Mathematical Physical and Life Sciences Division

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

MATHEMATICAL, PHYSICAL AND LIFE SCIENCES DIVISION

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENT HANDBOOK 2016-17

NOTES OF GUIDANCE FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS IN THE MATHEMATICAL, PHYSICAL AND LIFE SCIENCES

PLEASE KEEP THESE NOTES IN A SAFE PLACE

You will need to consult them during your graduate career at Oxford

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A – KEY PEOPLE

Your supervisor(s)

Each graduate student is assigned a supervisor, who is your primary source of information and guidance. Usually, your supervisor will have been appointed some time before you arrive in Oxford, but in some departments and in some circumstances (e.g. if you are from an overseas country, and have not had an opportunity to visit the department beforehand or if your research programme has a significant taught element in the first year, such as Doctoral Training Programmes) the appointment may be made later, once you have had the chance to meet members of staff to discuss possible project areas in more depth or until you have completed the taught components.

- What should I do if I am not happy with my supervision arrangements?

If you are unhappy with the arrangements for your supervision, particularly if you want to change your supervisor, you should first try to discuss the situation with your present supervisor. If, for any reason, you do not wish to do this, then you should contact the Director of Graduate Studies for your department. Your College Adviser or Tutor for Graduates may also be able to give informal advice. It is the responsibility of the relevant Director of Graduate Studies to approve a change of supervisor.

Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)

Each department (for Chemistry and Physics each sub-department), including the Doctoral Training Programmes, has a Director of Graduate Studies. The holder of this office has primary responsibility for graduate matters within the department concerned. The DGS is expected to formulate policy on graduate studies, and to exercise daily oversight of graduate business. As well as being involved in the planning of postgraduate lectures and training courses, the DGS is responsible for monitoring the progress of individual students and dealing with any problems as they arise, and for handling the administrative arrangements connected with, for example, supervision, probation, change of status, extensions of time, and the submission of theses.

A list of current Directors of Graduate Studies is below.

Department/Sub-Department	Director of Graduate Studies	Email Address
Chemistry	Dr N Green, Chairman, Chemistry Graduate Studies Committee and Director of Studies for Chemistry	nicholas.green@chem.ox.ac.uk
Inorganic Chemistry	Professor J McGrady	john.mcgrady@chem.ox.ac.uk
Organic Chemistry	Professor D Hodgson	org-dgs@chem.ox.ac.uk
Physical & Theoretical Chemistry	Professor G Ritchie	grant.ritchie@chem.ox.ac.uk
Chemical Biology	Professor D Hodgson	org-dgs@chem.ox.ac.uk
Computer Science	Professor D Kay	dkay@cs.ox.ac.uk
Earth Sciences	Professor C Ballentine	chris.ballentine@earth.ox.ac.uk
Engineering Science	Professor A Zavatsky	dogs@eng.ox.ac.uk
Materials	Dr A O Taylor	adrian.taylor@materials.ox.ac.uk
Mathematics	Professor A Dancer Professor A Muench	andrew.dancer@maths.ox.ac.uk andreas.muench@maths.ox.ac.uk
Physics	Professor A Cooper-Sarkar Co-ordinator for Physics)	a.cooper-sarkar1@physics.ox.ac.uk
Astrophysics	Professor G Cotter	g.cotter1@physics.ox.ac.uk
Atmospheric, Oceanic and Planetary Physics	Professor P Irwin	patrick.irwin@physics.ox.ac.uk

Atomic and Laser Physics	Professor P Norreys	peter.norreys@physics.ox.ac.uk
Condensed Matter Physics	Professor A Ardavan	arzhang.ardavan@physics.ox.ac.uk
Particle Physics	Professor D Bortoletto	daniela.bortoletto@physics.ox.ac.uk
Theoretical Physics	Professor A Louis	ard.louis@physics.ox.ac.uk
Plant Sciences	Dr N Kruger	nick.kruger@plants.ox.ac.uk
Statistics	Professor G Reinert	reinert@stats.ox.ac.uk
Zoology	Professor A Thomas	adrian.thomas@zoo.ox.ac.uk

Doctoral Training Programmes Course Directors

A list of current Doctoral Training Programme Directors is below:

Doctoral Training Programme	Course Directors	Email Address
Autonomous Intelligent Machines & Systems CDT	Professor S Roberts Professor N Trigoni Professor M Osborne	sjrob@robots.ox.ac.uk niki.trigoni@cs.ox.ac.uk mosb@robots.ox.ac.uk
Biomedical Imaging CDT	Professor P Jezzard	peter.jezzard@ndcn.ox.ac.uk
Cyber Security CDT	Professor A Martin	Andrew.Martin@cs.ox.ac.uk
Diamond Science & Technology CDT	Professor J Smith	jason.smith@materials.ox.ac.uk
Environmental Research DTP	Professor D Pyle	david.pyle@env-res.ox.ac.uk
Gas Turbine Aerodynamics CDT	Professor L He	li.he@eng.ox.ac.uk
Healthcare Innovation CDT	Professor V Grau	vicente.grau@oerc.ox.ac.uk
Industrially Focused Mathematical Modelling CDT	Professor C Breward Professor C Please	chris.breward@maths.ox.ac.uk colin.please@maths.ox.ac.uk
Interdisciplinary Bioscience DTP	Professor G Preston Dr E Becker	gail.preston@dtc.ox.ac.uk esther.becker@dpag.ox.ac.uk
Life Sciences Interface CDT	Professor D Gavaghan	david.gavaghan@dtc.ox.ac.uk
New and Sustainable Photovoltaics	Professor H Snaith	h.snaith1@physics.ox.ac.uk
Oil & Gas CDT	Professor J Cartwright	joe.cartwright@earth.ox.ac.uk
Partial Differential Equations Analysis & Applications CDT	Professor G-Q Chen Professor J Ball Professor E Suli	gui-qiang.chen@maths.ox.ac.uk ball@maths.ox.ac.uk endre.suli@maths.ox.ac.uk
Renewable Energy Marine Structures CDT	Professor B Byrne	byron.byrne@eng.ox.ac.uk
Science and Application of Plastic Electronic Materials CDT	Professor L Herz	l.herz1@physics.ox.ac.uk
Science and Technology of Fusion Energy CDT	Dr D E J Armstrong	david.armstrong@materials.ox.ac.uk
Statistical Science CDT	Professor C Holmes	chris.holmes@stats.ox.ac.uk
Synthesis for Biology & Medicine CDT	Professor M Smith Professor D Dixon	martin.smith@chem.ox.ac.uk darren.dixon@chem.ox.ac.uk
Synthetic Biology CDT	Professor A Papachristodoulou Professor R Carlisle	antonis@eng.ox.ac.uk robert.carlisle@eng.ox.ac.uk
Systems Approaches to Biomedical Sciences CDT	Professor C Deane Professor G Morris	deane@stats.ox.ac.uk garrett.morris@dtc.ox.ac.uk
Systems Biology CDT	Professor D Gavaghan	david.gavaghan@dtc.ox.ac.uk
Theory & Modelling in Chemical Sciences CDT	Professor D Logan	david.logan@chem.ox.ac.uk

College Adviser

Each student is allocated a College Adviser by their college, from among its Senior Members, who will arrange to see you from time to time and whom you may contact throughout your studies for additional advice and support on academic and other matters.

The College Adviser: Principal Responsibilities

The role of the College Adviser is additional and complementary to that provided in the student's department. The College Adviser is not expected to perform the role of the Department Supervisor(s), or to be responsible for directing students' academic work. Rather, the intention is to provide a focal point for an individual student's relationship with the College, and general academic or pastoral advice and assistance throughout the student's course of study.

The College Adviser is expected to monitor a student's progress, to discuss the University supervisor's reports, and to be available for regular consultation on academic or other matters, including those issues that a student may feel unable to raise with his/her supervisor. Advisers should, as appropriate, comment positively on students' progress, and achievements; they are not only there to monitor students' progress and pick up problems. The Adviser may wish to consult with the Tutor for Graduates (or Senior Tutor in Graduate colleges) about any students who appear to be experiencing difficulties in their academic work, or direct students to other appropriate persons for assistance with non-academic related difficulties.

College Advisees: Principal Responsibilities

You should not hesitate (or feel any way inhibited) to contact your college adviser outside their regular meetings and you should feel free to consult other college officers as necessary, including the Tutor for Graduates, the Senior Tutor or the College Secretary. College Advisees should be aware that the College Adviser is *not* expected to perform the academic role of the University supervisor. However, depending on your college adviser's field of expertise, and intellectual interests, advisees may seek academic advice from the Adviser. In addition, advisees should feel free to seek advice from the College Adviser on academic-related matters including applications for research funding, conferences and seminar attendance, publication and career plans etc. It is particularly important that advisees should consult their College Adviser if they experience any difficulty with their University supervisor. Any matters concerning examination procedures may be discussed with the College Adviser. If students wish to raise them formally, they should do so with the Tutor for Graduates/Senior Tutor.

MPLS Graduate Office

The Graduate Office supports the administration of the Graduate School, and is responsible for the management of all aspects of on-course graduate student administration, maintenance of graduate student records on the University's Student System, support for the Graduate Supervision System (GSS) and University Scholarships requiring a divisional competition (e.g. the Clarendon Scholarships). Contacts for the MPLS Graduate Office are:

Mrs Helen Beauchamp, Graduate Studies Officer
(tel. 2-82584), e-mail: helen.beauchamp@mpls.ox.ac.uk
Mrs Beccy Reynolds - Graduate Studies Assistant
(tel. 2-82579), email: rebecca.reynolds@mpls.ox.ac.uk

Students are welcome to visit the Graduate Office, between the hours of 9.15am – 1.00pm and 2.00pm - 4.45 pm Monday to Friday, with queries you may have regarding your studies or for advice and information. All completed graduate studies forms should be returned to the Graduate Office.

B – SUPERVISION & TERMLY REPORTING

Yours and your supervisor's responsibilities

The *responsibilities of supervisors* are set out in full in the University's *Policy on Research Degrees*.

Your supervisor(s) will be your main source of information and advice throughout the course of your research. Their responsibilities include giving you early advice about the nature of research and the standard expected, and about planning the framework of your research programme; arranging financial support for the research; advising you about literature sources, and attendance at lectures and classes; arranging any instruction needed in research techniques; meeting with you regularly to discuss your work and skills training needs; directing your efforts as necessary; and giving you informal assessments of your progress.

Some students will have a single member of staff as their supervisor, and some may have joint supervision, especially when a project involves drawing upon expertise in more than one area. In all cases, individual supervisors are required to identify at least one colleague to be available for limited consultation by the supervisee during the first year

The *responsibilities of graduate research students* are also set out in full in the University's *Policy on Research Degrees*.

The University expects all students to accept their obligation to act as a responsible member of the University's academic community, and to take ultimate responsibility for their research programme (including subject-specific, research, personal and professional skills training,) and for developing an appropriate working relationship with their supervisor(s). The main elements of your research programme should normally be reviewed with your supervisor(s) during your first term, although in some subjects this review may take place in the second term. The discussion will include establishing regular meetings with your supervisor(s), agreeing aims and objectives for the first year, and reviewing the facilities available to you, such as laboratory provision (bench space); library provision; access to appropriate computer facilities, including e-mail and the internet; access to telephone, word-processing and fax facilities; departmental common room facilities. In order to get the most benefit from your supervision, you should follow a few basic guidelines.

- Discuss with your supervisor(s) the type of guidance and comment that you would find most helpful.
- Agree on a regular schedule of meetings.
- Do not hesitate to take the initiative in raising problems or difficulties, however elementary they may seem.
- Try to maintain progress in accordance with an agreed plan of work, and if this is not possible, discuss the reasons with your supervisor as soon as possible.
- Keep systematic records of all that has been attempted and accomplished.
- Hand in written work (including thesis drafts) sufficiently ahead of time to allow your supervisor time to review your work.
- Above all, be open and frank; with good communication, you are likely to make good progress.

Further information can be found in the MPLS Brief Guide to the roles of research students and supervisors and the Code of Practice on the Supervision of Graduate Research Students.

Oxford Learning Institute Research Supervision Website

The Learning Institute website has some useful information for supervisors, DGSs, and students providing information such as expectations of students and supervisors, the relationship with your supervisor, beginning your research and making progress through the structured pathway to the DPhil degree, and explanations of Oxford's policies and practice.

Project Initiation Plan

The MPLS Division has created a non mandatory project initiation plan, which departments, students and supervisors may use and modify for their own purpose. The plan can be used as a useful tool to help assist you with working through with your supervisor(s) in establishing the scope and direction of your project.

Supervision reports and the Graduate Supervision System (GSS)

The Graduate Supervision System (GSS) allows students and their supervisors to report on the student's progress in their research project, and to reflect on your development as an independent researcher. Supervisors are required to write formal reports on your academic progress at the end of each term.

Am I required to submit a termly report?

All graduate students within MPLS are now required to submit a reflective report on their progress each term via GSS. You will be sent an e-mail to logon at the beginning of week 6 of each term to submit a self-assessment report (GSS is open for students from Monday of week 6 to Friday of week 7 (closing at 4pm) of each term). You will be prompted to list completed training / identify any other training needs and provide a comprehensive overview of your progress. You can also set a flag if you have any concerns with your academic progress. This will be highlighted to your Supervisor, Director of Graduate Studies, and College Adviser. Once your report is submitted your supervisor then completes a report on your progress, which will be available for you to view. **If you do not submit a report either for two subsequent terms, or for two terms out of three (on a rolling basis) this will trigger you being invited to a meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss your progress.**

Are there any specific forms that I need to complete and submit with my termly report?

For the term before your Transfer milestone is due a specific form 'Preparing for Transfer of Status' has been created for the supervisions/meetings to support you in reflecting on your level of preparedness for this assessment. This form should be uploaded to GSS, as your termly report, via the 'upload facility'. A copy of the form will also go to your transfer assessors. All other reports can be provided using the "free text", sections (noting that some have a word limit). A similar form 'Preparing for Confirmation of DPhil Status' has also been created for you to submit and upload to GSS the term before your Confirmation milestone is due. A copy of the form will also go to your confirmation assessors. All other reports can be provided using the "free text", sections (noting that some have a word limit). **Important Note:** If you are only uploading a file, you must ensure that you add a note to the text field to indicate that you have done this, otherwise the system will not register that you have submitted a termly report.

MPLS policy & notes of guidance for GSS

PLEASE NOTE

If you have any *formal* complaints about the supervision which you are receiving, you should raise these with your Director of Graduate Studies. Please do NOT use the supervision reporting system as a mechanism for formal complaints. If you have any concerns you do not feel able to put on your form you should discuss these with your Directors of Graduate Studies.

C – PROGRESSION & KEY MILESTONES

Below is a useful checklist for you to use to aid you through your studies, and some flow charts that provide an outline of the usual student research career.

Research Student Progress Check List

ADMISSION TO SUBMISSION OF THESIS

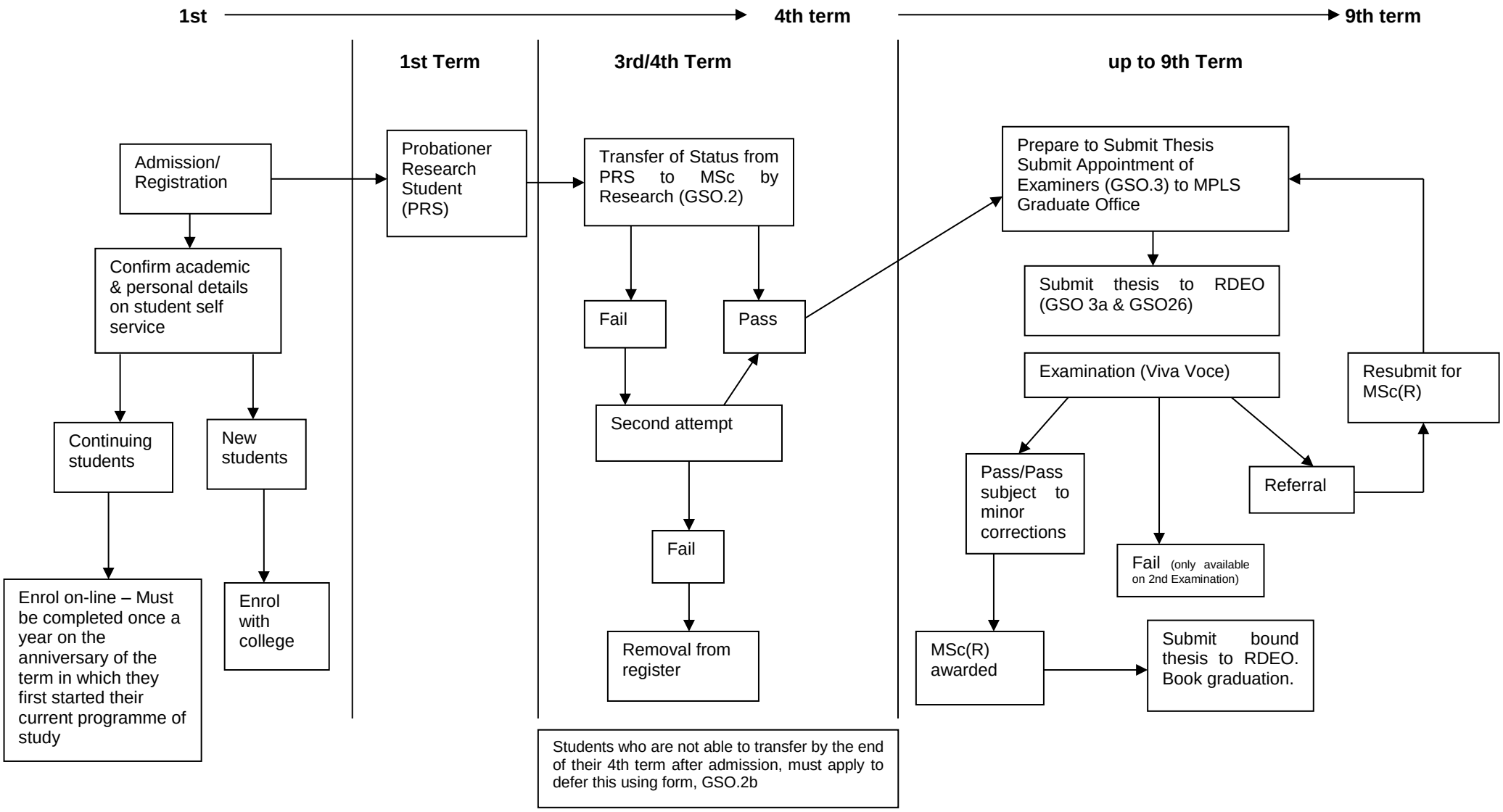
- Registration once a year (confirm personal and academic details, via student self-service) ☐
- Submit a termly GSS report each term (including uploading your preparation for transfer of status and preparation for confirmation of status forms at the appropriate time) ☐
- Transfer of Status from PRS to either MSc by Research or DPhil (complete GSO.2) ☐
- Confirmation of DPhil Status (for DPhil students only) (complete GSO.14.MPLS) ☐
- Application for appointment of examiners (complete GSO.3) ☐

SUBMISSION TO COMPLETION

- Submit thesis to the Examiners & Submission Team at the Examination Schools (complete GSO.3a & 26) ☐
- Viva date arranged by internal examiner ☐
- Submit minor corrections (if necessary) to examiners ☐
- Submit a hardbound copy of the thesis for the Bodleian Library to the Examiners & Submission Team, Examination Schools with loose copy of abstract ☐
- Submit thesis electronically via ORA (only for students admitted from October 2007) ☐
- Result notification letter sent to you from the Examiners & Submission Team, Examination Schools ☐
- Book graduation ceremony ☐
- Receive Degree Certificate following degree ceremony ☐

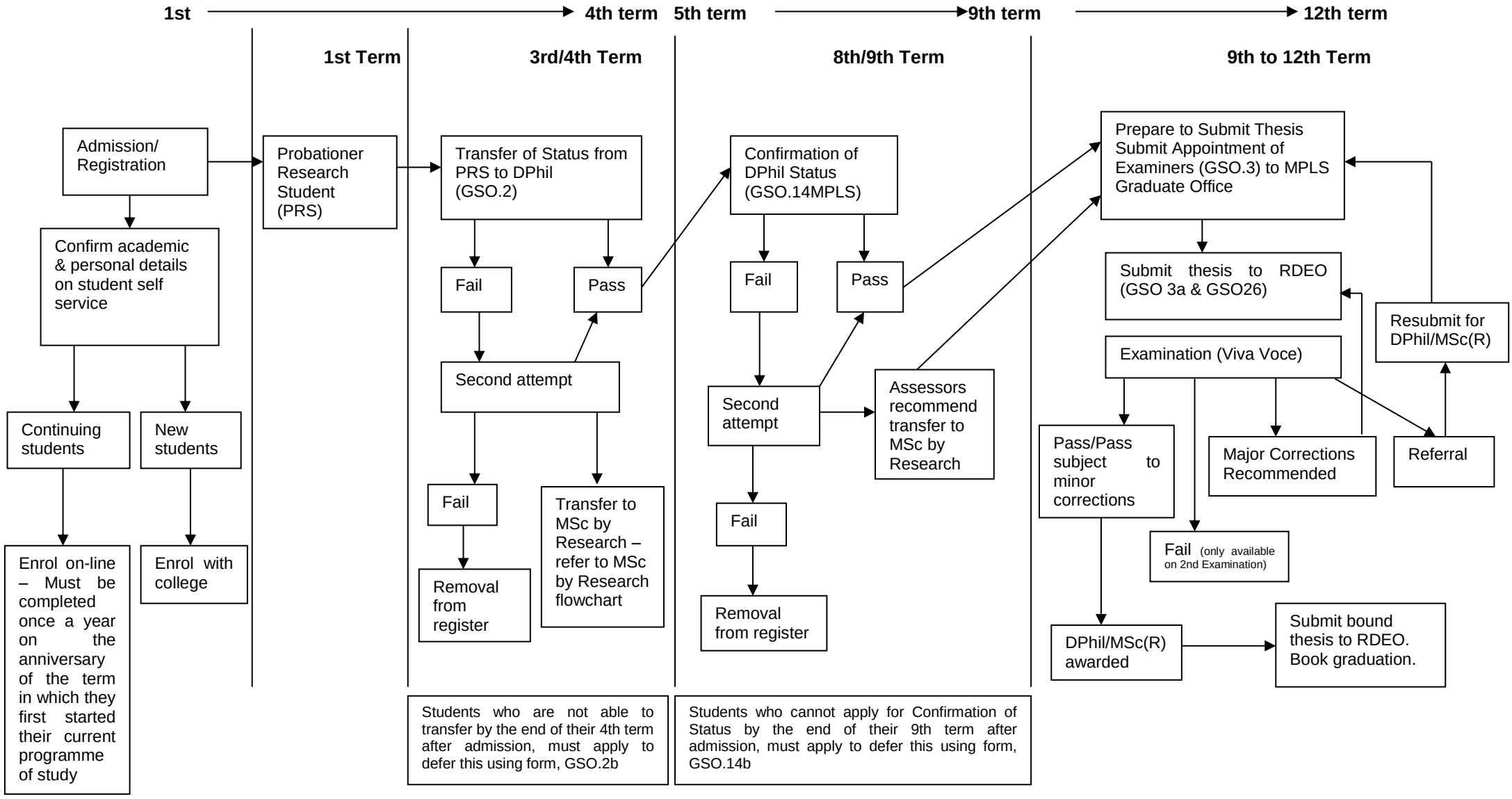
Request degree confirmation letter from Degree Conferrals Office (if required) ☐

MPLS Progress Flowchart for MSc by Research Students



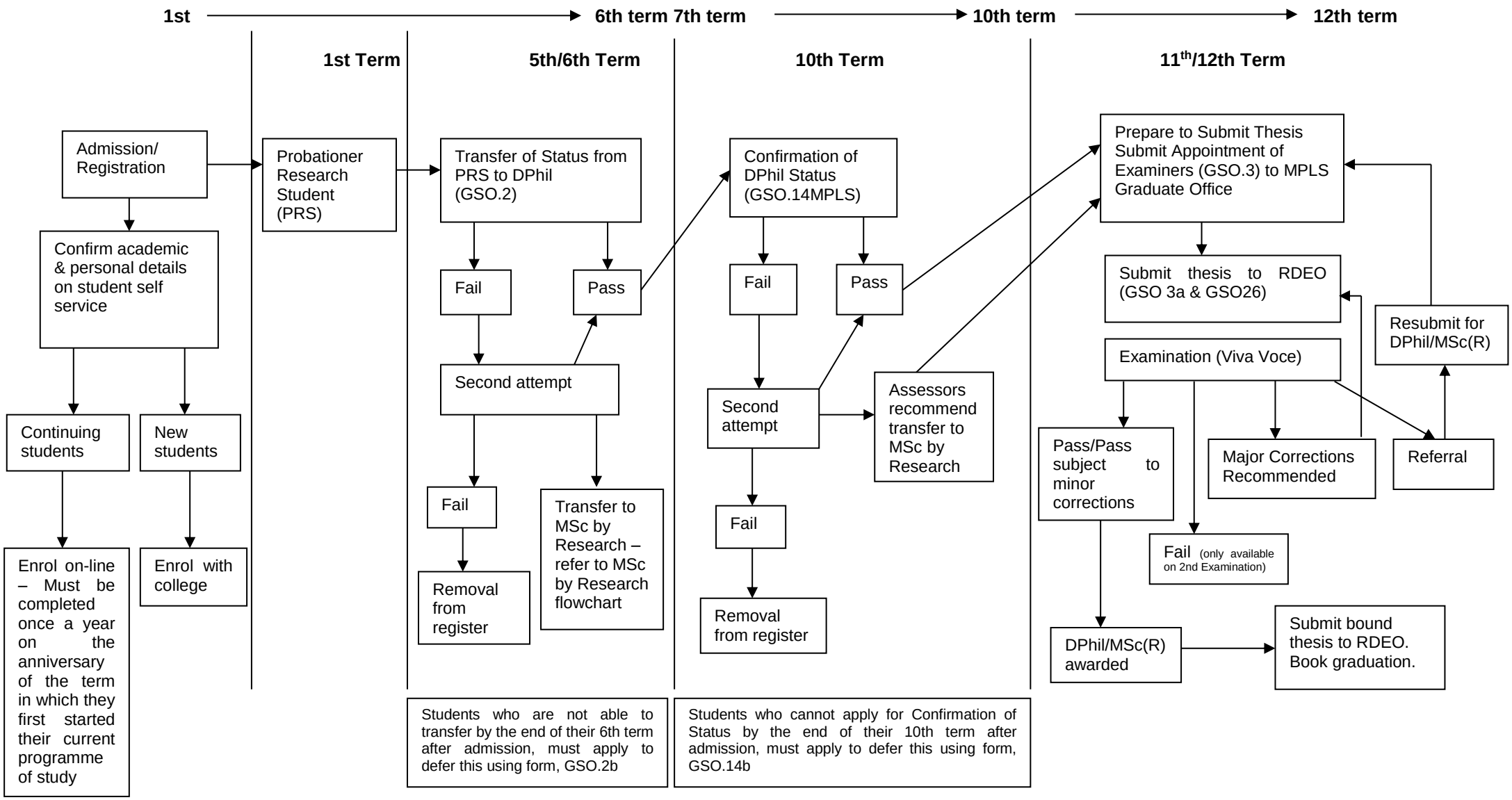
(Please note that only two attempts are permitted at transfer of status)

MPLS Progress Flowchart for DPhil Students



(Please note that only two attempts are permitted at transfer & confirmation of status)

MPLS Progress Flowchart for Students on a Doctoral Training Programme*



(Please note that only two attempts are permitted at transfer & confirmation of status

(*NB: These timescales are for students commencing on a Doctoral Training Programme from October 2014, subject to any specific regulations. For further information on timings for your specific programme please refer to the Examination Regulations)

Transfer of status

Below is a useful checklist for you to use to support you through the preparations for your transfer of status assessment. It maps directly to the assessment forms that your assessors will be using so the criteria are transparent.

MATHEMATICAL, PHYSICAL AND LIFE SCIENCES DIVISION

Transfer of Status - Checklist for Students

The purpose of transfer is to ensure that you have a convincing research proposal, that you are making satisfactory progress in its development, and to satisfy the assessors that the work is potentially of DPhil or MSc(R) quality. The assessors will also use the process to assess and confirm the likelihood of submission within your funded period/within 12 terms (for DPhil) or 9 terms (for MSc(R)).

Students are strongly encouraged to complete the University's online research integrity training (an introduction to good research practice) before applying for transfer, which is available at ***https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/hierarchy/skills/ricourses***

What assessors will be expecting/looking for from students at Transfer of Status:

- That you have a well-defined research project, with clear goals. You should have presented a statement of the subject of your thesis and the appropriate written work as defined by your department.
- That you are well-suited and able to undertake advanced research.
- That you have good general background knowledge of the field related to your work.
- That you show evidence that the project is likely to yield sufficient results in the time available, e.g. through a plan of work with key milestones.
- That you are likely to submit within your funded period/within 12 terms (for DPhil) or 9 terms (for MSc(R)).
- That you are able to work independently as appropriate.
- That your work to date is of a good standard and quality.
- That you are able to express ideas clearly, in English, both in writing and orally.
- That there is the potential for your work to make a significant and substantial contribution to your field of study.
- That your ideas and plans for future work are clear and realistic.
- That you can defend your completed and future work.
- That you have engaged well with both academic training and professional development/career skills activities. You should also be able to show what further activities you expect to engage with.
- You should have a statement of support from your supervisor and college.
- You should have a critical understanding of relevant literature.

Any Department Specific Guidance:

Please note that you do not need to wear sub-fusc.

MATHEMATICAL, PHYSICAL AND LIFE SCIENCES DIVISION

Transfer of Status - Checklist for Students

- ☐ Arrange meeting(s) with supervisor(s) to discuss transfer requirements
- ☐ Define/agree proposed research project
- ☐ Check department deadlines and requirements for transfer with (relevant department contact)
- ☐ Draft/prepare transfer work following department requirements, which should include a research proposal and timeline
- ☐ Submit transfer work to supervisor(s) for review
- ☐ Refine/complete transfer work following supervisors feedback
- ☐ Complete any relevant forms and submit to (relevant department contact)
- ☐ Obtain statement of support from Supervisor
- ☐ Obtain statement of support from College
- ☐ Submit transfer work to (relevant department contact) for assessment by required deadline
- ☐ Transfer assessors appointed by Department/DGS
- ☐ Transfer assessment date arranged by assessors/department
- ☐ Following assessment written feedback received
- ☐ Official confirmation of recommendation from the MPLS Graduate Office received

Other key points:

- ☐ Research Ethics Approval has been applied for (if relevant)
- ☐ Keep a log/record of any permission for inclusion of 3rd party copyright material. (http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ora/oxford_etheses/copyright_and_other_legal_issues/copyright_held_by_third_parties__and__other_rights)
- ☐ Keep a log/record of any subject-specific (e.g. research methodology; data analysis and management; record keeping; bibliographical skills; presentation of research) and personal and professional skills (e.g. time management, language skills, IT skills, team work, problem solving, presentation skills, teaching skills, career planning) which you have already acquired during the course of your time as a Probationary Research Student
- ☐ Identify any skills which might require further development or refinement
- ☐ Keep a record of any other related activities,(e.g. presentation of posters, attendance at conferences, courses attended, publications, opportunities to undertake teaching, etc.), which have made a contribution to the development of your work

What is the transfer of status:

As a new research student you will first be admitted as a Probationer Research Student (PRS). The purpose of the transfer process is to ensure that you have a convincing research proposal, that you are making satisfactory progress in its development, and to satisfy the assessors that the work is potentially of DPhil or MSc by Research quality.

Timing for transfer of status:

At the time of transfer it will be necessary to decide whether to apply for transfer to MSc by Research or DPhil status. Transfer of status must take place and be achieved no later than four terms after admission, subject to any specific regulations. You are advised to apply to transfer status ***before the end of eighth week of the fourth term from admission*****,** in order to allow sufficient time for the process to be completed.

Doctoral Training Programmes

For students on a Doctoral Training Programme transfer of status must take place and be achieved no later than six terms after admission, subject to any specific regulations. You are advised to apply to transfer status ***before the end of the fifth term from admission*** and no later than ***the end of eighth week of the sixth term,*** in order to allow sufficient time for the process to be completed.

Regulations relating to the timing of transfer of status:

The Special Regulations of the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division, are set out in the *Examination Regulations*.

General advice on the appropriate timing in your department will be provided by your Director of Graduate Studies. Students registered on a Doctoral Training Programme will have a different timetable available from their Course Administrator. **All relevant milestone dates are contained in your welcome letter, which is sent out to new students from week four of the first term. You should keep this in a safe place for future reference.** Some funding bodies have conditions that require students to have successfully completed their transfer of status after one year before they will renew their award for the following year. Your supervisor will be able to advise you on the appropriate timing of transfer of status.

Deferral of transfer of status:

If it is necessary for you to defer your transfer of status an application must be made by you with the support of your supervisor, using form, GSO.2b, and should be submitted to your departmental Director of Graduate Studies before the end of the fourth full term after admission. You may only apply for up to two terms deferral. Please note that approval will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, and a first application for transfer of status must take place within the six term limit of PRS status (eight terms for doctoral training programmes).

What forms do I need to complete to transfer status:

You will need to ensure that you have completed and uploaded your *'preparing for transfer of status'* form to GSS the term before you are due to transfer (see section on Supervision reports and the Graduate Supervision System (GSS)).

An application form for transfer of status, GSO.2, **must** be completed and submitted to the department administrator at the time that you are applying for transfer of status, and not at the end of the assessment. The DGS will use this form to sign and confirm that you are

ready to be assessed. You must complete all sections of the transfer of status form, including the sections about subject-specific, personal and professional skills development. Your form may be returned to you to complete if the information provided is inadequate. Your transfer assessors will also be given a copy of your GSO.2 form. The department administrator will keep hold of the completed GSO.2 form until the assessment has been completed, and will then return it to the MPLS Graduate Office with the completed assessors report form, in order for your student record to be updated.

Students from *Mathematics* **must** also complete a MATHS.1 or MATHS.2 form *(depending on which status you are transferring to)* and students in *Computer Science* and *Statistics* **must** complete a MAT.1 or MAT.2 form *(depending on which status you are transferring to)*, and submit two copies of any written work required to the relevant departmental administrator. If a student passes the written work to their assessors directly, this must be clearly indicated on the MATHS.1 or MAT.1 form.

Consideration of transfer of status applications:

Transfer applications should be considered by a minimum of two assessors on behalf of the divisional board, one of whom may be your academic adviser, but neither of whom should be your supervisor or a member of your supervisory team. In some departments your Head of Department and the relevant Director of Graduate Studies (if they are not your supervisor) may be involved. Each department has its own detailed assessment procedures, which should include as a minimum the following three components:

- submission of written work. Each department will set out its own requirements in this area. Examples of the type of written work which may be required include: a progress report; a literature review; any required course work; a plan for the development of your research over the next two-three years; any published papers.
- an interview with your assessors, which should allow you the opportunity to summarise and discuss your research to date.
- a brief presentation or talk. This need not be part of the transfer interview. For example, it could be a presentation at a departmental seminar series.

It is essential that you check what is required with your departmental graduate studies administrator.

Following your transfer assessment you and your supervisor will be provided with feedback, which will include an assessment of the viability and suitability of the proposed research, and of its completion on a reasonable timescale.

Please note that your assessors may recommend a range of possible outcomes, including transfer to the relevant lower degree. Assuming you come through the assessment procedure satisfactorily, you will be formally allowed to transfer status. If your first application for transfer to DPhil or MSc by Research status is not approved, you may make one further application. An extension of time of one term will be granted if necessary to make the second application. If your second attempt at transfer is unsuccessful, and transfer to the relevant lower degree (having been considered by the assessors) has not been recommended, you will no longer be able to continue with your studies, and you will be removed from the Register of Graduate Students.

Confirmation of status

Below is a useful checklist for you to use to support you through the preparations for your confirmation of status assessment. It maps directly to the assessment forms that your assessors will be using so the criteria are transparent.

MATHEMATICAL, PHYSICAL AND LIFE SCIENCES DIVISION

Confirmation of Status - Checklist for Students

The purpose of confirmation of status is to enable research students to receive an assessment of their work by two assessors, other than your supervisor(s). It is intended to provide an indication that if work on the thesis continues to develop satisfactorily, then consideration of submission of the thesis within your funded period/four years (for DPhil) would appear to be reasonable. It therefore provides a second stage of formal progress review in the four years of your overall research programme. It should be noted that 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 confirmation assessment is different to the transfer assessment. The assessors will be focusing on how the research is progressing, the quality of the work completed, whether it is at the right level, and on the plan for completion. The assessors will therefore be looking to ensure that you are making the appropriate amount of progress in the development of your thesis, so that submission will be achieved within your funded period/four years (for DPhil). Primarily, they will be looking to see that your work/research does/will make a 'significant and substantial contribution' to your field of study. The assessment can also be used as a good opportunity to prepare for the vive voce examination of the thesis.

Students are reminded that they should normally have completed the University's online research integrity training before applying for transfer of status, but if not, should do so before applying for confirmation. The training is available at ***https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/hierarchy/skills/ricourses***

What assessors will be expecting/looking for from students at Confirmation of Status:

- That your work/research makes or will make on completion and submission, a 'significant and substantial contribution' to your field of study. You should have presented a statement of the subject of your thesis and the appropriate written work as defined by your department.
- That you have to date undertaken advanced research.
- That you have sufficient background and in depth knowledge of the field related to your work.
- That you show evidence that the project has yielded sufficient results to date and within the time remaining, e.g. through a plan of work, which includes a timetable for writing up.
- That you are likely to submit a satisfactory thesis within your funded period/within 12 terms (for DPhil)
- That you are working as an independent researcher as appropriate.
- That your work to date is of a good standard and quality.
- That you are able to express ideas clearly, in English, both in writing and orally.

- That your ideas and plans for completing your research/thesis are clear and realistic.
- That you can defend your completed and future work.
- That you have engaged well with both academic training and professional development/career skills activities. You should also be able to show what further activities you expect to engage with, and that you have considered your career post DPhil
- You should have a critical understanding of the relevant literature.
- You should have a statement of support from your supervisor and college.
- You should have a critical understanding of relevant literature.

Any Department Specific Guidance:

Please note that you do not need to wear sub-fusc.

MATHEMATICAL, PHYSICAL AND LIFE SCIENCES DIVISION

Confirmation of Status - Checklist for Students

☐ Arrange meeting(s) with supervisor(s) to discuss confirmation requirements

☐ Check department deadlines and requirements for confirmation with (relevant department contact)

☐ Draft/prepare confirmation work following department requirements, which should include a brief written report about your research achievements to date and timetable for submission.

☐ Submit confirmation work to supervisor(s) for review

☐ Refine/complete confirmation work following supervisor's feedback

☐ Complete any relevant forms (including GSO.14 form) and submit to (relevant department contact)

☐ Submit confirmation work to (relevant department contact) for assessment by required deadline

☐ Confirmation assessors appointed by Department/DGS

☐ Confirmation assessment date arranged by assessors/department

☐ Following assessment official confirmation of recommendation from the MPLS Graduate Office received, with a copy of the assessors report

Other key points:

☐ Research Ethics Approval has been applied for (if relevant)

☐ Keep a log/record of any permission for inclusion of 3rd party copyright material. (http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ora/oxford_etheses/copyright_and_other_legal_issues/copyright_held_by_third_parties__and__other_rights)

☐ Keep a log/record of any subject-specific (e.g. research methodology; data analysis and management; record keeping; bibliographical skills; presentation of research) and personal and professional skills (e.g. time management, language skills, IT skills, team work, problem solving, presentation skills, teaching skills, career planning) which you have already acquired Identify any skills which might require further development or refinement

☐ Keep a record of any other related activities,(e.g. presentation of posters, attendance at conferences, courses attended, publications, opportunities to undertake teaching, etc.), which have made a contribution to the development of your work

What is the confirmation of status:

The purpose of confirmation of status is to enable research students to receive an assessment of their work by two assessors, other than your supervisor(s). It is intended to provide an important indication that if work on the thesis continues to develop satisfactorily, then consideration of submission of the thesis within the student's funded period/four years (for DPhil) would appear to be reasonable. It therefore provides a second stage of formal progress review in the four years of the student's overall research programme. It should be noted that 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.

Timing for confirmation of status:

Confirmation of status for D.Phil. students must take place no later than nine terms after admission to graduate status. You are advised to apply for confirmation of DPhil status ***before the end of eighth week of the eighth term*** after admission as a graduate research student.

Doctoral Training Programmes

For students commencing on a Doctoral Training Programme from October 2014 confirmation of status must take place no later than ten terms after admission to graduate status, subject to any specific regulations. You are advised to apply for confirmation of status ***before the end of eighth week of the tenth term*** after admission. However, each department has its own set timing and requirements, so please ensure you check this with your relevant department/CDT administrator.

The timetables above have been set to allow sufficient time to make confirmation of status a helpful part of your development as a scientific researcher. You are therefore encouraged very strongly to apply for confirmation of status at least 6-12 months before you expect to submit your thesis for examination.

Deferral of confirmation of status:

Directors of Graduate Studies are able to approve requests to defer confirmation of status in exceptional cases. If, for good reason, you are unable to submit your application for confirmation of status by the end of your ninth term (tenth term for doctoral training programmes), you may apply to defer this for up to a maximum of three terms, subject to any specific regulations, with the support of your supervisor, by completing form GSO.14b before the end of your ninth term. It is for the Director of Graduate Studies in each department to decide how many terms a candidate may be allowed to defer.

Any DPhil students who have **not** submitted their application for confirmation of status by the end of their ninth term (tenth for doctoral training programmes), and who have not applied to

defer their confirmation, will have their status as a graduate student lapsed and will need to apply for reinstatement to the register of graduate students in order to resume their studies.

If you have not applied for confirmation of status by the end of your twelfth term after admission, taking into account any periods of suspension of status, your department will undertake a formal review of your progress. You will be entered, or formally considered, by the department for confirmation of status. Your Director of Graduate Studies will provide further information. The purpose is to ensure that you receive a formal review of your progress before any extensions of time are applied for.

What forms do I need to complete for confirmation of status:

You will need to ensure that you have completed and uploaded your *'Preparing for Confirmation of Status'* form to GSS the term before you are due to confirm your DPhil status (see section on Supervision reports and the Graduate Supervision System (GSS)).

An application form for confirmation of status, GSO.14.MPLS **must** be completed and submitted to the department administrator at the time that you are applying for confirmation of status, and not at the end of the assessment. The DGS will use this form to sign and confirm that you are ready to be assessed. The form asks you and your supervisor to provide a clear indication of your progress to date, and the timetable for submission of your thesis. You must complete all sections of the confirmation of status form, including the sections about subject-specific, personal and professional skills development. Your form may be returned to you to complete if the information provided is inadequate. Your confirmation assessors will also be given a copy of your GSO.14 form. The department administrator will keep hold of the completed GSO.14 form until the assessment has been completed, and will then return it to the MPLS Graduate Office with the completed assessors report form, in order for your student record to be updated.

Students from *Mathematics* **must** also complete a MATHS.3 form, and students in *Computer Science* and *Statistics* **must** complete a MAT.3 form, and submit two copies of any written work required to the relevant departmental administrator. If a student passes the written work to their assessor(s) directly, this must be clearly indicated on the MATHS.3 or MAT.3 form.

Consideration of confirmation of status applications:

The requirements for confirmation of status may vary for each department within the following framework:

- all applications must be reviewed by two assessors, other than your supervisor(s), one of whom may be your Director of Graduate Studies (if they are not your supervisor);
- you will be asked to produce a brief written report about your research achievements to date. The specific requirements will be set out by your department, and might include a publication(s) or draft chapter(s) from your thesis, and your plans, and the timetable, for submission of your thesis;
- an interview with your assessors, which should allow you the opportunity to summarise and discuss your research to date.

It is essential that you check what is required for confirmation of status with your departmental graduate studies administrator.

Following your confirmation assessment you and your supervisor will be provided with feedback, which will include an assessment of your progress and the likelihood that you will

be able to submit your thesis within the planned timescale (as set out by you on the application form).

If your first application for confirmation of status is not approved, you may make one further application normally within one term of the original application. An extension of time of one term will be granted if necessary to make the second application.

If a candidate's application for confirmation of status is unsuccessful, the board may approve a transfer from DPhil to MSc by Research status. If your second attempt at confirmation is unsuccessful, and transfer to the relevant lower degree (having been considered by the assessors) has not been recommended, you will no longer be able to continue with your studies, and you will be removed from the Register of Graduate Students.

Appeals for transfer and confirmation of status

If you wish to contest the outcome of the transfer or confirmation assessment, either on procedural or academic grounds, you should first discuss the matter with your Director of Graduate Studies. Where a concern is not satisfactorily settled by that means, then you, your supervisor, or your college authority may put your appeal directly to the Proctors. The Proctors can only consider whether the procedure for reaching an academic decision were properly followed, and cannot challenge the academic judgment of the assessors. Please view the University complaints and appeals processes.

Suspensions

When can suspensions potentially be granted?

If for a temporary period, you are unable to pursue your course of study or research, you may apply for suspension of your student status. Relevant circumstances could include illness, accident, domestic crisis or unforeseeable financial difficulty. Alternatively, it might be essential for you to concentrate temporarily on some other project (e.g. gaining some other qualification) which could not reasonably be deferred until after your postgraduate work was completed; or you might wish to take up temporary work which was likely to be important to your future career, and the opportunity for which was unlikely to recur.

How do I apply for a suspension?

Applications must be made using the form GSO.17. You will need to specify the exact term(s) you require suspension for, and must have the support of your supervisor and college. Students are allowed to apply for a maximum of six terms suspension in total. However, you may only apply for a maximum of three terms at any one time.

Students wishing to apply for a suspension of status for **Maternity, Paternity or Adoption Leave** will need to complete form GSO.17b. Please refer to the University's Student Maternity, Paternity and Adoption leave Policy for further information and guidance.

What happens when I return from a suspension?

If you are intending to return from your suspension of status you will need to ensure that you complete the Returning from Suspension of Status form, GSO.17a, prior to your return.
Failure to return the completed form will delay the reactivation of your student status. The completed form should be returned to the Graduate Office, 9 Parks Road.

Removal from the Register

When a student's academic performance is unsatisfactory, or there are other concerns about a student's academic progress the department may find it necessary to initiate the removal from the register process. However, before starting the formal process, your department, in close discussions with your supervisor and college will always try and help support you through this period, which may involve making suitable adjustments to your study, and, or seeking help and advice from other sources. Students whose academic performance remains below the standard required will be advised at every stage of the options available to them, including voluntary withdrawal, a period of suspension, and requesting to change their registration to another degree (if appropriate).

D – YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Residence Requirements

While working in Oxford, graduate students on full-time courses must usually reside within 25 miles of the city centre. Work and residence towards a degree is calculated from the term of matriculation. There is minimum residence periods before a degree can be taken. These minima are normally:

Degree	Minimum terms of residence
MSc by Research	3 terms
DPhil - 'Standard'	6 terms
DPhil ***(after completing Oxford MSc)***	3 terms
DPhil - 'Doctoral Training Programme'	6 terms*
DEng	6 terms

*Subject to any specific regulations. Special arrangements exist to enable intermittent residence or vacation residence periods to count towards the overall requirements (see the *Examination Regulations*).

Dispensation from residence requirements

If you are a DPhil student, you may apply formally for dispensation from these requirements for not more than three terms of residence if it is necessary to your work that you should be allowed to pursue your course of study at some place other than Oxford. The most common grounds for dispensation is the need to carry out fieldwork, or to make use of experimental facilities which are not available in Oxford. It is also possible to obtain dispensation if your supervisor moves to another University in the middle of your course, and a suitable replacement cannot be found in Oxford. Dispensation from residence requirements must be applied for using the form GSO.8. Details of eligibility are given on the back of the form.

Given the increased emphasis on induction and research training, it is the University's expectation that students will not normally be given dispensation from residence in their first year of Probationer Research Students (PRS) status.

Collaborative Doctoral Training Programmes

Some Doctoral Training Programmes require students to undertake a master's course at another institution for a year of their programme. Others may be required to attend or conduct experiments in other institutions inside or outside the UK, or will be based in industry for a term or longer periods. In these circumstances it is not necessary to apply for dispensation from the residence requirement.

Permission to undertake research in a well-found laboratory outside the University

An exception to the residence requirements is made for a limited number of students admitted to undertake research in the division but with special permission to undertake their research in a well-found laboratory outside the University. This permission is granted at the time of application to the University. Details are provided in the Special Regulations of the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division, set out in the *Examination Regulations*. The Director of Graduate Studies for your department must apply on your behalf to the MPLS Division (via the Graduate Office).

Working hours and holidays

Most graduate students are not paid employees and therefore do not have contractual working hours. Working practices vary widely between disciplines and between individuals and thus a policy has been established to guide expectations. Your department will also provide advice on its particular arrangements.

Sick leave:

If you feel unwell and need to stay at home for a day or two, you should inform your supervisor and let him/her know when you expect to be back in the department. Do tell a friend or colleague as well in case you need help, and so that someone can check that you are better. If you are unwell for a longer period of time, you should try to maintain regular email contact with your supervisor to keep him/her informed of your health, and inform your college office. In a few cases it may be advisable to apply for suspension of status for the term in which you are ill.

Maternity leave, Parental and Adoption leave:

To support students seeking to take parental leave, the University's Student Maternity, Paternity and Adoption leave Policy provides details of the arrangements for students who are about to have or adopt a child. The policy outlines how much leave students are entitled to, access to University facilities, graduate accommodation and childcare services and the provision for a flexible return to full-time study. The University's policy is intended to harmonise with the frameworks operated by the Research Councils, enabling it clearly to differentiate maternity leave from suspension of study for medical or disciplinary reasons and to ensure consistent and fair treatment of pregnant students and new mothers. It also provides new mothers with the right to a protected period of leave after the birth.

Postgraduate research students should particularly note the requirements for applying for maternity leave, including the forms required and timings for notifying their college, supervisor and Director of Graduate Studies.

If you have already taken the six terms of leave your board may allow and have taken parental leave you may apply via your college to the Education Committee for permission to suspend your studies for a further period.

The Research Councils have harmonised their terms and conditions for Maternity Leave for Research Council funded students. The terms and conditions of training grants have been amended from 1 April 2016 and state: "All Research Council funded students are entitled to take 6 months of maternity leave on full stipend and a further 6 months of unpaid maternity leave."

Visas' and Immigration

The Student Information and Advisory Service provide visa and immigration information to new applicants and to current students studying at Oxford. This includes how to obtain a visa to study whether you apply from overseas or within the UK, correcting visa errors, information about your status and your legal obligations, immigration for family members, travel during your stay and staying on to work after your studies. The visa and immigration advisors can assist you during your studies by providing information about extending your visa, travelling outside the UK during your stay and explaining the rules about working during your studies.

If you are a holder of a Tier 4 Student visa the University and student have certain obligations to inform the UK Visas and Immigration if your circumstances change during your studies. The University is obliged to tell the UK Visas and Immigration about any students who fail to arrive for the start of a course, withdraw from a course, defer or suspend their studies, or are unexpectedly absent for a significant period of time. It is your responsibility to keep to the conditions of your visa and to make sure you do not stay beyond its end date, unless you have put in a renewal application. If you break the conditions, you could be prosecuted or made to leave the UK and it could make it more difficult for you to get another visa.

Complaints and appeals

Detailed information on the arrangements/procedures for your subject area will be available from your department. The collegiate University's procedures make provision for a student to seek advice on matters of concern from a number of individuals who have responsibility for different aspects of the well-being of graduate students. Please view the University complaints process.

Statutes and Regulations of the University

The Statutes and Regulations set out the legislation relating to the University's overall structure, governance and procedures.

Equality and Diversity at Oxford

"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." Equality Policy (2013

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

The Equality and Diversity Unit works with all parts of the collegiate University to develop and promote an understanding of equality and diversity and ensure that this is reflected in all its processes. The Unit also supports the University in meeting the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people with and without the 'protected characteristics' of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and/or belief and sexual orientation.

The Equality and Diversity Unit also supports a broad network of harassment advisors in departments/faculties and colleges and a central Harassment Advisory Service. Please view

the University's Harassment and Bullying policy for further information, and the support available for students.

Data Protection

Under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, the University/college is required to inform students of the personal data it holds on them and processes. In the case of sensitive data (defined under the Act as information about e.g. racial or ethnic origins, political opinions, religious or other beliefs, trade union membership, health, sexual preference, and criminal allegations, proceedings or convictions), your consent for this processing is required. Your college will give you a notice on this, which will include a form for you to sign and return to the Data Protection Officer at your college.

The MPLS Graduate Office keeps individual correspondence files on current research students, on which are retained copies of all forms and related correspondence, and other relevant documentation.

Intellectual Property Rights

The University has in place arrangements governing the ownership and exploitation of intellectual property generated by students and researchers in the course of, or incidental to, their studies. These arrangements are set out in the University's *Statutes*, under which the University claims ownership of certain forms of intellectual property which students may create. Further information may be obtained from the IP Rights Management Team.

Academic integrity: good practice in citation, and the avoidance of plagiarism

The University's code of conduct concerning academic integrity is set out on the website, and, while the code's principles relate specifically to the conduct of research, all graduate students are advised to make themselves aware of the document's contents.

The code of conduct mentions plagiarism, and in this context it is important for all graduate students within the division's subject areas, to be aware of, and to follow, good practice in the use of sources and making appropriate reference. You will need to exercise judgement in determining when reference is required, and when material may be taken to be so much a part of the 'general knowledge' of your subject that formal citation would not be expected. The basis on which such judgements are made is likely to vary slightly between subject areas, as may also the style and format of making references, and your supervisor will be in the best position to advise you on such matters; in addition, these may be covered, along with other aspects of academic writing, in your induction training.

By following the citation principles and practices in place in your subject area, you will develop a rigorous approach to academic referencing, and avoid inadvertent plagiarism. Cases of apparently deliberate plagiarism, while happily infrequent in the University are taken extremely seriously, and where examiners suspect that this has occurred, they bring the matter to the attention of the Proctors. Your attention is drawn to the Student Handbook (Proctors' and Assessor's Memorandum), Section 8.8, 'Plagiarism.

The University employs a series of sophisticated software applications to detect plagiarism in submitted examination work, both in terms of copying and collusion. It regularly monitors on-line essay banks, essay-writing services, and other potential sources of material. It reserves the right to check samples of submitted essays for *plagiarism.* Although the University strongly encourages the use of electronic resources by students in their academic work, any attempt to draw on third-party material without proper attribution may well attract severe disciplinary sanctions."

Please also refer to the Education Committee's guidance on good practice in citation, and the avoidance of plagiarism. The University also has an online training course about

avoiding plagiarism. Your department may provide additional statements about what constitutes plagiarism in your subject area.

Research Data Management and Research Councils Expectations

The University requires all EPSRC-funded researchers (staff and students), with department support, to manage their research data in accordance with the University Policy on the Management of Research Data and Records and, in relation to those data (and only such data) as would be necessary to verify published research conclusions – i.e. those data underpinning charts, graphs, and quantitative statements in publications. In 2011 EPSRC implemented its Policy Framework on Research Data which includes a number of expectations that need to be fully met by those it funds. If you need any help or guidance on how to manage your research data please refer to Research Data Oxford.

E – SUBMITTING YOUR THESIS

Preparation and Submission of Thesis

IMPORTANT

When preparing your thesis please ensure that you have taken into account any copyright or sensitive content issues, and dealt with them appropriately.

Tips on planning your thesis:

At an early stage you should:

- Prepare a detailed work plan for your research in consultation with your supervisor.
- Build some flexibility into your plan. It is difficult to give general advice about the allocation of time on theory-oriented projects, because the nature of these is so variable. In the case of experiment-based research projects, you should normally allow up to 6 months to write a DPhil thesis, or 3-4 months for a corresponding MSc by Research thesis.
- Consider attending available skills training courses, for example Thesis and Report Writing.

It is not advisable to leave all the writing to the end, for several reasons:

- You will need practice at writing over a period of time in order to develop a good style.
- There will inevitably be hold-ups in experimental work and it is better to use that time to work on part of your thesis, rather than to waste it and if you do some writing earlier, the final completion of your thesis will not seem such a daunting task.
- Approaching your submission date will become even more stressful than necessary.

About your thesis

The best way to find out what is required for a successful thesis in your subject area is to look at some written in recent years. You should obviously look particularly closely at theses written by previous members of your own research group, which are available in the University library.

The formal requirements for obtaining your degree are set out in detail in the '*Examination Regulations*'. The standard required for success in the DPhil examination is defined as follows: that the student present a significant and substantial piece of research, of a kind which might reasonably be expected of a capable and diligent student after three or at most

four years of full-time study in the case of a full-time student, or eight years in the case of a part-time student. For the MSc by Research the standard required is that the candidate should have made a worthwhile contribution to knowledge or understanding of the relevant field of learning after a minimum of one year or two years of full-time study.

Thesis structure

There are two approaches to the structure of theses in the Division. Certain departments in the Division have decided that theses may ***not*** comprise a collection of published papers. These departments are Chemistry, Computer Science, Earth Sciences, Engineering Science, Materials, Mathematics, Physics, Statistics, and the Doctoral Training Programmes. There are two main reasons for this. First, papers in these subjects are frequently multi-authored, and it may be difficult to ascertain the contribution made by each individual. Second, because of space limitations in many learned journals, much detailed information is usually omitted. Such information may be essential to anyone wishing to reproduce the work, and often forms a valuable archive for the research group in which the work was carried out.

The Departments of Plant Sciences and Zoology take a different approach. The University's *Examination Regulations* for these subjects permit that:

> "A set of scientific papers prepared as for publication, but not necessarily yet published, that concern a common subject may constitute an acceptable thesis, provided that with the addition of an Introduction, General Discussion, and General Conclusions they constitute a coherent body of work. Such papers should either be incorporated as typescript pages or as offprints bound in to the body of the thesis. Papers written in collaboration should not be included unless the greater part of the work is directly attributed to the candidate himself or herself, and the supervisor so certifies. Joint papers may however be included as appendices in a thesis. Candidates with some published work may also include that as part of a traditional thesis, normally as an appendix. Approval to submit a thesis using this format must be sought in advance from the appropriate Director of Graduate Studies".

In all departments, if some part of the thesis is not solely your work or has been carried out in collaboration with one or more persons, you should also submit a clear statement of the extent of your contribution.

Thesis word / page limits

Several departments place a word limit or page limit on theses. Details can be found in the *Examination Regulations* or GSO.20a Notes of Guidance for Research Examinations.

Permission to exceed the word / page limit

Should you need to exceed your word/page limit you must seek approval from the Director of Graduate Studies in your department. You and your supervisor must submit a letter requesting approval, giving reasons why it is necessary to exceed the limit. This must be submitted to the Graduate Office, 9 Parks Road.

Appointment of Examiners and Submission Dates

IMPORTANT

YOU ARE STRONGLY ADVISED TO APPLY FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF EXAMINERS AT LEAST FOUR TO SIX WEEKS BEFORE YOU SUBMIT YOUR THESIS

Appointing examiners for your thesis:

Approval of the proposed names of examiners rests with the Director of Graduate Studies. Two examiners are normally appointed. It is usual for one of the examiners to be a senior member of Oxford University (the 'internal examiner') and the other to be from another research organisation (the 'external examiner'). The divisional board will not normally appoint as examiners individuals previously closely associated with the candidate or his or her work, representatives of any organisation sponsoring the candidate's research, or former colleagues of a candidate. Your supervisor will make suggestions regarding the names of possible examiners. Before doing so, your supervisor must consult with you, in order to find out if you have any special views on the appointment of particular examiners. Your supervisor is also allowed to consult informally with the potential examiners before making formal suggestions. Such informal consultation is usually desirable, and is intended to determine whether the people concerned are willing in principle to act, and if so, whether they could carry out the examination within a reasonable period of time. (For example, there may be constraints if you have to return to your home country, or take up employment on a specific date).

What forms do I need to complete?

You will need to complete form GSO.3. Supervisors are required to complete Section 4 of the form, to indicate names of the proposed examiners and they should provide alternatives in case the preferred examiners decline to act.

Timing for appointment of examiners:

You are advised to submit your GSO.3 form for the appointment of examiners in advance of submission of your thesis to avoid delays with your examination process. Ideally you should apply for the appointment of examiners at least 4-6 weeks before you expect to submit your thesis for examination. You may submit your thesis to the Submissions Desk, Examination Schools, High Street at any time up to the last day of the vacation following the term in which you submit the form GSO.3. If you fail to submit by this date your application will be cancelled and you will have to reapply for appointment of examiners when you are ready to submit. **Please note that your thesis should not be submitted until your application for confirmation of status has been approved (this applies to DPhil students only)**. **For MSc by Research students you should ensure that your transfer of status has been completed.**

If you are funded on a research council studentship, you will have a recommended end-date before which your thesis must be submitted. If you do not know this date, please consult your supervisor.

Early viva

There are currently no University regulations requiring examination to take place within a certain time limit after thesis submission. However, your examiners would normally be expected to hold your viva within 3 months. If you need to have your examination sooner than this, you may apply for an *early viva*, by completing section 3.3 'request for time specific viva' on the GSO.3 form. **The request must be made at the time of completing and submitting the GSO.3 form, it cannot be done after this.** Please bear in mind that the examination date requested must not be earlier than one calendar month after the date on which the thesis has been received by the Examiners & Submissions Office **or** after the date on which the examiners have formally agreed to act, whichever is the latest. The actual date of the examination will depend primarily on the availability of both examiners. In the Long Vacation, a longer time is normally required. **It is therefore essential that you leave sufficient time for your forms to be formally approved, and for your examiners to be**

formally invited. If sufficient time has not be given this could impact on your early examination request.

If, for any reason, examiners wish to hold a viva within four weeks of receiving their copy of the thesis, notification should be sent to the relevant board, and the permission of the Proctors must be sought. The internal will need to give details of the proposed arrangement and the reasons for the request. Under no circumstances will a viva be permitted to take place within 14 days of receipt of the thesis by the examiners.

Special considerations

Your supervisor is permitted to indicate to the Director of Graduate Studies if there are any special factors which should be taken into account in the conduct of your examination. For example, a scientific paper may have been produced by another researcher which affects the content of your thesis, but which was published too late for you to take into account. The Director of Graduate Studies will also need to be told of any special circumstances you may require or need to inform your examiners of which may affect your performance in an oral examination, or if any part of your work must be regarded as confidential. The Director of Graduate Studies will then forward (via the Graduate Office), any appropriate information that they think should be provided to the examiners. The Graduate Office will also seek approval from the Proctors Office if required.

Change of thesis title

If during your studies you want to change the title or subject of your thesis, you must obtain the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies using form GSO.6. If you are requesting the change at the time of submitting your thesis, you may do this on the application for appointment of examiners form GSO.3, under section 1. A change of title is quite straightforward; it is common for students to begin with a very general title, and then to replace it with a more specific one shortly before submitting their thesis. Providing your supervisor certifies that the new title lies within the original topic, approval will be automatic. A change of the subject of your research requires more detailed consideration, because there may be doubt as to whether you can complete the new project within the original time-scale.

If following your examination your examiners recommend that your thesis title be changed, you will need to complete form GSO.6 to ensure that your record is updated accordingly.

Submitting your thesis

Completed theses must be delivered to the Submissions Desk, Examination Schools, High Street. Two printed copies of the thesis (soft-bound), incorporating two printed copies of an abstract, not normally more than 300 words, must be submitted. The documents must be submitted in unsealed padded envelopes. If you are supported on a research council studentship, you will have a specified end-date before which your thesis must be submitted.

PLEASE NOTE

YOU MUST NOT SUBMIT COPIES OF YOUR THESIS DIRECTLY TO YOUR EXAMINERS, AS THIS COULD RESULT IN YOUR EXAMINATION BEING DECLARED VOID, AND REFERRED TO THE UNIVERSITY PROCTORS.

Extensions, Lapse of Status and Reinstatement

Extensions

When can extensions potentially be granted?

Students working for the DPhil are expected to submit their thesis within three to four years of full-time study, and MSc by Research students within two to three years. If you are prevented 'by exceptional circumstances' from completing your research within the maximum period normally allowed by the University (9 terms for MSc by Research, 12 terms for the DPhil), you may apply for an extension of time. The maximum total periods of extension are up to six terms for DPhil and three terms for MSc by Research candidates. Students are only allowed to apply for a maximum of three terms at any one time. **However, it is divisional policy to approve an extension of one term only at a time, so that your progress can be kept under close review.**

How do I apply for an extension?

If you need an extension of time, you must apply formally using the form GSO.15. You must give full reasons for your request, and these must also be supported by your supervisor and college. The Director of Graduate Studies will wish to know the present state of your thesis, i.e. how much has been completed and how much remains to be done, and to see a new timetable for completion and the expected submission date for your thesis. Your application must be submitted before the end of your maximum submission date to avoid your status being lapsed (see below). An extension will only be granted if the Director of Graduate Studies is satisfied that you are working actively on your thesis. If this is not the case your status will be allowed to lapse and it will be necessary for you to apply for subsequent reinstatement if you wish to resume work or to submit your thesis.

Lapse of Status

Your status as an enrolled research student will lapse if:

- you fail to submit your thesis within the allotted time, and without being granted suspension or an extension of time.
- you fail to transfer status successfully to another status (DPhil, MSc by Research), within four terms of admission as a full-time student to the status of Probationer Research Student, within six terms for students on a Doctoral Training programme (unless you have been granted a deferral, or one term's extension following an unsuccessful transfer application.
- the board concerned deprives you of such status, after consultation with your college/hall and supervisor.
- *For DPhil students only:* If you fail to confirm status successfully within nine terms of admission as a full-time student, within ten terms for students on a Doctoral Training Programme (unless you have been granted a deferral or one term's extension following an unsuccessful confirmation application)
- following your examination you are required to complete major corrections to your thesis, and fail to complete these within the six months permitted.
- following your examination you are required to complete minor corrections to your thesis, and fail to complete these within the one month permitted.

Once your status has lapsed, you are no longer registered as a student of the University, and you will not have access to University facilities during this period.

Reinstating your status

To reinstate your status on the graduate register you will need to apply for reinstatement. Applications must be made on form GSO.23 and submitted to the MPLS Graduate Office, and must have the support of your supervisor and college. Your application should be accompanied by a clear work plan and timetable, which should be endorsed by your former supervisor. If your supervisor is no longer available, your department will need to appoint an assessor to check on the appropriateness of reinstatement. If the assessment is satisfactory then a new supervisor will need to be found for the purposes of submission. If no one is willing or available, then reinstatement is normally declined. Reinstatement should not be regarded as automatic; each case is dealt with on its merits.

When considering applications for reinstatement, the DGS will take into account factors such as the currency and validity of the thesis, the availability of appropriate supervision, and whether you successfully completed Transfer and Confirmation of Status before having your status lapsed.

If your status lapsed at the time of your thesis submission deadline reinstatement is usually allowed if you have completed your thesis, and you are ready to submit to have it examined. If your reinstatement is approved you will be given one term in which to submit.

If your status lapsed due to not having successfully completed your transfer of status by the allotted time, a fresh application may be more appropriate. However, if reinstatement is approved then you will need to ensure that you are ready to go through the transfer of status assessment in the term in which you are reinstated. In cases where Confirmation was not completed reinstatement is normally dependent on completion of an assessment equivalent to Confirmation, (the requirement for the milestone might subsequently be waived) and having sufficient time available remaining on the register for you to complete your thesis within the normal time limits.

What fees are payable upon reinstatement?

If you lapse/withdraw before the end of your fee liability, on reinstatement you will become liable for any outstanding fees up to the required maximum of nine terms for the DPhil or six terms for MSc by Research.

Reinstatement cases requiring Education Committee Approval:

For DPhil students, if you have had twelve terms plus six terms extension, and for MSc by Research students, if you have had nine terms plus three terms extension, then the application for reinstatement will have to be approved by the University's Education Committee. If at the time of reinstating you will have exceeded the maximum time permitted on the register, e.g. if you lapsed at the end of your twelfth term and then applied for reinstatement three years later, then your application will also require approval by the Education Committee. The department and Education Committee will want to make sure that your research is still relevant and up to date, and this should be clearly stated in your application.

F – EXAMINATION

Examination Arrangements

The duties of the examiners:

The formal duties of the examiners are set out in the *Examination Regulations* as follows:

(a) to consider the thesis and the abstract of it submitted by the student, provided that they shall exclude from consideration in making their report any part of the thesis which has already been accepted, or is being concurrently submitted, for any degree or other qualification in this University or elsewhere otherwise than as part of the requirements of this University for the Degree of Bachelor of Philosophy or of Master of Philosophy or of Bachelor of Civil Law, or as part of the dissertation submitted by a Student for the Degree of Master of Science by Coursework or of Master of Studies, and shall have the power to require the candidate to produce for their inspection the complete thesis so accepted or concurrently submitted;
(b) to examine the student orally in the subject of his or her thesis;
(c) to satisfy themselves by examination (oral, written, or both) whether the student possesses a good general knowledge of the particular field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls;
(d) to report to the board through the Registrar on the scope, character and quality of the work submitted;
(e) to return to the student the copies of the thesis and the abstracts thereof.

The viva voce / oral examination

You will always have an oral ('viva voce') examination on the subject of your thesis. Formally, the viva is a public occasion, the time and place of which is advertised in the University Gazette, and which any member of the University may attend. In practice, however, it is extremely unusual for anyone except you and the examiners to be present.

Your internal examiner is responsible for making all the arrangements for your viva examination and will contact you to arrange a date (usually within a month of receiving your thesis).

'Academic dress' must be worn for your viva. For male students, this consists of a dark suit, dark socks, dark shoes or boots, a white shirt and collar and a white bow tie. Female students must wear a white blouse, black tie, dark skirt or trousers, dark stockings, dark shoes or boots, and if desired a dark coat. An academic gown must also be worn by all students. For Oxford graduates, this will normally be an Oxford BA gown and hood, but graduates of other Universities may wear the academic gown of their own University.

The viva may be of variable length. University guidance indicates a minimum of one hour, and a maximum of three hours for the viva. In some cases a longer viva may be required. There is no set format. Some examiners may spend nearly the whole time going through the thesis with you page by page. Others may take a different approach, and ask you mainly general questions on the background to your chosen topic, and on the implications of your results. Most commonly, both these elements will be present. You should be prepared to explain:

- The reasons for your choice of thesis topic;
- Review the strategy you adopted in tackling it;
- Describe any major problems you encountered on the way;
- Summarise the key aspects of your results;

- If your research involved collaboration with other people, you will be asked to identify your own specific contribution to the overall project;
- Answer questions on the theoretical and experimental background to your field of work. It is surprisingly common for candidates to handle with confidence the most esoteric question on their thesis, and yet to get into difficulty on some quite elementary aspect of background knowledge.

The Skills Training Team run a course on Viva Preparation and Practice which you may wish to consider attending in advance of your viva.

You are strongly recommended to take a copy of your thesis with you to your oral examination.

Notification of Examination Results

When will I find out my result?

You should not expect your examiners to give you any indication at the end of the viva as to whether or not you have passed the examination. The University's procedures are designed to ensure that the formal outcome of the examination is not known until the recommendation from the examiners has been considered and accepted by or on behalf of the responsible body, while recognising that examiners asking for minor corrections to be completed, will inevitably provide you with an informal indication of their recommendation.

Potential outcomes:

In the case of the first DPhil examination, the examiners may make one of four recommendations to the divisional board:

(a) The degree of DPhil be awarded (this may, if necessary, be after correction by the candidate of any minor errors in the thesis);
(b) Major corrections to the thesis recommended;
(c) The thesis be referred back for substantial revision and later resubmission for the degree of DPhil, or the MSc be awarded (as the thesis stands, or subject to minor corrections);
(d) The thesis be referred back for resubmission for the DPhil or the MSc as the candidate chooses.

If the candidate chooses to revise and resubmit for the DPhil, then at any subsequent examination(s), the examiners may recommend any of the seven available options:

(a) The degree of DPhil be awarded (this may, if necessary, be after correction by the candidate of any minor errors in the thesis);
(b) Major corrections to the thesis recommended;
(c) The thesis be referred back for substantial revision and later resubmission for the degree of DPhil, or the MSc be awarded (as the thesis stands, or subject to minor corrections);
(d) The thesis be referred back for resubmission for the DPhil or the MSc as the candidate chooses;
(e) The thesis be referred back for resubmission for the lower degree of MSc only;
(f) The lower degree of MSc be awarded;
(g) The thesis be rejected outright.

In the case of original submission for an MSc degree, the examiners can only recommend the award of the degree (which may include the completion of minor corrections), referral back, or rejection (only available to the examiners' on second examination).

The examiners are requested to complete their formal report no later than one month from the date of the viva, and ideally within two weeks of the date of the viva or in the case of minor corrections, as soon as the required corrections have been checked and approved (normally within one month of receiving these).

Minor corrections

How long do you get to complete minor corrections?

If minor corrections have been requested you have one month from receipt of the list, to complete and submit them to your examiner(s). You should make sure you know exactly what is required of you and how your examiner(s) wish the corrections to be presented by discussion with your examiner(s). If, for exceptional reasons, you cannot complete the corrections within one month you may apply for an Extension of Time for one further month on form GSO.18.

Examiners Report – Approval process

The examiners' report is read by the relevant Director of Graduate Studies, who, if satisfied that the recommendation is clear and reasonable, passes it with a positive recommendation to the Head of the Divisional Board or the Head's nominee, who, if similarly satisfied, approves the recommendation. In the MPLS Division, examiners' reports on DPhil and MSc by Research candidates are approved by the division's Director of the Graduate School, on behalf of the Divisional Board. If the examiners' report does not clearly and reasonably support their recommendation, the case is resolved by reference to a sub-committee of the Divisional Board.

The above procedures have been put into place in order to reduce the delays between viva and notification of results to a minimum. However, instant approval is not always possible and it is not reasonable to expect to attend a degree ceremony less than one month after the date of your viva; in some cases, a longer period of notice may be required.

Major corrections

If your examiners recommend major corrections to your thesis, they must provide a preliminary report to the board with a detailed description of the major corrections required. After a decision has been reached on the examiners' report, you will be sent an official letter from the Examinations Schools with a copy of the report. A copy is also sent to your supervisor(s) and college. **You should not communicate with the examiners direct.** If you require further clarification of their remarks you should seek guidance through your supervisor.

How long do you get to complete major corrections?

If major corrections to your thesis are requested, you will have six months from the date of being notified by the Research Degrees Examination Officer, to complete and submit these to the Examination Schools. The Research Degrees Team will then send your revised thesis to your examiners for review. If, for exceptional reasons, you cannot complete the corrections within six months you may apply for an Extension of Time for a further three months on form GSO.18. If you fail to complete your corrections within six months (or nine months if an extension was approved), your name shall be removed from the Register of Students and you will be required to apply for reinstatement to the Register.

Reference back for re-examination

If your examiners recommend reference back of your thesis, they must provide a detailed statement outlining the areas in which the thesis falls below the standard required for the degree. This will be sent to you with a copy to your supervisor once it has been approved by the divisional board. **You should not communicate with the examiners direct.** If you require further clarification of their remarks you should seek guidance through your supervisor.

Resubmission of thesis

There are some rules governing the resubmission of theses. It will normally be assumed (unless there are objections) that when a recommendation for referral back has been made, the same examiners should be invited to act again when the thesis is resubmitted. If the same examiners act a second time, they may dispense with a further oral examination provided that they can certify that you have dealt satisfactorily with the points made in the statement setting out the respects in which the original thesis fell short of the required standard. The examiners will only be able to make this decision once they have reviewed the revised thesis.

If you choose to revise your thesis for examination, you will need to submit, with your revised thesis, a separate report indicating the changes made. For MPLS the word limit for the accompanying report is 2000 words.

Timings for resubmission

DPhil theses cannot be resubmitted later than the sixth term after the referral back, and MSc theses not later than the third term after referral. An examination fee is payable when a thesis is resubmitted. This fee can now be paid online. (Note that decisions taken during vacation periods are deemed to be part of the previous term).

Complaints and Appeals relating to examinations

All complaints relating to the outcome of an examination for a research degree should normally be directed to the Proctors.

If you believe that a decision regarding your examination was unfair, you have the right to complain to the University Proctors. By virtue of the University Statutes the Proctors have the duty to investigate complaints by any member of the University and are responsible for seeing that university examinations are properly and fairly conducted. While investigating a complaint concerning a graduate examination, the Proctors have the power to summon any member of the University to help them in their enquiries; the candidate is entitled to appear before the Proctors to put his or her case and may be accompanied by a friend or advisor. The Proctors will consider all matters relating to the examination of the graduate degree in question, and will concern themselves in particular with alleged procedural irregularities and extraneous factors that may have affected the result. If they are satisfied that justice has not been done, they may recommend to the divisional board that your work be reconsidered or re-examined. You are advised to consult with your supervisor and with your departmental Director of Graduate Studies before making a formal complaint of this kind. Please view the University complaints and appeals processes for further information.

Deposit of hard copy thesis in the Bodleian Library & e-Theses to the ORA

If you are granted leave to supplicate you will be required to submit a hard-bound copy of your thesis, incorporating any amendments required by the examiners, to the Submissions Desk, Examination Schools, High Street. This copy will be deposited in the Bodleian Library

where it will be available for consultation by others. Permission to supplicate will be conditional upon this.

What if there is restricted content in my thesis?

In general, the MPLS Divisional Board are of the opinion that the hard copy of theses should be readily accessible as contributions to knowledge. The board accepts that it may sometimes be necessary to restrict access to a thesis temporarily, e.g. while a patent is being taken out, and that bodies such as the UK Research Councils make specific provision for such a course in their standard conditions of research studentships, but the board wishes to be consulted as early as possible (i.e. normally before a student is admitted as a candidate for a higher degree) if a sponsor or other person wishes to impose any longer-term restriction on access to a proposed thesis, or the exclusion of any material from a thesis on the grounds of confidentiality. Only in exceptional cases will the board accept such conditions. If you wish to apply to restrict access to your hardbound thesis, your application (form GSO.3C) should be made simultaneously with your application for appointment of examiners (form GSO.3). This should include the reasons for your request and the length of time for which dispensation is required.

Oxford Digital Theses - e-Theses

The University of Oxford is committed to the widest dissemination of research theses produced by its graduate students. Students following DPhil and MSc (by Research) programmes and registered from 1st October 2007 are required to deposit a hardbound and a digital copy of their thesis with the Oxford University Libraries. All e-theses are currently automatically embargoed from consultation in ORA for a period of three years from deposit unless the candidate opts to make them freely available when completing the online submission form. This is to avoid endangering publications in preparation. After three years they will automatically become freely available unless an application for dispensation from consultation (form GSO.3C) is submitted.

For RCUK-funded students the automatic embargo period will be one year from the date of award unless the candidate opts to make them freely available. This is so that it is in line with the current terms and conditions set out by the Research Councils. However, in exceptional circumstances students may apply to the relevant Board for an extension to the embargo period, by completing form GSO.3C.

The digital copy should be deposited in the Oxford University Research Archive (ORA). ORA provides maximum visibility and digital preservation for Oxford digital theses. Students should read important information about the deposit of and access to digital theses, which includes:

- Legal requirements and author responsibilities;
- When to deposit the digital copy of your thesis;
- How to deposit the digital copy of your thesis;
- Open and embargoed access (for reasons such as sensitive content, material that would affect commercial interests, pre-publication or legal reasons) to all or part(s) of your thesis;

Copyright

Copyright in the thesis usually rests with the author: this does not change when depositing your thesis in ORA. The author does not give away any rights to the Oxford University Research Archive or the Bodleian Libraries. However, please see information on third party copyright.

A useful template is available on the ORA website for students to use to keep track of permissions for copyright/third party material.

Sensitive content

It is also crucial to take steps to ensure that sensitive information not intended for public release is not inadvertently made freely available on the open Internet. Errors could result in serious consequences for the University or third parties which could be of a legal, personal or financial nature. Please view information on sensitive content.

What is sensitive content?
Sensitive content might fall into any of the following categories:

- Personal information: personal data (name, address, age, criminal record etc.); personal medical details; information that enables the identification of an individual; photographs etc
- Commercially sensitive information: details of new products and processes; names of companies and collaborators; content covered by non-disclosure or other agreement
- Patentable information;
- Research using controversial processes;
- Some political, security or similar content ;
- Other information which could be deemed to cause similar difficulties if made public;
- Material where copyright is held by a third party.

Please contact ORA@bodleian.ox.ac.uk if you require further information or have any queries regarding deposit of your digital thesis.

Graduation

Formal ceremonies for the conferring of degrees are held in the Sheldonian Theatre (or should the Sheldonian Theatre not be available then at the Examination Schools). You can graduate in person by attending a ceremony, or in absence.

Once you have been granted leave to supplicate, you will receive an email invitation with information about booking a degree ceremony. The days available will depend on when your college is presenting. Full academic dress must be worn for the ceremony.

If you have any debts or dues outstanding to your college or the University you will not be permitted to graduate.

Please note that you will not be able to book onto a ceremony until you have been granted leave to supplicate.

G – CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

The DPhil is a period of professional training and preparation for a range of careers that will use your research skills and have the potential for economic, societal and industrial impact. Even if you are not sure yet about which career to pursue, having a plan and developing academic, research and generic skills and experience to support your research will provide structure and coherence to your DPhil, and mean that you are well prepared for a career. Remember that the best plans are flexible and evolve as time goes on.

Your supervisor can be a useful source of information and advice about careers and training in your field. You should discuss your development and training needs – and how to fill them – with them.

Doctoral training in the MPLS Division and in your department aims to support these principles. You learning and development will happen formally and informally as part of your day to day work with your supervisor, your research group, and in your department.

Training courses are available:

- In your department – see your departmental website and the Researcher Training Tool (https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/hierarchy/mpls/gap) for details
- In the Division – see the Division's Training webpages: https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training
- Other departments: The Researcher Training Tool hosts details of all of this and you should browse what is available: https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/hierarchy/mpls/gap
- The University Careers Service: www.careers.oc.ac.uk
- IT Services: http://www.it.ox.ac.uk/want/course
- Bodleian Libraries: http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/
- The Oxford Learning Institute, especially this: http://supervision.learning.ox.ac.uk/students

Expectations about training

The Research Councils have the following expectations of students in relation to their broader training. Even if you are not funded by a Research Council, these represent valuable guidelines for your approach to your broader career and professional development:

- Students should take responsibility for shaping, managing and directing their research project and training, taking advice from their supervisor
- Students are expected to develop the higher-level capabilities outlined in the Researcher Development Statement (see paragraph below)
- Where students have the opportunity to work in a non-academic environment, they should maximise the opportunity by seeking to understand the role of research within the organisation and the wider context
- Students should recognise their responsibility for developing personal career goals during their doctoral training and consider their possible career options, recognising that these may be outside academe. They should ensure that they are aware of the range of advice available and reflect on their training and development needs to assist in their future employability.

The Researcher Development Framework and Statement

Vitae is a national organisation that champions the career and professional development of researchers. Its vision is for the UK to be world-class in supporting the professional development of researchers and researcher careers. It has, in conjunction with the research councils, developed the Researcher Development Framework (RDF) which provides a framework for planning and supporting your personal, professional and career development. It will help you to consider the skills and experiences that help you achieve your career and research goals.

Your own career and professional development

Because much of your learning and development will happen informally, it is a good idea to think consciously about when and how you are developing new skills, and keep a record of what you are learning – for example you might learn about a new experimental technique from your supervisor, or make a presentation to your research group on which you receive feedback. The Graduate Supervision System (GSS) provides an opportunity to reflect on

your development and progress, and to record career and professional development training needs and training attended. If you have any queries about graduate training, please contact skillscourses@mpls.ox.ac.uk.

Teaching

The MPLS Division recognises that graduate students may benefit in a variety of ways from carrying out some undergraduate teaching, provided that it does not conflict with work for the graduate degree.

Teaching will provide the opportunity to develop useful skills. The most useful type of teaching, from this perspective, involves student contact through involvement in class or tutorial teaching or laboratory demonstrating. However, teaching is potentially very time consuming and can significantly interfere with the progress of a research project. The arbiter of this is the supervisor and, if consulted by either the student or supervisor, the Director of Graduate Studies. Any proposal to take on a significant amount of teaching, for either a College or Department, should be discussed with your supervisor in advance, and he or she should be able to request that the arrangement should cease, if in his or her judgement it is interfering significantly with research progress.

Guidelines on the amount of teaching undertaken:

The MPLS Division recommends a guideline of 120 hours' work overall in any year, to balance the desirable development of teaching skills against the potential impact on research progress. For tutorial or class teaching it is recognised that each hour spent in contact is likely to involve (for a graduate student) at least two hours of preparation and marking and it is therefore recommended that no more than 40 contact hours should be arranged. For demonstrating or marking, no more than 120 hours should be undertaken.

Training to support teaching:

Graduate students in the MPLS Division **must** attend an appropriate teaching skills training course, before undertaking any teaching activity, which also carries an additional time demand. The Division and Departments organise and advertise this training, and in some departments it is compulsory for all students. Please see the divisional webpages on training for teaching (https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training/course-programme-for-graduate-students/training-in-teaching-skills for further information. The Division specifies a guide to the number of hours a student should teach annually in order to allow flexibility for substantial involvement in a particular course for a limited amount of time. It is recognised that students may be departmentally funded (in lieu of a research council or other grant) but this should not carry a condition of teaching beyond the guidelines introduced above, except where a specific Teaching Assistantship Scheme has been established.

It is recognised that students who have run off the end of their regular funding may need to exceed these guidelines.

To facilitate contact between graduate students who want to teach, and college tutors who require teaching, each department maintains a teaching register of those interested in teaching and who have attended appropriate training.

H – ACADEMIC SERVICES

Libraries

The Bodleian Libraries are responsible for providing library and information support for all the teaching and research that is carried out in the University. They include the principal University library—the Bodleian Library—which has been a library of legal deposit for 400 years; major research libraries; and libraries attached to faculties, departments and other institutions of the University. The combined library collections number more than 11 million printed items, in addition to 80,000 e-journals and vast quantities of materials in other formats.

The Radcliffe Science Library is one of the main University research libraries and is situated at the corner of Parks Road and South Parks Road. The collections include all the non-medical sciences, and some medicine. In addition to the print collections there are now extensive electronic resources. All the collections are available through the Oxford libraries' online catalogue called SOLO. This includes the e-journals and databases in OxLIP+ – (the Oxford Libraries Information Platform) and the catalogue of over 100 Oxford libraries, including many of the departmental libraries in science

Workshops, guides and tutorials are available for students to use to enable them to use the resources of the library to the full.

IT Services

IT Services is the central support unit for the University's IT. A wide range of services are available to staff and students, including free IT courses, help and support. Their website also includes a service catalogue. While you are at Oxford you are encouraged to take the opportunity to acquire a sound knowledge of IT skills.

The key support for students can be found at the IT Services based at **13 Banbury Road,** Oxford OX2 6NN, tel: (2)73200. Opening times are 8.30am to 8.30pm Monday to Friday throughout the year, including out of term.

The Language Centre

The Language Centre provides resources and services for members of the University who need foreign languages for their study, research or personal and professional interest. Its library has one of the largest collection of materials for language learning in the UK. Their web pages also provide extensive links to language and linguistic servers globally. The centre is based at: 12 Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6HT, tel: 01865 283360.

The Careers Service

The Careers Service is available for all Oxford students to use at any point during their student career, to obtain impartial advice, guidance and information from advisers, whom have a broad range of career histories.

Throughout the year they hold a number of tailored events, talks, workshops and career fairs. Their webpages also provide useful links and information to other resources within the UK and around the world. Their offices are based at: 56 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 6PA, tel: 01865 274646.

I – OTHER FACILITIES AND SUPPORT

University Club

The club provides sporting and hospitality facilities, and is a meeting point for postgraduates, university staff and associate employees. The Club is located on Mansfield Road and is open seven days a week until 11 pm; membership is free for registered graduate students and university staff. To join online or to obtain more information visit the Club's website.

Oxford University Student Union (OUSU)

OUSU is the central student union which supports all students at the University, and has a full-time sabbatical officer dedicated to graduate students. OUSU represents and works for students, with officers sitting on many of the University committees looking at such issues as education, welfare and funding. OUSU also has a dedicated Student Advice Service, which can offer impartial and confidential advice on anything from dealing with academic or financial problems to dealing with exam stress.

The University Counselling Service

The University has a professionally staffed Counselling Service available to offer help in strict confidence on the problems arising from University life - personal, social or academic. No information is divulged to your college, supervisor, or department without your prior permission. Their offices are located at 3 Worcester Street, and they are open from Mondays to Fridays, 9.15 a.m. to 5.15 p.m. throughout the year and pre-booked appointments are available Monday – Thursday evenings during term time. Further information on the services provided, including a number of useful self-help pages can be found on their website.

Nightline

This is an independent listening, support and information service run for and by students. Nightline aims to provide every student in Oxford with the opportunity to talk to someone, in confidence, about anything at all. It has no political, cultural or religious affiliation. Nightline is open nightly from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. during Full Term and during the weeks immediately before and after each term (0th and 9th weeks). In Michaelmas term Nightline remains open until the end of 10th week. Contact may be made by telephone (01865 270270), Skype (Skype name: oxfordnightline), or by calling in at the office, located in the basement flat, 16 Wellington Square. Callers can remain anonymous, and all information is held in the strictest confidence and is not passed on to anyone else.

The University Disability Advisory Service

The Disability Advisory Service works with students, their College and their department to make adjustments so that they can participate fully in university life. They work with a number of students at Oxford University, arranging a range of support and adjustments tailored to meet their specific needs; including arranging diagnostic assessments for students who may have specific learning difficulties; carrying out needs assessments for students who have applied for Disabled Students Allowances; arranging support workers such as SpLD tutors, note takers and mentors and help with organising exam arrangements. All information provided to the Disability Advisory Service is kept confidential to the service. It is only passed on to the rest of the University with your consent, and then only to ensure that the support and adjustments you have agreed to are put in place.

J – FEES AND CHARGES

Fees - Fee liability

Length of fee liability means the length of time that you have to pay tuition fees to the University.

DPhil and MSc by Research students are liable to pay fees up to their maximum fee liability or up until the term in which your thesis is submitted (whichever is sooner), subject to the minimum fee liability for your degree.

Degree	Minimum Fee Liability	Maximum Fee Liability
MSc by Research	3 terms	6 terms
DPhil - 'Standard'	6 terms	9 terms
DPhil ***(immediately after completing an Oxford MPhil)***	3 terms	6 terms
DPhil - 'Doctoral Training programme'	6 terms*	12 terms*

*Subject to any specific regulations

Further information on the number of termly fees (composition fees) payable to the University can be found in the *Examination Regulations*.

Fees are charged for each term in which the student is working for a graduate qualification, *whether or not he or she is working in Oxford*. That is to say, even if a candidate is dispensed from any part of the residence requirements, he or she will nevertheless remain liable for fees for each term from admission until the course is completed or the maximum fee liability is met. (The only circumstance in which the series of fee payments is broken is when a student's status is formally suspended).

College fees are also payable: students should contact their colleges about these and any alteration of status that could have fee implications.

Continuation charges

What is the continuation charge?

A continuation charge is a charge levied once you have reached the end of your standard period of fee liability. It is only payable by students registered on research programmes.

Am I liable for the charge?

All graduate research students who have reached the end of their standard period of fee liability may be liable for a college continuation charge. The amount varies by college but is likely to be £100 per term. You should check details with your college.

All graduate research students who started their research programme in or after September 2011 and who have reached the end of their standard period of fee liability are liable for the University continuation charge. Students who started graduate research programmes before September 2011 will not be expected to pay the charge.

How much is the charge?

The University continuation charge for the 2016/17 academic year will be £440 per term. The amount will be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the annual fee review process.

MPLS continuation charge waivers:

For programmes within the MPLS Division (i.e. those programmes in the Departments of Chemistry, Computer Science, Earth Sciences, Engineering Science, Materials Science, Mathematics, Physics, Plant Sciences, Statistics, and Zoology) the University continuation charge is waived for all students in the fourth year of their DPhil programme, and in the third year of their MSc by Research programme. That will be the full extent of the bursary provision associated with the University continuation charge within the Division. The University continuation charge will be levied on all students in the fifth and subsequent years of their DPhil programme and in the fourth and subsequent years of their MSc by Research programme, without any provision for bursaries.

Doctoral Training Programmes within the Division are each of four years duration, and a student under active supervision is liable for fees in each of the four years; the University continuation charge and its waiver therefore do not apply to the fourth year of these programmes, but the University continuation charge will be levied on all students on these programmes in the fifth and subsequent years without any provision for bursaries. Any students on the doctoral training programmes who have transferred to the MSc by Research, the charge will be levied in the fourth and subsequent years of their MSc by Research programme, without any provision for bursaries.

Other Financial Matters

Ensuring you make adequate financial provision:

It is essential that you make adequate provision in advance to cover your fees and expenses for the whole of your expected stay in Oxford. A small number of graduate scholarships are offered by certain colleges and details may be found in the University Gazette. There are also some special funds to assist overseas students to pay fees and living expenses. However, most University and College funds are awarded during the admissions process, and there are very little funds to apply for once you are here. Details of the available funding can be found on the University's student funding web pages.

Hardship:

If you need assistance, you should seek funds through your department and your college, and through your grant awarding body. In the case of serious unexpected financial hardship students are advised to consult their colleges in the first instance.

The University also has a *Hardship Fund*, which exists to help in cases of unforeseen personal financial hardship.