil. programme, and for giving the necessary time and effort to the programme;

- responsibility for the direction of and innovation in the research project as it develops, with the support of the supervisor(s);
- responsibility for reviewing skills and training needs on a regular basis with the support of the supervisor(s), undertaking any training agreed with the supervisor and department(s) concerned, and uploading completed Training Needs Analysis/Development Needs Analysis/Skills Review documents on GSR or Canvas;
- responsibility for working with his or her supervisor(s), other staff and colleagues to maximise progress in their research degree.

Meetings and feedback
- attend an initial meeting with the supervisor as soon as possible at the beginning of the degree, and agree with the supervisor the expected frequency and duration for future meetings (including any considerations which need to be taken into account due to disabilities and/or caring responsibilities), and arrangements for contact when either the supervisor or student is away from Oxford
- where more than one supervisor is appointed, request to meet with all supervisors together at least once per year;
- arrange to meet with the supervisor as soon as possible upon return from fieldwork or suspension;
- discuss and agree with the supervisor the most appropriate model of supervision, the type of guidance/comment which is most helpful, and the expected speed for feedback on written work;
- recognize the demands made on a supervisor's time and the need to prepare adequately for meetings and to observe deadlines;
- accept the importance of constructive criticism within the supervisory relationship, and seek a full assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of any work;
- keep a written record of discussions with the supervisor, and give full weight to any suggested guidance and corrective action proposed;

Research
- define the area of research, complete the literature review, acquaint him/herself with the background knowledge needed, and produce a timetable for the completion of the research project;
- write a clear and detailed research proposal prior to embarking on the research for the thesis;
- abide by the University's requirements with regard to plagiarism, and the legal, ethical, and health and safety guidelines related to her/his research;
- prior to embarking on empirical work or fieldwork (data collection):
- seek approval from the supervisor;
- where research involves human subjects, seek ethical approval via her/his department/faculty and complete the University ethical approval form(s) for submission to the Social Sciences and Humanities Inter-divisional Research Ethics Committee (IDREC) prior to undertaking data collection;
- completion of the mandatory online Research Integrity training
- Undertake any necessary risk assessments and obtain travel insurance well in advance of the proposed trip, and agree a plan to remain in contact with the supervisor;
- where necessary, apply in good time for a disclosure through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if the research involves working with children and/or vulnerable adults.

Progress, monitoring and performance

- in consultation with the supervisor, establish a clear timetable and programme work which is kept under regular review, and keep relevant records of all aspects of the work;
- submit written material in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussion;
- engage actively in the review process and play an active role in planning and reviewing progress;
- seek out and follow the regulations applying to the research programme, and seek clarification, where necessary;
- provide regular reports on progress where these are required (and at least once a year for the supervisor), and to inform the supervisor immediately of any circumstance which might lead to interruption of study;
- with the support of the supervisor, complete the assessed written assignments required as part of the research training programme and submit them by the dates specified;
- ensure that the standard of his or her written and spoken English is of the necessary standard for the submission of a thesis;
- allow sufficient time for writing up and pay particular attention to final proof reading;
- decide when they wish to submit the thesis for examination, having provided the supervisor with sufficient time to comment on the final draft and having taken account of the supervisor's opinion;
- (where the student feels that there are good grounds for contemplating a change of supervision arrangements) discuss this with the existing supervisor, or, if this presents difficulty, with another appropriate officer in the department, faculty or with a college adviser.

Resources
- make positive use of University, departmental/faculty, and college teaching and learning facilities;
- make appropriate use of any guidance available relating to the student's career after successful completion of a research degree.

Development and training
- attend the required courses/training, and other appropriate courses and research training as agreed with the supervisor;
- make full use of opportunities to engage in the intellectual life of the department/faculty and the wider academic community;
- make appropriate use of opportunities for personal and professional development.

Supervisors' responsibilities for students undertaking fieldwork

Overview

Fieldwork
The University has a legal duty of care to its students undertaking fieldwork. University Policies and Procedures are in place to set out how this duty of care is to be discharged. These procedures require that risks are assessed, and proportionate measures and arrangements put in place to mitigate those risks to an acceptable level.

Responsibility
Supervisors play a key role in this process in terms of a) ensuring risk assessments are carried out; b) ensuring their students are properly prepared for their fieldwork; as well as c) bringing their own experience and knowledge to guide, advise, assess, and check arrangements. All University employees have a legal duty to take reasonable care for the safety of those affected by their [the employees] acts or omissions. Employees, and students, are therefore expected to comply with the University's health and safety policies and statement of safety organization. A key requirement for field trips is careful planning to reduce the likelihood or impact of something going wrong. Supervisors must therefore be able to demonstrate this planning by ensuring assessments are in place, appropriately prepared, documented where necessary, reviewed and authorised.

Specific duties of Supervisors are to:
- ➢ Be aware of relevant University Safety Policies and Departmental procedures.
- ➢ Consider the health and safety implications of any research proposal.
- ➢ Ensure their students have received training appropriate to their needs.
- ➢ Ensure that risk assessments have been made and the safety provisions relating to the work exist and have been discussed with those doing it.
- ➢ Ensure that suitable arrangements are in place for regular contact to provide support and checks on the student's welfare while they are away.
- ➢ Review arrangements with the student after the fieldwork to identify any problems and learn any lessons

Relevant university policies, training courses and further information /resources can be found at:

- Practical guide for fieldwork supervisors
- Fieldworker experiences case studies
- Fieldwork | Social Sciences Division (ox.ac.uk)
- Overseas Travel and Fieldwork | Safety Office (ox.ac.uk)

Appendix I: Training Needs Analysis Framework

INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDANCE

For Students:

- TNA provides an opportunity to reflect on your existing expertise and skills, and to work with your supervisor to identify your training and development needs. Be honest with your self-assessment of your current skills, and make some realistic objectives for the year ahead.
- If this is the first time you've carried out a TNA, think about it as a baseline and reflect on all previous relevant experiences. If this is a follow-up TNA (students in years 2 and beyond) then please provide responses to questions 1-10 relating only to the previous academic year.
- In developing your training plan and objectives, have a look at the training, courses and resources offered by your department, the Social Sciences Division, the University's Language Centre, the Careers Service, the Bodleian libraries, IT services, as well as any national and international opportunities. Information about all these can be found at (www.socsci.ox.ac.uk/training)
- Arrange a meeting to share and discuss this analysis with your supervisor.
- Upload the completed TNA to Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) once discussed and agreed with your supervisor.

For Supervisors:

Review the TNA form prior to the scheduled meeting.

- Help identify areas where the researcher could take action over the coming year to acquire and develop the skills and competencies needed to progress their research.
- Assist with selecting and prioritising concrete actions to accomplish, and suggest targets and deadlines.
- Consider training and resources available through the department, the Social Sciences Division (www.socsci.ox.ac.uk/training), the Language Centre, the Careers Service, the Bodleian libraries and ITLP.
- Write down your comments to summarise any advice, guidance, and suggested next steps.
- Ensure the student uploads the completed TNA form to GSR following your meeting.

Name:		Supervisor(s):	
Department:			
Funder, if applicable:			

Pathway, if applicable (e.g. Area Studies, Migration, Politics):		Current programme of study:	

Please confirm that you have discussed your TNA with your supervisor. ☐

PREVIOUS TRAINING AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Describe any previous professional and work experience that may be relevant to your current research plans and topic of study.

1. WRITING AND PUBLICATIONS:

What writing experience/skills have you developed? List any report writing, policy briefs, academic publishing, blogging, book reviewing, funding proposals, peer reviewing and journal editing experience.	Alongside your dissertation, what other publication and writing projects do you plan to pursue? What training or support would help you do so?

2. COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

To date, what opportunities have you had to develop your communication skills? How much experience do you have of oral presentations, conferences, outreach and public engagement activities? Have you participated in any language, presentation or media training or in other communication activities relevant to your research?	What specific opportunities should you seek in order to develop your confidence and communication skills? Are there further opportunities you should seek to improve your language skills? What training might you need to do so?

3. NON-ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE:

What experience have you had of working with business, public-sector, or civil-society organisations? Have you been involved in 'knowledge exchange' activities (e.g. advisory work, collaborative research with non-academic partners, placements, briefings etc?) How have these strengthened your skills and/or your networks?	Think about ways your research could contribute to society or influence work being done outside of academia. Are there any connections you need help in brokering? What skills or training might you need?

4. TEACHING:

What teaching experience, if any, have you gained (e.g. tutorials, one-off courses)? Do you have a teaching accreditation or relevant experience from training or the workplace?	What teaching and supervisory experience would be beneficial?

5. BIBLIOGRAPHIC AND COMPUTING SKILLS:

What research and technical skills have you acquired to date? Please include details, such as bibliographic tools, statistical software, as well as research and data management.	What specific opportunities should you seek to improve your skills in this area over the year(s) ahead?

6. TRAINING IN RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY:

What research methods skills have you acquired, either as part of a formal research training degree or in other forms? List content from your previous or current degree programme as relevant.	What research and methods training are you planning (or required to complete) over the coming year? Are there specific skills you think you will need help with, or that you would like to develop further?

7. ETHICS AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY

What, if any, training have you received on research ethics, research integrity and/or fieldwork risk assessments?	What ethical and safety issues will your research raise? What skills or training might you need?

8. FIELDWORK

To date, have you carried out any fieldwork? Have you received training on safety in fieldwork and risk assessments?	What ethical and safety issues will your fieldwork raise? What skills or training might you need?

9. FUNDING, RESEARCH LEADERSHIP & PROJECT PLANNING

Have you applied for small grants, fellowships or other funding? (e.g. equipment grants, conference travel, early career fellowships)? Have you organised seminars/conferences or edited journals? Have you designed or managed projects outside of your DPhil?	What opportunities do you plan to gain in these areas during this year and throughout your DPhil? Do you have ideas for new research initiatives or collaborations? What skills or training might you need?

10. PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

What do you see as your particular professional and personal strengths? (e.g. team working, managing projects/people, leadership, bridging between academia and policy/practice, communication).	Are there areas of personal effectiveness you would like to develop? What are these and how best can you pursue this?

AND FINALLY, YOUR CURRENT CAREER ASPIRATIONS (IF YOU KNOW!)

Where do you see yourself working in 3 to 5 years? What do you hope to achieve in your career in the long-term? What would help you to gain more clarity in your career plans? This will help your supervisor understand and support your current plans.

RESEARCH AND TRAINING OBJECTIVES FOR THE COMING YEAR
(TO BE COMPLETED WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR)

SUBJECT AND RESEARCH METHODS TRAINING AND OBJECTIVES FOR THIS YEAR

OTHER TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES FOR THIS YEAR

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OTHER COMMENTS, THOUGHTS, CONCERNS?

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Appendix J: Oxford University Research Archive (ORA) and Digital Publication of Theses

The University of Oxford is committed to the widest dissemination of research theses produced by its graduate students. The Oxford University Research Archive (ORA) is an online archive of research output including theses created in fulfilment of Oxford awards, produced by graduate students at the University of Oxford.

DPhil, MLitt and MSc (by Research) Degrees

All students following the DPhil, MLitt or MSc (by Research) are required to deposit a digital copy of their thesis with the Bodleian Libraries. Please be aware that this is a condition for award of the degree and it is enforced. The digital copy should be deposited into ORA at http://ora.ox.ac.uk after Leave to Supplicate (LTS) has been granted.

ORA provides maximum visibility and digital preservation for Oxford digital theses. Students should read the important information about the deposit of, and access to, digital theses which is available at https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/digitaltheses/ nd includes:

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Dispensation from consultation is granted by the department/faculty not the Bodleian Libraries or ORA staff. If you need any help with progression forms, please contact your Graduate Studies Assistant: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/contacts?wssl=1

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