



DPhil in International Development

COURSE
HANDBOOK
2026/27



Sept 2026 - Version 1.0

This handbook applies to students starting the DPhil in International Development in the 2026-27 academic year. The information is also relevant for students starting in other years, with a very few exceptions.

**A Full copy of the handbook plus all
appendices is available on the
Canvas site for current DPhils:**

<https://login.canvas.ox.ac.uk/>

**You will need your Single-Sign-On
username and password to access the site**

**Any updates will be made
to the Canvas version only**

Cover Photograph:

'In the Amazon', Theodor Borrmann, DPhil in International Development

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PREFACE

Welcome to Oxford, to the Oxford Department of International Development (ODID) and to its DPhil programme. I hope you will find this Course Handbook useful.

Its purpose is to give you an overview of the doctoral studies programme, some general advice on how to approach your studies, and much practical information on specific things you need to do or to know along the way. It can be read as a whole, or in bits (use the table of contents to find what you want). Suggestions for improvement in the guide (including correction of errors) are welcome.

You will find that there are other Handbooks with useful information for students: your College Handbook and the University's Student Handbook. All of them are available online.

There are many other useful written sources of information, listed in section 1.3 of this guide. But two even more vital sources of information are the front-line administrative staff of this programme:

Ms Dominique Attala, ODID Graduate Studies Manager, based at Mansfield Road (office on first floor). ☎ (2)81806; e-mail: dominique.attala@qeh.ox.ac.uk

Ms Tessa Finlayson-Gray, Senior Graduate Studies Administrator for International Development, based at the Social Sciences Divisional Office, 6 Worcester Street, OX1 2BX; email: graduate-studies-1@socsci.ox.ac.uk

Please make sure that you keep your current address and contact details up to date. If you move, or go away on fieldwork, please update your contact details through your [Student Self Service](#), so that important correspondence does not go astray.

I am here to help you, too, with advice on process and on problems that you and your supervisors can't resolve (including misunderstandings between you and them, or between you and the system). I will try to meet all DPhil students at least once a year as well as when you arrive, and I hope to see most of you more often than that. If you would like to meet or to get a written response, please e-mail me at: ruben.andersson@qeh.ox.ac.uk.

If you want to raise an issue at a senior level without involving me you should get in touch with ODID's Director of Graduate Studies who is responsible for all the Department's teaching programmes. For the 2026-27 academic year, this will be Prof Corneliu Bjola (e-mail: corneliu.bjola@qeh.ox.ac.uk).

Do also remember that your College is an important first point of call for issues regarding wellbeing, extensions and related matters, and do make sure to make the most of your College community and its support structures.

You are embarking on a transformative three to four year (full-time) programme of study. I wish you a fulfilling and productive time at ODID.

Ruben Andersson
Director of Doctoral Research

October 2026

DISCLAIMER

The *Examination Regulations* relating to this course are available at: (<https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/Regulation?code=rdinintedeve>) and also general regulations across all degrees (<https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/Contents>)

If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the *Examination Regulations* then you should follow the *Examination Regulations*. If you have any concerns please contact Dominique Attala at email: dominique.attala@qeh.ox.ac.uk

The information in this handbook is accurate as at **30 September 2026**, however it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained on the Graduate Admissions page for changes to courses (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses>). If such changes are made the department will publish a new version of this handbook on Canvas, together with a list of the changes and students will be informed.

The *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)* level for the DPhil is 8 and for the MLitt is 7. Further details are on the University's website: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/how-we-are-run/policies-and-statements/policy-hub/awards-framework>.

SOCIAL SCIENCES DIVISION PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

ODID is part of the Social Sciences Division of the University. The Division offers a range of support and events for researchers, both in person and online. To start off, and as an introduction, they have arranged an event during Induction week that new students are strongly encouraged to attend.

The Divisional Induction event will take place on Thursday 8th October from 1600-1800 at the Blavatnik School of Government, Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, Woodstock Road, OX2 6GG. Book your place here <https://www.socsci.ox.ac.uk/events/social-sciences-division-induction-event-2026>.

This social event includes a panel discussion with current and past students sharing their insights and tips for getting the most out of your time in Oxford, and a showcase of existing doctoral work.

- Hear what the Social Sciences Division can offer you
- Understand how to access free training
- Connect with peers and senior doctoral students

New doctoral students are encouraged to attend the Social Sciences Divisional events and to make use of the resources for DPhils on their website: <https://www.socsci.ox.ac.uk/dphil-students>.

FULL TERM DATES 2026-27

Michaelmas 2026	Sunday 11 October to Saturday 5 December
Hilary 2027	Sunday 17 January to Saturday 13 March
Trinity 2027	Sunday 25 April to Saturday 19 June

Future years' term dates can be found on the University's Facts and Figures website: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/facts-and-figures/dates-of-term>.

1. INTRODUCTION

This Course Handbook covers the DPhil in International Development and the MLitt in International Development. The Handbook for the DPhil in Migration Studies is provided by the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography (SAME).

This introduction offers general advice and a list of sources from which you can get more information and advice on the process of doctoral study in Oxford. A copy of the most recent edition, with any updates is always on Canvas (<https://login.canvas.ox.ac.uk/>) (Single-sign-on username and password needed for access) and a slightly edited copy of the most recent edition is on our Departmental website (<https://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/>).

1.1 SECRETS OF SUCCESS: THESIS OUTLINE AND WORK PLAN

The objectives of your doctoral studies are to master an area of academic literature and produce a thesis that makes an original contribution to knowledge. Along with this, you should aim to gain relevant professional experience. We hope to guide you through the DPhil as rapidly and enjoyably as possible. Having said that, it is true that the lived experience of DPhil students varies widely. For many, it is an exciting and transformative opportunity to master the craft of academic research while acquiring a valuable credential. For others, however, the DPhil can turn into a long and painful slog. In some of these latter cases, the causes are external: ill health, family problems, fieldwork or supervision difficulties, unanticipated funding crises. But in other cases, sadly, the problems arise from bad planning, indecision, or lack of focus. This section offers some suggestions for avoiding such problems and succeeding in the achievement of your objectives.

Good planning of doctoral studies, in brief, requires that you always keep one eye on the thesis and the other eye on the clock. If that's not enough, in your peripheral vision, you should also be conscious of your ultimate destination: an eventual job market.

'Always keeping one eye on the thesis' means never losing sight of the final product of your work. It is surprisingly easy to be diverted or to misallocate time: to undertake long reviews of interesting but irrelevant literature, while missing really crucial bits; to work in the field pursuing issues that are not central to your research question, while failing to gather information that will be essential when it comes to writing up (or just unnecessarily protracting your fieldwork); or to draft chapters that are far too long to fit into the strict length limits on theses, while postponing the drafting of sections that must be included because they are crucial to the overall argument.

The way to avoid all these pitfalls is to have, and to update regularly, an overall plan of the content and structure of the thesis. For most of you, who will be working on monograph-style theses, your thesis outline can be quite detailed, with target lengths for chapters. It is good to keep this short – just one or two sides of paper – both because this makes it easier to keep the overall structure in view and because it makes it quicker to revise the plan (which you will need to do many times along the way). It is also good to make an early start: by half-way through your first term, you should have developed a plan based on the outline you submitted with your application, and by the end of your first year, the plan should already have gone through its first few revisions.

For those expecting to write an 'integrated thesis' (i.e., a three-or-more paper thesis), the outline and planning process may look different. In some cases, the shape and focus of your papers may not become entirely clear until you get reasonably far into your data analysis. Nevertheless, you should maintain and update a document that spells out a coherent plan for your papers – intended research questions, data sources, and relevant literature, to the extent that you can articulate these clearly – and also describes the unifying threads that will unite the papers. You should also make sure that your plans are consistent with the Department's policies on co-authorship.

‘Always keeping one eye on the clock’ means never losing sight of your long-term timetable. You will also need short-term timetables, for the coming weeks or months. But these should fit into an overall strategy of what you are aiming to do, and by when, from the present moment to the point at which you will submit your final thesis for examination. The Oxford system (explained later in this guide) has some important milestones with prescribed time limits (for example, Confirmation of status) that must be in your timetable, but the other elements and phases, including fieldwork and writing up, you must design for yourself, in consultation with your supervisor.

It is never too early to start laying out your long-term timetable. At the start of your studies, the later stages of your timetable are bound to be sketchy, though the target end-date and key intermediate dates can be specific. You should also realise that few things, especially in research, ever go according to plan, and that you will need to revise your timetable at least as frequently as the plan of your thesis.

Finally, ‘keeping the job market in your peripheral vision’ is important even relatively early in your DPhil experience. At the outset, it is normal not to have a clear idea of what kind of career path you would ideally like – academic or non-academic. But as you continue through the DPhil, you should ask yourself repeatedly where you hope to arrive at the end of the process. Different career paths may dictate different choices along the way – including about the shape and structure of your research. Which academic communities do you want to be in conversation with? How can you frame your work so that it will appeal to historians, for example, and how will this framing differ from what you might bring to an area studies audience? If you seek to market yourself to public policy schools, or to non-academic audiences, what are the criteria that they look for in someone with a newly minted doctorate? Of course, you may want to keep multiple options open; but you should then think about the trade-offs between a broad framing of your work and a narrower one.

The main point is that you should keep these issues in mind throughout your DPhil, rather than deferring them to the final months before you submit. Your intended path *beyond* the DPhil has implications for many aspects of your professional development *during* the DPhil: which academic journals you aim to keep up with, which seminar series you attend, which conferences you target with submissions.

These are, of course, general principles. People vary in how they work best – students and supervisors – and the approach outlined above will not be right for everyone. Think for yourself about your objectives and how you will be most likely to achieve them, and organise your studies accordingly. Please remember that all research has ups and downs – and usually more downs than ups. There are brief periods of elation, when you hit on a new idea or uncover new evidence, and occasional senses of achievement, for example when you finish the draft of a difficult chapter. But there are long periods of hard work, too, during which you may feel that you are making little or no progress. And things can go wrong: your hypothesis is rejected by the evidence, your outputs are severely criticised, or work you did turns out to have been wasted. Often, what seem like serious setbacks turn out to be minor, or even to be helpful in avoiding or correcting errors. But be prepared for a bumpy ride.

In a set of assessment interviews with doctoral students, all those who were shortly going to complete their studies in the normal time limits and without problems were asked how they had succeeded in doing this. Their answers were broadly consistent with the approach above: having a clearly defined topic from the outset; and initially setting an overall length for the period of study (in some cases just three years from PRS entry), and sticking to it and to its intermediate deadlines. But they also had some other good suggestions:

Get into a group, so as not to get lost or lonely. Some students are automatically in groups as part of externally funded research projects or because a supervisor convenes a regular working group. Others should create their own groups by getting together regularly with students working on similar topics or using similar methods, to exchange ideas, to comment on each other’s drafts and even(!) – to socialise.

Work on a subject or country which you already know well from previous work or study. Learning about new issues and places, up to doctoral standard, takes a lot more time.

Design your research topic to relate closely to your supervisor's own current research. To become a part of her or his own research programme yields all sorts of benefits, including greater supervisor interest, more expert comments, and more contacts with others working in your area, including invitations to conferences.

Use all available funding opportunities. If your parents have offered to fund your studies, then be willing to accept their generosity rather than trying to support yourself by working. Look out for chances to sell parts of your research to development agencies that want to commission studies in your area, and adapt your plans to take advantage of them as long as they do not place any restrictions on publishing or placing a copy of your thesis in the Bodleian.

1.2 LIBRARY SERVICES

The extensive Development Studies collections are housed at the Bodleian Social Science Library (SSL) in the Manor Road Social Science building, five minutes' walk from Mansfield Road (<https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/libraries/ssl>).

All library holdings are searchable through the online catalogue, SOLO https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/discovery/search?vid=44OXF_INST:SOLO&sortby=rank&lang=en. Course readings are available through Oxford Reading Lists Online (ORLO) and there is a link to this from the SOLO front page. The Library has access to a comprehensive collection of electronic journal titles via OU e-journals and databases through OxLIP+ (Oxford Libraries Information Platform). As members of the University, students can also use the Bodleian Library, as well as the libraries within the Bodleian Libraries system such as Law, Radcliffe Science and Anthropology.

Students are provided with a library induction session at the beginning of Michaelmas Term, and a search skills session for online resources later in the term in preparation for dissertation writing. The Libguide for International Development (<https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/development>) also provides useful links for subject-specific resources.

Sarah Rhodes, Subject Consultant for International Development, is based in the SSL and available for individual research appointments on request (sarah.rhodes@bodleian.ox.ac.uk). Social Sciences data management queries can be addressed to John Southall (john.southall@bodleian.ox.ac.uk).

1.3 OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

i. Social Science Division

ODID is part of the Social Sciences Division. Their website (<https://www.socsci.ox.ac.uk/>) has information for doctoral students across all its departments including training and fieldwork safety advice.

ii. Oxford Students Website and the MyOxford App

The Oxford Students (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/>) website has continually updated information and is a good place to start if you have a question about the University; it also has links to the sites for Health and Welfare, Visas and Immigration, Examinations etc.

The MyOxford App (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/it/myoxford>) gives you access to University systems and services.

iii. Education Committee

The University's **Education Committee** (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/how-we-are-run/governance-finance/committees/education-committee>) is responsible for policy and standards across all courses. They will consider requests from the Department on behalf of its students, for dispensation from Examination Regulations.

iv. Examination Regulations

On academic matters, the definitive sources of information are the University's official publications. The key one is the **Examination Regulations** <https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/Contents>, which includes all the rules on studying for and getting Oxford degrees. Its bulk is off-putting, and it is not exactly lively reading, but only fairly small parts of it are relevant to doctoral students. **In the event of any discrepancy between this guide and what is in the Examination Regulations, the latter will prevail.** Remember to choose the correct year when doing your search. The key sections are:

- General, non-award-specific regulations
- Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations
- General Regulations Governing Research Degrees
- Exceeding word-limits and late submissions
- Probationer Research Students
- Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, particularly the section on International Development

v. Other Handbooks

The **University Student Handbook** (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/student-handbook>) provides general information and guidance on study at Oxford, including the codes, regulations, policies and procedures which govern its students.

The various colleges also provide Handbooks for their students, which will be available on their own websites (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/colleges>).

vi. The Gazette

The **University Gazette** <https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/how-we-are-run/gazette#where-can-i-find>, published at least weekly in term time, contains official announcements, including forthcoming seminars and lectures and announcements about prizes and other potential sources of funding.

vii. Canvas VLE

Your Canvas Dashboard (<https://login.canvas.ox.ac.uk/>) has a tile labelled *International Development: Departmental Information* which contains general information about working in the Department, travel for fieldwork, making an application for ethics approval. The *DPhil International Development* tile contains information specifically for DPhils. Please make sure that you make yourself familiar with Canvas and the information contained there.

The master's courses' materials (reading lists, etc) are held on Canvas. If you are taking an examined course from one of these degrees, you will need to request permission from the Course Coordinator concerned (names are in the Induction slides posted on the International Development site).

viii. University Lecture Lists

Lecture lists for some subjects in some Departments are published every term and are posted online (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/lectures>).

ix. Centre for Teaching and Learning

The Centre for Teaching and Learning offers a range of courses, support and services (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/how-we-are-run/education/centre-for-teaching-and-learning>).

x. Vitae Researcher Portal

The Vitae Researchers' Portal is a consortium of universities and research councils that supports the training and employment of doctoral researchers (<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/>).

2. PEOPLE

The most important people in a programme of doctoral study are the student and the supervisor(s). Their responsibilities are specified in the University's *Policy and Guidance for Research Degrees* (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/how-we-are-run/policies-and-statements/policy-hub/research-degrees>) issued by the University's Educational Committee (EdC) and the 'Code of practice on supervision'.

2.1 STUDENT

Ultimate responsibility for progress and performance rests with the student. They must discuss with their supervisors the type of guidance and comments they want, and arrange meetings. They must find out and follow the regulations relevant to the DPhil, seeking clarification from supervisors and others when necessary. They should not hesitate to take the initiative in raising problems or difficulties, however elementary these may seem. It is also the responsibility of the student to submit their thesis for examination, subject to the approval of their supervisors.

Supervisors have many competing demands on their time. Students should therefore hand in work for comment in good time to their supervisors and give adequate notice of meetings. The need for adequate notice applies also to requests for references from supervisors. Students should maintain progress in accordance with the plan of work agreed with their supervisors. They should be aware that the provision of constructive criticism is central to a satisfactory supervisory relationship, and should act on guidance and corrective action proposed by supervisors.

If a student wishes to consider adding or changing the formal supervision arrangement, this should be discussed with the supervisor or, if that would be difficult, with the Director of Doctoral Research or the College Advisor. To change (or add) a supervisor, students can apply to the Graduate Studies Committee on form GSO.25.

2.2 SUPERVISOR(S)

Every research student has at least one supervisor with whom they will work closely throughout the period of doctoral research. In the case of joint supervision, at least one supervisor must be based at ODID. In theory, both supervisors bear equal responsibility, but in practice they and the student usually agree on a division of responsibility for different aspects of the research. It is extremely unusual to have more than two supervisors.

Probationer Research Students (typically referred to redundantly as 'PRS' students) doing examined coursework may receive special supervision – for example, on an essay or another piece of assessed work – from members of staff other than their primary supervisor(s). This may be useful for a student whose PRS course work falls outside the areas of expertise of the primary supervisor(s).

DPhil students often find it useful to seek advice or to discuss their work with academics across the University, including especially those within ODID. Conversations of this kind can be enormously helpful. Supervisors are often best placed to make introductions and to broker initial contacts. Students should be aware that these other academics have neither obligations nor incentives to make time available for students whom they do not supervise; it is accordingly appropriate to use their time sparingly, to be flexible in adapting to their schedules. One gesture that is often appreciated is to send, in advance of a meeting, an e-mail with a brief agenda or list of questions, in order to focus the conversation. Students should keep their supervisors informed about interactions they have with other academics.

There are, of course, formal processes for eliciting feedback from other University academics.

Students' work is read, assessed and commented on by members of staff other than their supervisor(s) during the processes of Transfer and Confirmation of status. These are discussed in more detail below.

Although ultimate responsibility rests with students, supervisors too have responsibilities both to their students and to the Department's Graduate Studies Committee.

Supervisors are expected to meet their students regularly, on an agreed schedule – at a minimum, once every two weeks in the first term, and three times each term thereafter. Part-time students should be in Oxford for short periods during the year and should ensure they meet regularly with their supervisor(s). During the periods when they are not in Oxford, part-time students should ensure they keep in regular online contact with their supervisor(s), whether by e-mail or teleconferencing. See section 3.1.4 for minimum number of days in Oxford per year for part-time students.

Students should take notes at these meetings. A strongly recommended practice is for students to send their supervisors(s) 'minutes' of each meeting, as a way to record agreement, progress and other matters related to the student's programme of study. The frequency of meetings with supervisors has been found to be the single most important determinant of research student satisfaction in Oxford. If there are two supervisors, at least one joint meeting each term is desirable, and the student should convey relevant outcomes of meetings with one supervisor to the other. Supervisors should be accessible to students at other appropriate times when advice is needed.

Supervisors and students should ensure that they are in contact at least once a month, if not more regularly, at least by email if they do not have meetings. This is especially important if students are out in the field or are not in Oxford. It will also help the Department to comply with the UK Home Office regulations governing students who have a student visa.

Supervisors are responsible for giving early advice about the nature of research and the standard expected for the Transfer and Confirmation papers as well as the thesis. They must advise students about literature and sources, attendance at classes, and relevant techniques (including helping to arrange instruction where necessary). This is particularly important for the design of fieldwork or surveys and where the thesis will involve statistical analysis. Supervisors can help advise students who are unable to proceed with their planned research because of travel or ethical restrictions.

Supervisors should request written work as appropriate and in accordance with the plan discussed with students. The work should be returned with constructive criticism and in reasonable time. It is not possible to define 'reasonable time' in a general or precise way, because other aspects of the workload of supervisors fluctuate, but their minimum obligation, on receipt of written work, is to tell the student when feedback will be provided and to stick to that date.

Supervisors should also assist students to discuss their research with other Oxford staff and students, and to communicate their findings to the wider academic community, both orally and in writing.

Except where students' theses are part of an externally funded research programme, supervisors are not responsible for arranging finance for their studies. Supervisors are expected to write references in support of funding applications, but not to pursue funding opportunities. Students can, however, get information on funding sources from Dominique Attala, and advice on financial problems from their Colleges or the Student Funding Office (discussed in the next section).

Supervisors write reports for the University on the progress of their students, one at the end of each term plus one during the long summer vacation period. These reports are entered using the online Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) and accessed via Student Self Service (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/selfservice>) using your Single-Sign-On details. At the start of the process each student will receive an automated email notification, encouraging them to enter their own report on their progress that term. The supervisors then enter their report and once they have released it, it can be accessed both by the student and the college. Supervisors are also expected

directly and regularly to keep students informed of how well their work is progressing.

If you have any issues with teaching or supervision please raise these as soon as possible so that they can be addressed promptly. Contact either the DDR or Graduate Studies Manager in the first instance.

2.3 COLLEGE ADVISORS

To be a student at Oxford, membership of a college is required. For undergraduates, the college is central to the educational experience: much undergraduate teaching is provided by colleges, in collaboration with University departments. ODID is a relative rarity, as we offer no undergraduate teaching. Supervision and teaching of graduate students are provided entirely by their departments. This means that the college experience is not central to the academic lives of DPhil students. Nevertheless, colleges provide many other services that you will find useful – and in some cases essential.

Your college will assign one of its faculty members (called Fellows) to be your College Advisor. Another Fellow of the college will have responsibility for all of its graduate students: the Senior Tutor or Tutor for Graduates, depending on whether the college has both undergraduate and graduate students or only graduates. Departments are required to copy all significant information on the progress of graduate students to their colleges, and the formal consent of the college is required at several stages of a DPhil (for example, in applying for Confirmation of status).

How much contact graduate research students have with their College Advisors and Tutors varies greatly, depending on the preferences of the student and the advisor and on the circumstances of the student. In most cases, these contacts end up being minimal. Your advisor is unlikely to chase after you, but will usually be glad to meet whenever you choose to take the initiative. It is worth cultivating them, partly to broaden your experience of Oxford but also because they can be helpful if things go wrong. In some cases, serendipity leads to extremely productive interactions between a DPhil student and a College Advisor.

Colleges are responsible for registering students, reminding students to ensure their contact and other information is up-to-date on the central system (which is particularly important for overseas students), health care, and signing them up for a graduation ceremony.

Importantly, colleges will also provide welfare support and will help students to make any applications for exam adjustments that might be necessary.

Colleges are also assigned the lead role in student finance – checking in advance that applicants have enough money to start their courses, and helping students deal with financial problems – and in almost all non-academic matters. They can also be helpful in academic matters, particularly if you run into difficulties. Your College Advisor or Tutor can give you impartial advice, help you negotiate, and (if you wish) intervene on your behalf.

2.4 GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Formal responsibility for most decisions on doctoral students rests with ODID's Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), which is chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). For the 2026-27 academic year, the DGS will be Professor Corneliu Bjola. Other members of the GSC are the ODID Head of Department and the Course Directors of all ODID's graduate programmes including the DDR for the DPhil. The Committee always meets in the morning of the Tuesday in the 2nd and 7th Weeks of each of Oxford's three terms.

The GSC has overall responsibility for research degrees, and for monitoring the students' performance and progress. It is responsible for admitting new students and for appointing their supervisors, as well as approving nominations for their assessors for Transfer and Confirmation of Status and their final

examiners, all of who formally report to the GSC and whose recommendations have to be agreed by the GSC. It decides also on applications for extension of time, change of thesis title or supervisor, suspension of status and reinstatement, applications from students to submit an integrated format thesis (see 3.2.1), applications to change between full-time to part-time and dispensation from residence requirements. The GSC also discusses and acts on policies set by the central University, the Social Sciences Division and the Educational Committee (EdC).

2.5 COURSE DIRECTOR

Responsibility for the academic administration of ODID's doctoral programme rests with the Director of Doctoral Research (DDR). For the 2026-27 academic year, the DDR will be Professor Ruben Andersson. The DDR is accountable to, and a member of, the GSC. However, since the GSC meets infrequently, it has delegated some of its powers to the DDR in order to permit faster decisions on issues affecting students – on some of which he will consult with the DGS and other members of the GSC. The DDR meets all newly arrived doctoral students to discuss their needs for research training, in consultation with their supervisors. The DDR also has review meetings with doctoral students individually once a year, usually in Trinity Term (but at other times if they are away on fieldwork). Also in Trinity Term, usually in preparation for these meetings, doctoral students are required to fill in a form which assesses both their own progress and the performance of their supervisors and other relevant aspects of ODID. The DDR reviews the termly reports of supervisors on all students, and contacts them if there are any issues which require discussion. He also sees the reports of assessors for Transfer of Status and Confirmation of Status, and in these ways seeks to keep track of the progress of students. He is glad to meet students, or to respond to questions in writing, if issues arise which cannot be resolved by supervisors (or by Dominique Attala or Tessa Finlayson-Gray). Email to ask a question or to arrange an appointment.

2.6 ODID GRADUATE STUDIES MANAGER

The advice of the ODID Graduate Studies Manager, Dominique Attala, should be sought on administrative matters related to the course: if she cannot give you the answer herself, she can direct you to the right person. She is available to assist with the allocation of student workspace (which is effectively delegated to one of the DPhil student representatives) and computers, in consultation with Peter Franklin Routh, ODID's Head of Administration, and Shuqin Zhang, ODID's ICT Officer. Dominique can provide you with information on scholarships and funding, and direct you to university services such as the IT Services or the Language Centre. Her office is on the first floor of the Mansfield Road building (☎(2)81806, or e-mail dominique.attala@qeh.ox.ac.uk).

2.7 DIVISIONAL OFFICE AND GRADUATE STUDIES ADMINISTRATOR

Many matters concerning doctoral students involve the central University and the Social Sciences Divisional Offices, in addition to ODID (one of its departments). Tessa Finlayson-Gray is Senior Graduate Studies Administrator and is responsible for research students in International Development. She is based in the Social Sciences Divisional Offices, 6 Worcester Street, OX1 2BX; e-mail: graduate-studies-1@socsci.ox.ac.uk.

Tessa knows a lot about the University's formal rules and regulations and their interpretation (more than most supervisors), and is available to answer questions and provide information. She also sends reminders to doctoral students and supervisors about Transfer, Confirmation and final submission deadlines. She is also the official channel of communication between doctoral students and the GSC and you will hear officially from her about decisions that affect you. To obtain the various progression forms you will need, download them from:

www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/progression

2.8 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Each new DPhil cohort elects representatives in the Michaelmas Term, usually one for PRS and one for those from the ODID MPhil if there are more than one or two, who maintain regular contact with relevant people in ODID, including the DDR. A list of the current student representatives will be posted in the Departmental Information section on Canvas after they have all been elected at the beginning of Michaelmas Term.

They meet with the DDR as and when required, at which time issues can be raised about research, teaching, supervision and facilities. These meetings are informal and any doctoral student can attend them. They are chaired by the DDR, and minutes are taken by the student representatives. Issues raised at these meetings are acted upon by appropriate people or committees. The representatives also coordinate decision-making among doctoral students on issues of common interest such as desk-space and rules of behaviour in the shared working area. They organise, or arrange for another student to organise, the weekly doctoral work-in-progress seminar.

A student representative also sits on the committee of the Social Sciences Library and the Division's student consultative committee.

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

2.9 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. We recognise that the broad range of experiences of a diverse staff and student body strengthens our research and enhances our teaching. In order for Oxford to remain a world-leading institution, we must continue to provide a diverse, inclusive, fair and open environment that allows everyone to grow and flourish.' *University of Oxford Equality Policy* (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/how-we-are-run/equality-diversity>).

As a member of the University you contribute towards making it an inclusive environment and we ask that you treat other members of the University community with respect, courtesy and consideration. The University does not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimization and has policies such as the harassment policy and Statue XI which outline the appropriate conduct expected from all staff and students within the University.

The Equality and Diversity Unit (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/how-we-are-run/equality-diversity>) works with all parts of the collegiate University to develop and promote an understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion, and ensure that our policies comply with the relevant legal and regulatory requirements. This aligns closely with the updated Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech | Compliance published by the University. The code reflects the requirements of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023, which came into force on 1 August 2025 and the Office for Students' regulatory advice 24 which also came into force on 1 August 2025.

The Equality and Diversity Unit also supports a broad network of Harassment Advisors in all departments, faculties and colleges as part of the Harassment Advisory Service. If you have experienced bullying or harassment and would like guidance on how to report this, or access to support, departmental Advisors can provide impartial advice. For more information on the University's Harassment and Bullying policy and the support available for students visit: (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/how-we-are-run/policies-and-statements/harassment-and-sexual-misconduct>).

The Department has set up its own Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee to ensure that suitable equality, diversity and inclusion actions are undertaken at an appropriate level within the department.

Oxford is home to a wide range of faith societies, belief groups, and religious centres that are open to students. Learn more at: (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/life-in-oxford/leisure-time-and-learning/religious-life>).

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

2.10 STUDENT WELFARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The University's unique and close-knit collegiate system provides a wealth of pastoral and welfare services for students to support engagement with studies and University life, promoting student wellbeing by providing opportunities for social interaction, sport and arts. Additionally, the central Student Welfare and Support Services department offers professional support that complements provision in colleges and departments. More detail can be found in the University's Common Approach to Support Student Mental Health: (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling/common-approach-student-mental-health>).

Your college takes the lead role in your welfare. Most colleges will have a Welfare Officer, although for some, this role is taken by another college staff member (sometimes the Chaplain, or the Senior Tutor). Remember, you always have the opportunity to discuss any problems both with your Departmental supervisor and your College Advisor. Information will be in your College Handbook or website. You can also contact Dominique Attala, or your supervisor, or the DDR for help from the Department or to let us know if you are ill or otherwise unable to work.

The **Disability Advisory Service (DAS)** can provide information, advice and guidance on reasonable adjustments to teaching and assessment and assist with organising disability-related study support. You are encouraged to contact them if you need to (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability>).

The **Counselling Service** is here to help you address personal or emotional problems that get in the way of having a good experience at Oxford and realising your full academic and personal potential. They offer a free and confidential service and the counselling team are committed to providing culturally sensitive and appropriate psychological services. Students can request to see a male or female therapist, a Counsellor of Colour, or to attend a specialist group such as the LGBTQ+ or Students of Colour Groups. All support is free and confidential. For more information visit (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling>)

The Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service provides a safe and confidential space for any student, of any gender, sexuality or sexual orientation, who has been impacted by sexual harassment or violence, domestic or relationship abuse, coercive control or stalking, whenever or wherever this took place. More information is available from www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/supportservice.

A range of services led by students are available to help provide support to other students, including the peer supporter network (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/peersupport>), the **Oxford SU's Student Advice Service** (<https://www.oxfordsu.org/>) and **Nightline** (<https://oxford.nightline.ac.uk/>).

Oxford Students' Union also runs a series of campaigns to raise awareness and promote causes that matter to students.

There is a wide range of student clubs and societies to get involved in, covering a range of interests (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/clubs>).

2.11 EXAMINATION ADJUSTMENTS FOR DISABLED STUDENTS

PRS students with a registered student-support-plan from the Disability Advisory Service should contact their college early in order to ensure that their application for any adjustment needed for their examination is submitted before Friday of 4th Week of the term before the exam takes place.

Disabled students who need to inform Assessors for Transfer and Confirmation of Status vivas and Examiners for their final viva about any adjustments needed for their disability should submit a GSO.19 form at the same time as they submit the application for the assessment.

3. STAGES OF PROGRESS

3.1 STRUCTURE OF THE DOCTORAL STUDIES PROGRAMME

3.1.1 Overview of the stages

Every DPhil has its own unique characteristics and its own challenges. This means that the timeline and structure of your individual programme will depend on many factors. Nevertheless, it is useful to plan around a clearly defined structure, which is sketched out in this section.

The tables below outline the three stages of work in the doctoral programme, using the example of a typical student with a field-based research project. The tables give a simple overview of what needs to be done, and in what sequence. Each section is a 'milestone' stage and is explained in greater detail in the following sections of this guide. There is also Divisional guidance on Managing Submission Deadlines the Transfer process and the Confirmation process. Note that the time and sequence of these stages will vary to some extent for students working on an 'integrated' (i.e., three-paper) quant-oriented thesis. Nevertheless, the timeline for the milestones should remain similar.¹

Starting as Probationer Research (PRS) Student

Full-Time		Part-Time	
One year	Transfer of Status – PRS to DPhil Status -Coursework for examination -Preparation of Transfer paper -Presentation of Transfer paper (8 th Week Hilary Term) -Submission of application for Transfer of Status forms and Transfer paper (<u>by end of 2nd Week Trinity Term</u>) -Assessment of Transfer paper (by end of Trinity Term) -Transfer to DPhil student status -Re-sit of exam if required	One year	Transfer of Status – PRS to DPhil Status -Coursework for examination
		One year	-Preparation of Transfer paper -Presentation of Transfer paper (8 th Week Hilary Term) -Submission of application for Transfer of Status forms and Transfer paper (<u>by end of 2nd Week Trinity Term</u>) -Assessment of Transfer paper (by end of Trinity Term) -Transfer to DPhil student status -Re-sit of exam if required
One	Getting to Confirmation of Status	Two	Getting to Confirmation of Status

¹ In particular, students writing quant-based 'integrated' dissertations may not have a single extended period of fieldwork or other research; instead, their data collection and analysis may take place separately for each of the three papers. This means that the three stages envisaged in the table for PRS students may blur. Even so, the milestones remain useful and applicable: students should complete the Transfer by the end of the first year, and if possible, the Confirmation within another 18 months. If you are pursuing this path, you should discuss your timetable with your supervisor and the DDR.

year	-Finalise preparation for fieldwork <u>including any local restrictions</u> -Carry out fieldwork (or other research) -Write core chapters based on research -Assessment for Confirmation of Status (application submitted Week 1 of milestone term)	years	-Finalise preparation for fieldwork <u>including any local restrictions</u> -Carry out fieldwork (or other research) -Write core chapters based on research -Assessment for Confirmation of Status (application submitted Week 1 of milestone term)
One year	From Confirmation to completion -Write remaining chapters -Supervisor reviews whole thesis -Revise all chapters of thesis -Submit thesis for examination	Two years	From Confirmation to completion -Write remaining chapters -Supervisor reviews whole thesis -Revise all chapters of thesis -Submit thesis for examination

Starting with DPhil status after completing MPhil Development Studies

Full-Time		Part-Time	
One year	Getting to Confirmation of Status -Finalise preparation for fieldwork <u>including any local restrictions</u> -Carry out fieldwork (or other research) -Write core chapters based on research -Assessment for Confirmation of Status (application submitted 1st Week of milestone term)	Two years	Getting to Confirmation of Status -Finalise preparation for fieldwork <u>including any local restrictions</u> -Carry out fieldwork (or other research) -Write core chapters based on research -Assessment for Confirmation of Status (application submitted 1st Week of milestone term)
One year	From Confirmation to completion -Write remaining chapters -Supervisor reviews whole thesis -Revise all chapters of thesis -Submit thesis for examination	Two years	From Confirmation to completion -Write remaining chapters -Supervisor reviews whole thesis -Revise all chapters of thesis -Submit thesis for examination

The first stage is relevant for those who enter as Probationer Research Students (PRS). (The double lines indicate that the coursework and paper should be done in parallel by full-time students.)

Students who entered the DPhil from ODID's MPhil in Development Studies often, but not always, start at the second stage, with DPhil student status acquired through these first two years of MPhil study.

The second stage is usually the longest and the most fundamental. During it, students carry out the main part of their research, either by fieldwork or by other methods, and write much of it up.

In the third and final stage, students write up any further chapters based on their fieldwork and additional chapters needed for the complete thesis, which usually also includes material from the Transfer paper or (for entrants from the MPhil) from the MPhil thesis. Supervisors review and comment on the draft thesis, which students then revise and submit for examination.

3.1.2 How long should it take?

The normal length of time for completing a doctorate in UK universities is expected to be either three years full-time (six years part-time), or two years full-time (four year part-time) for those coming from the MPhil, and formally that is the timetable for this DPhil programme too. However, in development studies, as in some other social science disciplines, research data often need to be collected through fieldwork, which can add another year for full-time students (two years for part-time students) to the time needed to complete a thesis. This means that three to four years (full-time) and six to eight years (part-time) is usual to complete a thesis in International Development and some do take longer. Thus PRS entrants should plan to complete in three to four years (or six to eight years for part-time), and MPhil entrants in two to three years (or four to six years for part-time). These time-spans are consistent with the *Examination Regulations*, which direct examiners to judge a DPhil thesis by whether, among other things, it is 'what may 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'. The approximate division of this time between the three stages is indicated in the charts above, although it will vary greatly across students.

For PRS entrants, Transfer of Status by the end of the third term for full-time students and end of the sixth term for part-time students is required if the overall timetable is to be achieved. Fieldwork or data gathering research should begin in the summer vacation after the third (or sixth) term or sometime early in the second (or third) year.

Ideally, Confirmation of Status should be completed no less than nine months (or eighteen months for part-time) before the target date for completion, to make it possible to respond properly to the comments from the Confirmation assessors on the core chapters and from the supervisor on the complete draft thesis. Students who are at or close to a milestone deadline (for Transfer or Confirmation) will be added to a register kept by the Social Science Division. These students might be required to meet with the DDR and their supervisor to discuss their progress, and a report will be sent to the Division.

Where problems arise – for example, medical or domestic ones – which interrupt progress with the thesis, it is possible, as explained in a later section, for students to get permission to suspend status, the effect of which is to 'stop the clock' for an agreed length of time.

3.1.3 Scope for other work

Full-time students

Full-time DPhil students should expect to work on their research at least 40 hours per week and a minimum of 44 weeks of the year; this is a demanding course, and you should not expect it to take less time than any other full-time occupation. In principle, though, the expectation is that you should be able to complete the DPhil working only during normal working hours. It is true that many students find it constructive to work longer hours and more days, but there is often a trade-off between lengthening your hours and maintaining a clear head.

What is essential is that any paid work you undertake should still allow you to study during these times. The financial guarantees you have made to your college are regarded as binding by ODID, which expects students to make use of the funding sources they have specified. You will not be allowed to undertake large amounts of paid work or in other ways to interrupt or delay your studies on grounds of insufficient funding (unless you can prove that for reasons outside your control funding that was originally guaranteed has ceased to be available).

It is desirable for non-financial reasons, during study for a doctorate, to get some other professional experience – teaching, research assistance and consultancy – which can enhance CVs and broaden knowledge. Teaching assistant opportunities for doctoral students are offered through many courses that form the various master's programmes in the Department and in other departments and colleges. DPhils are required to take one of the 'Preparation for learning and teaching' courses available before

taking on any teaching within the University (not just the Department).

Students must normally have completed (or had waived) Transfer of Status before taking on any teaching activities. Before considering any teaching, students must seek agreement from their supervisor and advice as to whether their research is making good progress and they are expected to complete on time.

Oxford's Paid Work Guidelines (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/how-we-are-run/policies-and-statements/policy-hub/paid-work-graduate-students>) advise that students should do no more than around eight hours of paid work per week (including time for class preparation and marking, in the case of teaching assistance). UK Research Council or other funding bodies might restrict this further to between five and six hours (including preparation). The ODID Graduate Studies Committee requires students who wish to take up paid employment to seek advice from their supervisors **before** taking up any such employment. Students must ensure that paid employment does not impinge on their studies. Supervisors must be consulted on a termly basis to enable them to monitor that a proper balance is maintained between paid employment and academic course work.

Part-time students

Part-time students will be expected to commit around 20 hours per week to their studies. They should discuss with their supervisor how they will divide their time between research and their employment or caring responsibilities.

Part-time students in employment will be asked to provide a letter from their employer confirming that they are supportive of the study and willing to release the student from the workplace for study in Oxford, independent study and any fieldwork necessary for data collection. In addition, where appropriate, students will be required to obtain written agreement from their employer for the use of their employer's data if it is used in their research.

3.1.4 Residence requirements

Full-time students

The minimum length of time for which **full-time** students are required to live and work in Oxford in order to get a DPhil is six terms unless the student already holds an Oxford MLitt, MPhil or MSc, in which case the minimum is three terms. Periods of fieldwork may be counted towards this residency requirement. In addition, students must be resident in Oxford for the whole period of the PRS. The rules can be found in the *Examination Regulations*. Students may apply to be exempted from up to three terms of this requirement, but this dispensation is granted only in unusual circumstances and almost never during the PRS period. Applications for dispensation are made using Student Self Service.

Students with DPhil status (after Transfer from PRS or entry from the MPhil) are not required to reside continuously after they have completed the minimum terms of residence, and most of them need to be away from Oxford for long periods to carry out their fieldwork. When away on fieldwork, however, it is important that they keep the Department and their colleges informed of their plans and maintain regular contact with their supervisors. **In particular, those who have entered the UK on a student visa must ensure that they keep in regular contact with their supervisor and the Graduate Studies Manager.**

Even after completing the minimum required period of residence and their fieldwork, students are encouraged and advised to work on their theses in Oxford. Close contact with supervisors and colleagues is vital for good progress, and students who choose to work away from Oxford often experience serious delays and problems with Confirmation of Status and examination.

Part-time students

Part-time students will be expected to be in Oxford for at least 30 weekdays per year (excluding bank holidays and periods of holiday closure), normally coinciding with the full terms of the academic year, for university-based research work, supervision meetings, attending departmental seminars and any skills training that may be required. The number of days will be greater (closer to 70) in the first year when students need to take classes, and possibly an in-person examination, for their examined course for Transfer of Status.

3.1.5 Required Training: avoiding plagiarism, researcher integrity information security

Plagiarism

All new students must read the extensive information provided by the University online about avoiding plagiarism. They must all take the online tutorial on avoiding plagiarism, the link for which is on the website is here: (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism>), on the right hand side of the page. You will need your single sign-on username and password to access this site. **On completing the course, you must print out or email the certificate of completion and give it to Dominique.**

Please ensure that you read the University's Plagiarism Policy and information about good academic practice:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/applying-to-oxford/university-policies/plagiarism>

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/academicpractice>

To avoid plagiarism, it is important for all students within individual 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 particular 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 the style and format of making references. Your supervisor will be in the best position to advise you on such matters.

By following good practice in your subject area you should 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.

Researcher Integrity Training

The UK Concordat to Support Research emphasises the need for researchers to undertake appropriate training in research integrity. The University's Research and Innovation Committee agreed that introductory research integrity training should be made compulsory for all University researchers, including postgraduate research students.

The University's introductory Core research integrity training course can be accessed via:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/it/training-and-skills/information-security-and-data-protection>.

Upon successful completion (a mark of 80% is required), you will receive an emailed certificate of completion as evidence of having taken this. Keep the certificate somewhere safe as all DPhils admitted from Michaelmas Term 2021 are required to complete the training course successfully and have to provide their certificate as evidence when applying for Transfer of Status, if applicable, or Confirmation of Status if Transfer is waived.

Information Security Training

As part of the Researcher Integrity training, all students are required to complete the Information Security training. The link can be found here: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/it/training-and-skills/information-security-and-data-protection>

Using Generative AI

The University-wide rollout of [ChatGPT Edu provides a secure GenAI environment](#) for study, supported by training and guidance which emphasises ethical usage, the importance of critical thinking, and responsible application in line with University policies. [Guidance on the safe and responsible use of these tools](#) is available. The department's policy for the use of AI in shared option courses will be shared with students and is likely to change as AI evolves. These rules also apply to DPhil theses.

3.2 THINKING BACKWARD: THESIS FORMAT AND PUBLICATION OPPORTUNITIES

Even from the earliest days of your DPhil, it makes sense to be thinking about the end of the process. This includes a number of issues that you should discuss early and often with your supervisor. Where do you hope that the DPhil will take you? What kind of jobs do you eventually hope to pursue? How do you plan to position yourself for the job market? Answering these questions – and revisiting them regularly throughout your time on the DPhil – can help keep you on track.

Two issues are particularly important to consider early. The first is the format of your thesis – using the word 'format' in a sense specific to the University. The second is the value of publishing your work during the DPhil, rather than waiting until completion to pursue publication.

3.2.1 Thesis format

The majority of students in this Department submit their thesis in the traditional 'monograph' format as series of chapters in the style of a book. However, for those whose disciplinary orientation is primarily economics, it is possible to submit an 'integrated thesis' that is made up of a minimum of three published (or to be published) articles, or a combination of articles and conventional chapters.

Whichever format is chosen, the thesis must be the result of research undertaken whilst you are enrolled on the DPhil programme (though it may build on work completed during a master's programme at Oxford). In either format (a monograph format or integrated thesis), the requirements regarding originality and scholarly contribution remain the same.

If you are eligible and choose the integrated format, it will need to form a coherent body of research and should include a separate introduction placing the individual papers in context, a literature review (which may take the form of separate literature reviews on each of the papers, rather than a standalone section), and an overall conclusion. The coherence of the thesis implies a concern for some set of intellectual themes or ideas, which can be traced through the thesis. It refers to more than a shared disciplinary or methodological approach. Coherence may, for example, be achieved through addressing a particular locale, policy question, or concept.

You should be aware that including one or more papers that have been accepted for publication or published already does not necessarily mean that the work is of sufficient quality or significance to be awarded the DPhil. Issues of copyright must be addressed before you submit your thesis, in particular where part has already been published or is being considered for publication, as all completed DPhil theses are made available to other researchers by submission to the Bodleian Library.

If you are applying for an integrated thesis you must discuss this with your supervisor first. Applications should be made before you apply for Confirmation of Status (see section 3.5 of this

Handbook for information on Confirmation of Status).

The application should be made on **GSO.31 SSD** and submitted to Dominique Attala after it has been signed by your supervisor(s). If you decide that you would like to go back to the monograph format of thesis, you will need to make an application to your supervisor(s) and to the Graduate Studies Committee showing good cause for the change.

Under **very** exceptional circumstances, co-authorship may be permitted for students submitting an integrated thesis, for example where research relies on the implementation or design of surveys by local counterparts and intellectual content is therefore shared. Permission for the inclusion of co-authored work must also be received from the Graduate Studies Committee, with the support of the supervisor(s). Co-authorship with supervisors or other ODID students is not permitted.

The necessity of co-authorship must be justified and the contribution of the student in such cases must be clearly indicated. Where co-authored articles are included, the supervisor(s) and all co-authors must certify in writing to the Graduate Studies Committee that the majority of that work represents the work of the candidate. Co-authors must provide a statement of permission to include the work in the thesis, with each collaborator confirming the nature and extent of the student's contribution.

The same word count and presentation regulations apply to both the monograph format and integrated format thesis. Further information on the presentation of your thesis for submission can be found in sections 3.6.2 and 3.6.3 of this Handbook.

Your application must include the following:

- Confirmation that your submission will include an introduction placing the individual papers in context, a literature review, and an overall conclusion, and a brief indication of the basis for coherence of the thesis (see above).
- Approximate number of articles that will make up the whole (three or more), or mix of articles and chapters.
- Supporting letter from supervisor (both if you are co-supervised).
- Exceptionally, co-authorship is allowed. Indicate in your application if you intend to include co-authored work, but note that you must apply separately to the Graduate Studies Committee to include such work.

3.2.2 Publishing your research

Oxford encourages students to publish some of their research prior to its submission in the DPhil thesis. ODID similarly encourages DPhil students to publish parts of their research as early as possible. Time lags in publication are long (on average around two years for a journal article from initial submission to appearance in print), so there are advantages to starting soon, particularly if you want a strong CV for academic job applications by the time you complete the thesis. Also, you may get valuable comments from journal referees – even if your paper is rejected. For some types of research, disciplinary norms allow for papers to be put into the public domain faster by submitting them to working paper series or similar pre-publication outlets – but this varies widely across different segments of academia. Check with your supervisor, who can offer guidance appropriate to your area of research.

Preparing material for publication is therefore often a good reason for taking time out from simply writing your thesis. But you should minimise the conflict between these two objectives by careful design of publications and thesis that maximises the overlap. The duality of approaches with regard to publishing DPhil research may leave some confusion in your mind. Please feel free to address any concerns regarding publication to the Director of Doctoral Research at any time during your doctoral

studies.

You should be aware that including material in your thesis that has already been accepted for publication or published already does not necessarily mean that the work is of sufficient quality or significance to be awarded the DPhil. You should note that the acceptance of such material for publication does not of itself constitute proof that the work is of sufficient quality or significance to merit the award of the degree concerned. This remains a judgement of the relevant board on the recommendation of its examiners.

You are permitted to include in your thesis material that has already been published. However, you must clearly identify previously published material in the thesis (for example, in the introduction), and ensure that you do not breach any copyright rules that were attached to publications. Under very exceptional circumstances, co-authorship may be permitted - for example, where research relies on the implementation or design of surveys by local counterparts and intellectual content is therefore shared. Co-authorship with supervisors or other ODID students is not permitted. The necessity of co-authorship must be justified and the contribution of the student in such cases must be clearly indicated. Co-authors must provide a statement of permission to include the work in the thesis, with each collaborator confirming the nature and extent of the student's contribution. Permission for the inclusion of co-authored work must also be received from the Graduate Studies Committee, with the support of the supervisor(s).

3.2.3 Material from previous degrees in your thesis

The bulk of the thesis should be from work conducted whilst on the DPhil and it is preferable that you do not include material already used to earn a degree outside Oxford.

Material from a master's degree at Oxford may, however, be included; indeed, it is expected that students coming to the DPhil from the MPhil Development Studies will build on their MPhil thesis work, as outlined in section 3.4. Any work used from another degree should be declared on the GSO.3 form at the time of submission, and a statement included with the form.

You should discuss with your supervisor any possible relationship between work submitted for another degree and the DPhil early on, preferably in your first term. See the DPhil section of the *Examination Regulations* (<https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/Regulation?code=grftdodoctofphil>).

3.2.4 Rules for word counts

At several stages, as explained in this guide, you are asked to submit written materials that are no longer than some specified number of words (e.g., 100,000 for the final thesis). You thus need to know the rules for counting words laid down by the Social Sciences Division (of which ODID is a department). The word count includes all text (including cover page, contents table, footnotes and appendices) *except* lists of references and bibliographies. It also includes figures and tables, which count for the number of words that would have been in the space that they occupy. In a **very few** special circumstances an additional 10,000 word appendix may be permitted by the Graduate Studies Committee.

3.3 PROBATIONER RESEARCH STUDENT

The probationary period is intended for the development of and early work on the thesis topic, for learning relevant research methods, language and computing skills, and for attendance at lectures, seminars and classes in the general topic area. During this stage, residence in Oxford is required, other than in exceptional circumstances, and field research is not permitted.

Full-time PRS students are encouraged to achieve Transfer (*the first Milestone*) to DPhil status in their

third term, which involves passing an examined course and assessors approving a Transfer paper. Part-time PRS students will take their examined course in their first year which normally involves sitting an exam (or fulfilling other assessment requirements, depending on the specific course) in their third term. They will then continue with the rest of the Transfer of Status process in their second year and can re-sit the exam if necessary in their sixth term. **ODID prefers students to have completed their Transfer by the end of Trinity Term, therefore they should plan to start the process by submitting the application for Transfer of Status in 2nd Week of Trinity Term.** University rules allow PRS status to continue for up to four terms for full-time students and up to eight terms for part-time students (special permission is required for extra time), but delaying Transfer to the fourth (or eighth) term should be avoided if at all possible.

3.3.1 Examined coursework

All PRS students are expected to do some *examined* coursework during their first year. Supervised essays or informal attendance at lecture courses where there is no formal exam mark do not count. The course may be one of those offered to the MPhil in Development Studies students or from a related degree in Oxford and permission must be obtained from the lecturer for you to take the course and be examined.

The choice of paper should reflect the research needs of the individual student, and must be agreed with the supervisor before the start of the first term, so that the student can start attending the relevant lectures and classes. The choice is usually made in a meeting with the supervisor in 0th week (the one before Full Term starts) of the first term, often following some prior correspondence. Dominique Attala and the Director of Doctoral Research (DDR) should be informed of the choice no later than Monday morning of 1st week. The choice will be approved formally by the ODID GSC at the 2nd Week meeting.

If a student fails, a re-sit of the exam is allowed. The exam must be passed for successful Transfer of Status and in order to continue with the second stage of the DPhil. See section 3.7.3 for information on what to do if you are taken ill during examinations.

Part-time students should be aware that they will need to choose a course that takes place in the term in which they are in Oxford. It is not possible to take a course remotely or to ask for lectures and classes to be recorded. They will also need to plan to be in Oxford to sit the relevant exam. (Some exams are submissions but you should not expect that this will be the case for the course you are approved to take.)

Students with a student-support-plan from the Disability Advisory Service should note that if they need any adjustments for the exam, they should speak to their college early so that the application is submitted before Friday of 4th Week of the term before the exam takes place.

3.3.2 Preparation for Transfer of Status

The Transfer paper is normally the plan for the thesis, which justifies and locates the research in relation to earlier work in the field (theoretical and empirical), sets out the questions, hypotheses or issues on which it will focus, and describes and explains the methods by which these will be answered, tested or addressed. The discussion of methodology is particularly crucial: the world is awash with interesting questions, but good ways of answering them are scarce. All this needs to be written up in a paper of no more than 10,000 words, professionally presented (and in at least 11-point font and 1.5 or double spacing), to which draft questionnaires and other relevant material can be appended.

For students intending to pursue an integrated thesis, the Transfer paper may look somewhat different; supervisors and the DDR should provide guidance. For example, a student intending eventually to pursue an integrated thesis might benefit from submitting a Transfer that takes the form of a single relatively complete paper (within the word count), along with a discussion of the other

anticipated papers that will make up the thesis. The submission should demonstrate that the student has mastered the methods and techniques that will be used in the remaining papers. It should also demonstrate familiarity with relevant literatures and context(s), and it should articulate the unifying themes that will eventually define the coherence of the thesis. Note, however, that formally, students do not apply for permission to submit an integrated thesis until they are approaching Confirmation of Status. Thus, the Transfer process may involve a discussion of whether the student's research is well suited to this format

Although the final stages of preparation of the Transfer paper will of course be concentrated in the latter part of the year, you are advised to start thinking about it from your first week and to work on it in stages throughout the preparation period. Questions, hypotheses and methods benefit from being kicked about, argued over, reflected upon and revised many times over a protracted period. Start with sketches of a page or two, discuss them with your supervisor and friends, revise them, discuss them some more, and gradually expand them as your ideas become more settled. Write a draft of the complete paper well ahead of your planned submission date, so that your supervisor will have enough time to comment on it and you will have enough time to revise it thoroughly.

A good grasp of the existing literature is crucial to the success of any research project, so in the course of preparing the Transfer paper you will need to do quite a lot of reading. But do this in a focused way and in parallel with the evolution of the paper itself. Base your reading at each stage on the latest sketch of your paper, which should shape what you read and what you look for in the reading. Then use what you have read in the next revision of your sketch. Go through this loop repeatedly. In this way, avoid the common but serious error of believing that it is necessary to do a comprehensive literature review before starting to think about your own research.

To help the students with their preparation for Transfer of Status, all PRSs are required to give a Transfer presentation which will take place towards the end of Hilary Term. The presentation will be 15 minutes long followed by 10 minutes Q&A. The presentation should include a clear and focused statement of the research question(s), a brief literature review indicating the contribution of the research to the field, the theoretical framework that the study is to build upon, detailed explanations of the research methods to be used, and a timetable for the proposed research. Part-time students will take part in this workshop in the Hilary Term of their second year. Students working on an integrated thesis should be able to give a general presentation that relates to the overall scope of their thesis, or else a more narrowly structured presentation that spells out a detailed plan for the first paper.

3.3.3 Assessment of Transfer paper

The rules of the Transfer process are laid out in the *Examination Regulations* (<https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/Regulation?code=grftdodoctofphil>). For the purposes of this process, you need to submit the following items:

- (i) the completed Transfer of Status form GSO.2 on which the supervisor will suggest the names of two suitable assessors (normally academic staff working in the University of Oxford: only in exceptional circumstances will external assessors be appointed). The form should be started by you, then it is passed to your supervisor, your college Senior Tutor or equivalent and approved by the department. The form should be submitted by **Friday of 2nd Week of the third term for full-time students and the sixth term for part-time students**;
- (ii) a provisional thesis title and outline of the proposed research (up to 500 words, including a list of chapter headings, and some indication of the expected contribution to knowledge);
- (iii) the Transfer paper itself (up to 10,000 words excluding appendices). This word limit must be strictly adhered to and submissions over the limit cannot be accepted.

These two documents (ii) and (iii) should be attached to the GSO.2 by **Friday of 6th Week of the third term for full-time students and of the sixth term for part-time students**. If the viva meeting is scheduled before this date, the papers must be submitted at least three weeks before the meeting.

Although you can initiate the Transfer process earlier if you wish, ODID expects PRSs to apply for Transfer at the beginning of their third term for full-time students and at the beginning of their sixth term for part-time students. Any student who has not applied to Transfer status by 6th Week of their third or sixth term should review their progress to date with their supervisor and draw up a timetable to ensure that the Transfer is successfully achieved within four terms.

Formally, assessors are appointed by the ODID GSC, which meets only twice per term, but it has delegated this power to the DDR (who can consult other members of the Committee as necessary). To ensure that the assessment happens reasonably soon after the Transfer paper is submitted, the assessors need to be appointed in advance. Therefore, items (i) and (ii) can be submitted any time after the presentation sessions at the end of Hilary Term up to the deadline of 6th Week of Trinity Term, when the Transfer paper itself should be submitted. The Transfer assessment meeting must take place before the end of Trinity Term. *You should note that academic staff tend to leave Oxford during the breaks between the three terms so you should make sure you are aware of your supervisor's travel plans so that the forms are signed before the deadline.*

It is also often helpful for the supervisor to check informally that the proposed assessors are available, before putting their names on the form, and to tell them when the paper will be submitted (so that they can fit the assessment into their future plans). The assessors are expected to read the papers and viva the student within a six- to eight-week period. This timeframe may actually be longer depending on the workload and prior commitments of the assessors.

You should not contact your assessors directly to send them any work or to arrange a date for the assessment meeting. The assessors will agree a suitable date between themselves after they have received the written work and will contact you to confirm the meeting date.

The assessors will review the Transfer paper and interview the student. It is not necessary to wear *sub fusc* – see section 3.8 – for this interview. After the interview, the assessors write a report that they are asked to submit around three weeks after the viva, to the GSC, containing a recommendation and other comments, on the basis of which the Committee decides whether or not to approve Transfer to DPhil status. If the Committee does not approve Transfer, it will usually ask the student to submit a revised paper for further assessment within one additional term. The second attempt cannot be deferred to a later term. Only one resubmission is allowed if the first attempt is unsuccessful. You should include with your new application, a statement explaining how you have responded to the comments of your assessors in your resubmission. A second meeting will be scheduled for the second attempt at Transfer of Status.

If, following resubmission, the GSC still feels unable to approve Transfer to DPhil status, it may advise the student to withdraw from the course, in which case the student will be removed from the Register of Graduate Students. Alternatively, it may offer a Transfer to MLitt status – the MLitt being a less demanding and quicker research degree.

3.4 TRANSFER FROM THE MPhil

Students who enter the DPhil programme from the MPhil should be at roughly the same stage as PRS entrants who have just completed Transfer of Status, with a good knowledge of the topic of the thesis, a well-developed research plan for the next two to three years, and adequate preparation to start

fieldwork during or at the end of their first term. A rapid start on fieldwork or data collection is essential if the thesis is to be completed within the target periods specified above.

The key to a successful transition from MPhil to DPhil lies in the relationship between the two theses. ODID does not allow students to transfer from the MPhil directly to DPhil status if they wish to switch to a different topic for DPhil and thus cannot incorporate work done for their MPhil theses into their DPhil theses, because this causes unacceptable delay in completing the DPhil. Changes of emphasis are fine, but if the subject of the DPhil thesis deviates substantially from what was stated in the application to the DPhil programme, permission must be sought for a change of title (on form GSO.6). If the change in title is radical, the GSC may require an assessment of the new topic and the time needed to complete it, similar to that for Transfer from PRS status. (This assessment would be in addition to the Confirmation of Status process).

The topic for the MPhil thesis should have been chosen, among other reasons, because of its suitability for later extension to a DPhil thesis. There are many possible ways of extending an MPhil thesis, depending on its topic – for example, by making comparisons with another country or region, or by complementary research in the same country at a different level (regional rather than local, or national rather than regional), or by using other methods, sources or data to generate more evidence on the same issue. But the DPhil thesis must include substantial further new research: it cannot be simply a longer version of the MPhil thesis (and to check this, the DPhil examiners can ask to see the MPhil thesis). Also, crucially, it must have ‘made a significant and substantial contribution in the particular field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls’, which is a higher standard than is required of a thesis at the master’s level.

3.4.1 Transfer paper for students moving from MPhil to DPhil status

In order to facilitate the transition from MPhil to DPhil status, these students may submit by the end of Michaelmas Term of their first year of DPhil study, a Transfer-type report focusing on the extension of the MPhil research to a DPhil thesis. The Transfer report should be submitted to the supervisor who will assess the document.

The Transfer paper is essentially the plan for the DPhil thesis with a special focus on the extension of the MPhil thesis. It should explain the link to the MPhil thesis; justify the extended research as a substantial addition to the MPhil thesis; locate the overall research in broader literature in the field; set out the additional research questions, hypotheses or issues on which it will focus; describe and explain the methods by which these will be answered, tested or addressed; and plan a timetable for the research to be carried out. All this needs to be written up in a paper of no more than 5,000 words, professionally presented (and in at least 11-point font and 1.5 or double spacing), to which draft questionnaires and other relevant material can be appended.

3.5. GETTING TO CONFIRMATION OF STATUS

The stage between Transfer of Status or entry from the MPhil (*the first Milestone*) and Confirmation of Status (*the second Milestone*) is the longest and most fundamental part of the work on a doctorate. During it, students carry out the bulk of their research, by fieldwork or other methods, and undertake the initial writing up of their results. Their outputs are then subjected to independent scrutiny before they are allowed (after Confirmation as DPhil students) to complete their theses and submit them for examination.

Full-time students are required to apply for Confirmation of Status at the beginning of their ninth term after arrival in Oxford if they started as a PRS. Part-time students starting as PRS are required to apply for Confirmation of Status at the beginning of their eighteenth term after arrival in Oxford. Those who started their DPhil from the MPhil should apply for Confirmation of Status at the beginning of their fifth term after starting the DPhil for full-time students and the end of their tenth term of DPhil for part-time students.

3.5.1 Fieldwork or other research

Research is clearly the most basic element of doctoral study, but this guide, which is mainly about process, has little to say about it. In terms of substance and methods, the key guides for students are their supervisors, others working in the same area, and their friends and colleagues. However, there are some important process aspects that apply specifically to students planning a lengthy investment of time away from Oxford engaged in data collection, participant observation, archival work, or other field-based research. Some of these issues may also apply to students doing other types of research that do not require extensive travel e.g., those working on quantitative analysis of existing data sets. However, field-based research involves a number of important steps and procedures.

Much of the preparation for fieldwork will already have been done by the start of this stage. The overall design of the research will have been specified in the Transfer paper or in the MPhil thesis and application for the DPhil programme. During the PRS period or the MPhil, students must have attended relevant University and Departmental workshops and seminars on practical aspects of research design and fieldwork.

However, some final preparation for the fieldwork will usually still be necessary. The official permissions from the country concerned and arrangements with host or counterpart institutions may need to be tied up. Securing funding to cover fieldwork costs can also take time. You will already have an idea of the costs that you are likely to incur during fieldwork, but these can vary greatly depending on length of fieldwork, number of trips necessary, countries to be visited. The Department has some funding to contribute to these costs.

It is well worth thinking through in detail what sorts of information need to be gathered, and to do this prior to arrival in the fieldwork country, where the excitement and specifics of the activities make it harder to keep the big research picture in perspective. The two sorts of error to avoid are (a) wasting time on gathering information that you really don't need for the thesis and (b) failing to gather some of the information that you really do need. These errors may seem too obvious to be worth mentioning, but both are often made (not only by doctoral students!). The way to avoid them is to think ahead to the chapters you will write after you return: what will be their structures and arguments, and hence what material will you need to flesh out the structures and to support the arguments? For example, if quantitative data are involved it can be helpful to conceptualise the eventual tables that you hope to show in the thesis.

Fieldwork and related travel can be expensive, but help may be available from various sources in Oxford. Many colleges have funds for travel. ODID offers a Departmental travel grant for those who are *not funded by ESRC*. Those taking an historical approach to Commonwealth countries may try the Beit Fund. Other departments and faculties might have funding related to particular areas and disciplines. The Frere Exhibition for Indian Studies awards prizes for outstanding essays, which might finance fieldwork. Also remember to check the *Gazette* (<https://gazette.web.ox.ac.uk/>).

As noted above, if you do carry out field-based research as part of your thesis, it is vital that you stay in regular contact with your supervisor (every two to three weeks). Your supervisor is required by the University to maintain regular contact, as part of a duty of care. There are additional reporting responsibilities that the Department has for those who are on a student visa. If we cannot vouch for your continued engagement in your DPhil research, your visa status may be jeopardised, which would cause real problems.

IMPORTANT: Before departing, all students **must** complete the University's Research Integrity Training Core course: <https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/OxIntranet-research-innovation/SitePages/training-integrity.aspx>. The certificate that is received after completion of the course is now required as part of the application for Transfer of Status or Confirmation of Status. Further details are in section 3.1.5. They must also complete all departmental Risk Assessment forms followed by the online Travel Insurance application form, and the relevant Research Ethics forms.

Students must consult the Travel Health Clinic at the University's Occupational Health Centre: <https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/OxIntranet-health-safety-wellbeing#occupational-health-service> well in advance of travel, on immunisation and other medical precautions. The immunisations and malaria prophylaxis given by the Health Clinic will be charged to the Department. We cannot cover these costs if the treatment is given outside the Occupational Health Centre.

3.5.2 About Confirmation of Status

The process of Confirmation of status is one of the best features of the Oxford system. Although at first sight it may seem just another bureaucratic hurdle, it is enormously helpful to students. Its purpose is to provide an independent (of the supervisor) mid-course review of work on the thesis. This greatly reduces the possibility of nasty surprises when the thesis is eventually examined, and provides authoritative comments and suggestions on problems and how to address them. Many of the problems detected by Confirmation assessments are with exposition – good material being presented in an unclear or confusing way – but sometimes important problems of substance are picked up, for example on the use of concepts or methods. Even if the thesis is basically in good shape, the comments of the Confirmation assessors often stimulate valuable improvements.

These benefits are accompanied by some costs. For a start, receiving critical comments on one's work is always initially painful – for professors as well as doctoral students – and it can take weeks to come to terms with them. The Confirmation assessment is also a formal test, which it is possible to fail (more on this below).

Finally, the assessment has to be done by a certain time, and is deliberately used by Oxford University in general and the ODID GSC in particular as a device to ensure that students make acceptably rapid progress with their theses.

Full-time PRS entrants must Confirm their DPhil status by the end of their ninth term after arrival in Oxford; part-time PRS entrants must Confirm status by the end of their eighteenth term. Full-time entrants from the MPhil must Confirm status by the end of their eleventh term after starting the MPhil (that is five terms after starting the DPhil); part-time entrants from the MPhil must Confirm status by the end of their sixteenth term after arrival in Oxford (that is ten terms after starting the DPhil).

Students can apply for deferral of Confirmation, but are discouraged from doing so except for good reason, as this slows their time to completion. Applications to defer Confirmation require the approval of the ODID GSC. PRS students (both full- and part-time) may apply for a maximum of three terms as long as the total number of terms from admission does not exceed twelve terms for full-time students and pro-rata for part-time. For those from the MPhil, only one term of deferral of Confirmation is allowed. To apply for a deferral use GSO.14b: submit with it an outline of the thesis and the proposed timetable from the date of application to completion of the thesis. The form must be submitted before the milestone deadline date.

It is important to apply for Confirmation of Status well before the intended final thesis submission date – at the very least three months ahead (which is a University regulation), and preferably nine months to a year ahead. To wait until close to the date of final submission is to throw away most of the potential gains from the process described above, since there is then not enough time to take substantial comments from the assessors into account in finalising the thesis for examination. Please remember that the assessment process takes time – the comments of the assessors are unlikely to be received before six to eight weeks (and sometimes longer) after the submission of the draft chapters – and that the assessors may ask for major revisions, which can seriously disrupt the timetable for completion of the thesis if submission for Confirmation has been left too late.

3.5.3 Assessment for Confirmation

The rules of the Confirmation process are laid out in the *Examination Regulations* (<https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/Regulation?code=grftdodotofphil>). For the purposes of this process, you need to submit the following:

(i) for the consideration of the ODID GSC, a completed Confirmation of status form GSO.14. The supervisor will suggest the name of two assessors: these should normally be academics working in the University of Oxford (only very exceptionally will an external assessor be appointed); accompanying the completed form must be a statement of progress and a timetable for completion of the thesis. The form should be submitted by you and approved by your supervisor and your college Senior Tutor before being submitted, preferably by **Friday of 1st Week** of the milestone term;

and for the consideration of the assessors:

(ii) a comprehensive account of the treatment of the thesis topic (up to 3000 words, in at least 11-point font and 1.5 or double spacing), together with (a) the thesis title and chapter plan, (b) a statement of progress to date, and (c) a timetable for completion of the thesis (b and c are the same as attached to the form);

(iii) a substantial part of the draft thesis (in at least 11-point font and 1.5 or double spacing). The exact interpretation of this will vary to some degree, depending on the nature of the thesis. For most ODID DPhil students, the submission will consist of two chapters, but it can be just one chapter or parts of two or more chapters – whatever you think provides a representative sample of the thesis. Typically, the submission will be between 15,000 and 20,000 words. But it must be ‘core’ and original material, based on the writing up of fieldwork or other research. It should not include review of literature or of theory, nor description of methodology. Nor should it include any large part of the Transfer of Status paper (in the case of PRS entrants) or of the MPhil thesis (in the case of entrants from the MPhil). For those whose main contribution lies in the development of theory, it can include a chapter on theory but this has to be original work rather than a review of theory. If you submit more than 20,000 words of material (see section 3.2.4 on the rules for word counts), the Graduate Studies Administrator will return it to you for shortening. However, the assessors are entitled, if they wish, to ask for extra supplementary material.

For students who are planning to pursue an integrated thesis, the Confirmation submission will still need to include ‘a substantial part of the draft thesis.’ For most students following this path, the submission should include at least one fully complete paper, newly written for the DPhil (and preferably the ‘job market paper’), so that the assessors can judge the quality of the candidate’s analytic work. In addition, the submission should ideally include a sketch of a second paper, with some preliminary results.

Items (ii) and (iii) should be attached to the GSO.14, preferably by **Friday of 2nd Week** of the milestone term.

In planning what material to submit, bear in mind what the assessors are asked to do by the GSC, which is to judge whether, if three to five times as much material of this quality were submitted, it would be awarded a DPhil by the final examiners.¹ As explained in section 3.6 below, a thesis needs to pass on two criteria: making a significant and substantial contribution to knowledge, and being presented in a lucid and scholarly manner. The assessors will thus apply both these criteria to the material presented for Confirmation: you should be alert to them in preparing your submission. In terms of substance, ensure that your 3,000-word overview explains how the thesis will contribute to knowledge and how the 20,000-word sample fits into its structure. In terms of presentation, ensure that both items are really well written – at the standard you are aiming for in the final thesis.

¹ For candidates pursuing the integrated thesis route, the expectations will be quantitatively different but qualitatively similar.

The process can be initiated at any time before the milestone deadline date, but should be in progress by **1st Week** of the milestone term with the submission of the form. Formally, the assessors are appointed by the ODID GSC, which meets only twice per term, but it has delegated this power to the DDR (who can consult other members of the Committee as necessary). To ensure that the assessment happens reasonably soon after the materials are submitted, it is desirable to appoint the assessors in advance. To assist this, item (i) can be submitted up to four weeks ahead of items (ii) and (iii) as long as all items are submitted by or before 2nd Week of the milestone term. *You should note that academic staff tend to leave Oxford during the breaks between the three terms so you should make sure you submit your forms on time. This is especially the case during the Christmas break between Michaelmas and Hilary and the long summer vacation between Trinity and Michaelmas which is the academics' research time.*

As with the Transfer viva, it is also often helpful for the supervisor to check informally that the proposed assessors are available, before putting their names on the form, and to tell them when the chapters will be submitted (so that they can fit the assessment into their future plans). If the milestone term is Trinity and your assessors are not able to do the assessment meeting before 0th Week of the following Michaelmas term, a small amount of leeway is allowed. In these cases, item (i) should still be submitted by Friday of 1st Week of Trinity but items (ii) and (iii) can be submitted later as long as it is before the end of the first week of September. You should inform the Divisional GSA and Dominique Attala if this is likely to be the case. The assessment meeting must take place before the end of 1st Week of Michaelmas.

You should not contact the assessors directly to send them any work or to arrange a date for the assessment meeting. The assessors will agree a suitable date between themselves after they have received the written work and will contact you to confirm the meeting date.

The assessors then review the chapters and interview the student (it is not necessary to wear *sub fusc* for this interview. After the interview the assessors write a report around three weeks after the viva, which is submitted to the GSC and contains a recommendation and other comments, on the basis of which the Committee decides whether or not to Confirm DPhil status.

If the Committee does not approve Confirmation, it will usually ask the student to resubmit the application with revised or additional written work or other appropriate evidence within the usual time limit or if necessary with an extension (or an additional extension, if one has already been granted) of one term. Only one resubmission is allowed and there must be a second meeting. *The resubmission should include a statement noting how you have responded to the assessors' comments.*

A substantial minority of applicants for Confirmation are asked to resubmit. If you find yourself in this position, you will initially be deeply disappointed, especially if the comments of the assessors are highly critical. In retrospect, most people who are asked to resubmit come to see this as helpful – having given them an opportunity and incentive to make substantial improvements to the thesis and to avoid the risk of a much more costly and time-consuming referral of the final thesis. But it is normal for people to take some time to get over the initial disappointment.

Alternatively, **or** if, after resubmission, the GSC still feels unable to approve Confirmation of Status, it has two options. It may offer a Transfer to the MLitt – a less demanding and quicker research degree. Or it may advise the student to withdraw from the course, in which case the student will be removed from the Register of Graduate Students.

The GSC's final decision on the assessors' recommendation for Confirmation of Status must be complete before the start of the next term (except in the case of minor leeway, noted above, at the end of Trinity / beginning of Michaelmas Terms after the Summer Vacation).

3.6 FROM CONFIRMATION TO COMPLETION

This third and final stage of work, following Confirmation of Status, will normally take between nine months and one year. The University policy is that the thesis should be submitted at least three months after Confirmation of Status for full-time students (six months for part-time).

During this stage, students draft any further chapters based on their fieldwork and any other chapters needed for the complete thesis – which usually also includes material from the Transfer paper or (for entrants from the MPhil) from the MPhil thesis. (For candidates pursuing the integrated thesis, the time is spent working on the additional papers – often including the ‘job market paper’, which will be the most demanding and exactly written of the three.) In this way, they put together a draft of the complete thesis, on which their supervisors provide comments. The thesis is then revised, finalised and submitted for examination.

During this stage, careful planning of work is particularly important. A lot of things have to be done in a fairly short time, so it helps to have a written-out (but evolving) plan of what these are, in what sequence they need to be done, and by when they will need to be completed. Supervisors should be involved in preparing these plans, since this stage of the work makes heavy demands on their time, which will need to be fitted in around their other commitments and travel plans.

3.6.1 Time limit

University rules require full-time DPhil students to submit their theses within twelve terms of their admission date. In the case of PRS entrants, this means the date at which they started as PRS. In the case of entrants from the MPhil, it means the date at which they Transferred to the DPhil programme (which in theory, anomalously, gives them longer to complete their studies than PRS entrants). Part-time students should submit within twenty-four terms of their admission date.

Within the framework of the Oxford rules, the time targets that ODID expects DPhil students to meet are the normal ones for doctorates in UK universities (three full-time years, after a one-year master’s degree; or two full-time years, after a two-year master’s degree), but extended to allow for the fact that in development studies, as in some other social sciences, research data usually need to be collected through fieldwork (rather than, for example, being taken from published statistics). Part-time students should expect to take twice as long.

Even with fieldwork, it is still possible to complete in three or two years of full-time study (or six or four years of part-time study), and some students have done so, but the usual target to aim for should be the normal length of time plus the time spent in the field, which typically adds between six months and a year full-time and double that for part-time. Thus PRS entrants should plan to complete within four years full-time or eight years part-time, and MPhil entrants within three years full-time and six years part-time.

The ODID time targets are within the time limits set by the University, but if progress is delayed by problems in the research, students can apply to the GSC for an extension of time beyond the twelve-or twenty-four-term limit by completing the online GSO.15 form. The GSC is reluctant to grant extensions, and will do so only if the student presents a credible plan for completing the thesis in a specified and fairly short period (in other cases, it will allow the student’s status to lapse with the possibility of applying for reinstatement later, as explained in another section). The maximum extension for a full-time DPhil student is six terms, and for a part-time DPhil or MLitt it is three terms, but the GSC will normally allow an initial extension of only up to three terms for full-time students and one term for part-time students and will require increasingly persuasive reasons for any further extensions. Extensions are approved one term at a time, unless a good reason is given for two. They are not normally permitted at the PRS stage.

3.6.2 Length limit

A thesis can be up to 100,000 words long (see section 3.2.4 on the rules for word counts). This is a

maximum, not a norm or a target, and many excellent theses are considerably shorter, although they are rarely under 75,000 words, except for integrated theses.

Students may exceptionally apply to the GSC for an extension of the word limit, with support from their supervisors (for example, where it is essential to annex extensive transcripts or other primary data). The maximum extension is a 10,000-word appendix. In such cases, *if* the application for extended word limit is approved, examiners will be advised that this appended material does not need to be read closely. The letter of approval from the GSC must be submitted at the same time as the thesis and appendix.

GSC meetings are held in 2nd and 7th Weeks of each term, so applications with supervisor support, must be submitted to Dominique Attala, in time for one of these meetings.

More generally, doctoral students can save themselves literally months of time by thinking ahead about the overall length of their thesis and the number and length of its constituent chapters, and keeping these to the minima needed for a thesis of DPhil standard. Drafts are often longer than final versions, and editing them down can substantially improve their quality. But it is easy to make the mistake of drafting too many, and too long, chapters and then at a late stage being forced to discard a lot of material because of the length limit. Research on any subject can be expanded almost indefinitely, and only a certain amount can be fitted into one thesis, so make deliberate decisions to leave some aspects of your topic for a later time or for other researchers.

3.6.3 Thesis presentation

Examiners must judge a thesis both on its substance (does it make a ‘significant and substantial contribution’ to knowledge?) and on its form (is it presented in a ‘lucid and scholarly’ manner?). It is beyond the scope of this guide to advise on substance, which varies greatly from one thesis to another, but some basic points of form are common to all theses. These points also matter a lot: even if the substance of a thesis is excellent, the examiners will not pass it – they are required to send it back for revision and resubmission – if it is poorly presented.

The University’s rules on presentation are in *Examination Regulations*, and more guidance is provided in the note: GSO.20a (*Notes of guidance for research examinations*) which can be found on the Graduate Forms website

(<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/progression>). The basics include:

- choose A4 paper size as your layout default
- save in PDF format
- number pages and provide a word count
- set a page margin of 1.25-1.5 inches (32-38mm) on the left side
- use double spacing (at least 0.33 inches or 8 mm between lines)
- quotations and footnotes should be single-spaced
- include footnotes at bottom of relevant pages
- present the title page in standard format
- include an abstract of no more than 300 words

It is advisable, unless you actively want to irritate your examiners, to use a reasonable font size – at least 11-point, and for preference 12-point – for the text (and for tables and figures), though a somewhat smaller font (10-point) is customary and acceptable for footnotes.

Students who developed an MPhil thesis into a DPhil thesis must also include a statement to this effect (usually in the introductory chapter), indicating how the DPhil thesis relates to the MPhil thesis and is different from it.

Another obvious requirement is a standard system of referencing work cited. There are several to choose from but, whichever is chosen, it must be applied with care and consistency. Check that every work cited in the text is included in the list of references: not only is this good scholarship, but examiners often look up things as they are reading the thesis and hate missing references.

Proof-read the thesis thoroughly (it has been known for candidates to mis-spell their own names on title pages). This is your responsibility, and your supervisor is under no obligation to do it for you. It matters, too. Small mistakes, especially if numerous, arouse doubts in the minds of examiners about the accuracy and reliability of more basic aspects of the research. Ensure the accuracy of quotations, correct spelling of authors' names and correct years of publication (the examiners are likely to know the literature well). In checking for typos, watch out for the headings (which often get overlooked in scrutinising text). It can also be helpful, in order to force yourself to go slowly, to cover each page with a piece of paper and gradually move it down as you read. Proof-reading by a third party is acceptable provided it is no more than advice on spelling and punctuation, formatting, grammar and syntax. See the University policy on the use of third-party proof-readers on the [website](#).

Although presentation matters are important throughout the document, we all recognise that there is strategic value in paying particular attention to the presentation of the first twenty or thirty pages of the thesis. Examiners will often form an initial impression of the thesis based on these early pages and this impression may carry through their reading of the entire document. The absence of typos, a nicely laid-out table of contents and a well written abstract can all help in this regard.

The introductory chapter is also critical. Remember in drafting it that, although you are familiar with the entire thesis, for the examiners this really is an introduction, so you need (a) to tell them what is in it and (b) to make them want to read it (which will depend as much on the clarity with which you write as on the interest of the subject). The introduction should include:

- an explanation of the thesis topic, and the reasons for choosing it
- a statement of the main questions that the thesis seeks to answer
- existing views and how your thesis confirms or challenges them
- an overview of the theories, sources and research methods used
- a summary of the contribution that the thesis makes to knowledge
- a description of how the rest of the thesis is structured

If statistical material is included in the thesis, take care to present it in a clear and accessible way. Keep tables small (minimise the number of numbers in them, including unnecessary detail after the decimal point), and invest time in making titles and headings unambiguous but concise. Rows and columns in tables should be clearly labelled and informative; don't just use the variable names from your statistical software, for instance.

Footnotes are essential, but should not be abused. Keep the number of footnotes to a minimum and allocate material correctly between text and footnotes. To achieve this, in the course of finalising your thesis, ask yourself the following two questions about every footnote. Should this material be in the text (for example, if it makes an important point or if it is simply a three-word citation that belongs in brackets)? Should this material be deleted (because it is trivial)?

Last but by no means least, write clearly and readably. Some people naturally write better than others, but work that is easy to read was usually not easy to write. Style can be learned, and well-written output typically reflects hard work, self-criticism and repeated revision. Reading aloud can be a good way of checking the quality of writing – does it sound clear, concise and correct? Some basics are:

- logical sequencing of words, clauses and sentences
- short sentences, pruned of surplus words and phrases

- short paragraphs (no more than 12 lines – split longer ones)
- well-worded sub-headings used as sign-posts for readers
- correct grammar and punctuation

Try to see what you are writing through the eyes of your readers. Consider the works of your proposed examiners and reference them in your thesis where pertinent. Think about what they need to know and the clearest way in which to explain it. Anticipate problems or questions: for example, if there is an obvious objection to a point you are making, then acknowledge it and deal with it.

3.6.4 Submission for examination

For information on the exam process, start by going to the Graduate Forms website (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/progression>) and click on GSO.20a 'Guidance for research examinations for students submitting their thesis'. Also, take a careful look at the 'Research Examinations' page (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/research>) as well as at the information on the various relevant forms and how to use them. What follows below in this handbook is a summary, not a substitute for reading Oxford's official instructions!

To initiate the process, students apply for appointment of examiners on form GSO.3 through Student Self Service. The form includes a section in which you can ask for a minor change in the title of the thesis (which used to require the submission of a separate form). Please make sure that the title on your GSO.3 matches the title on the copies of the thesis you submit and that you give the number of words (not pages). There is also a space where you need to enter the date by which the thesis will be submitted. This can be done at any time during the term (including the vacation following) in which you will submit your thesis, even before the GSO.3 is approved and processed. Once you submit the form, it will go to your supervisor.

Supervisors are asked to suggest on the form the names of at least two internal examiners (from Oxford University) and two external examiners, from which the GSC will choose one of each, and to check that the student has no reasonable objection to any of the names proposed. The supervisor should informally check with at least the two first choice proposed examiners that in principle they would be willing to act and this can be indicated on the form. Neither examiner can be the student's supervisor, nor can an examiner be someone who has given significant help or advice to the student in the preparation of the thesis or has a connection to the student that might make it hard for them to be impartial. The internal examiner might also have been the assessor for Transfer or Confirmation of Status. External examiners should normally be based in, or visiting, the UK or Europe.

Examiners are appointed by the ODID GSC, which meets only twice per term, but can act on applications by correspondence if it is a long time until the next meeting. The GSC will approve your GSO.3 form, which will include the names of your examiners, and the form will then be sent to the Research Degrees Examinations Office who will send out formal invitations to your examiners. Once the examiners reply *to accept* the invitation, they will be given access to your thesis.

You should be aware that there should be at least **eight weeks** between the time your thesis is received by your examiners via RDEM and your viva. In order to ensure that the examination is reasonably soon after the thesis is submitted, the form should be submitted ahead of the thesis, also allowing enough time for the GSC approval and the formal invitation to be accepted. It is possible to request on the GSO.3 form, that your viva take place by a particular date. If this is sooner than eight weeks, please note there will still need to be at least **four weeks** between receipt by the examiners and the viva.

The typed part of the thesis and abstract must be submitted in PDF format via the Research Degrees Examination Management (RDEM) accessed through your Single Sign On. Any additional files (images, recordings, annexes etc) should be saved to a single zip file and uploaded under 'Additional

Documents'. Further information, including a Quick Reference Guide on submitting the thesis, is on the Research Examinations website (link above). The student should keep a copy of their thesis for preparing for (and using in) the viva. It is possible to add acknowledgements in the copies that go to the examiners; this can be updated to include the examiners when you submit your Bodleian copy.

If you wish to submit during Trinity Term and have to leave the UK during the Summer Vacation you should bear in mind that potential examiners often have heavy examining commitments in June and July and are then away over the summer. Applying early for appointment of examiners and submitting the thesis on the promised date are necessary conditions for the exam to be undertaken in the summer. But they are not sufficient conditions: the exam may have to wait until the following Michaelmas Term.

Please be aware that Oxford regulations strictly prohibit students from directly contacting their examiners, either before or after the viva while the outcome of the examination is still under consideration. Any violation of this prohibition must be referred to the Proctors, and the resulting investigation causes delay. The only exception is correspondence to agree on the date of the viva – but this correspondence must be initiated by the examiner, not by you. If you do not hear from the internal examiner about the date of the viva within a month of being formally notified by the Exam Schools about the names of your examiners, you should get in touch with the Exam Schools, who will contact the internal examiner. **You must not send your thesis directly to the examiners.**

3.6.5 Examination and after

In order to be able to recommend the award of a DPhil, the examiners must be satisfied that:

- the student possesses a good general knowledge of the particular field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls
- the student has made a significant and substantial contribution in the particular field of learning
- the thesis is presented in a lucid and scholarly manner
- the student has presented a satisfactory abstract of the thesis

In their assessment of the substantial significance of the thesis, examiners are required to bear in mind the duration of study: whether the thesis is what might reasonably be expected of a capable and diligent student after three or at most four years of full-time study or pro-rata for part-time study.

The examiners base this assessment largely on their reading of the thesis, but also, and sometimes importantly (particularly if they have reservations or large questions about the thesis) on their oral examination (viva) of the student. An oral examination also gives them an opportunity to test the student's general knowledge of the field of the thesis, so their questions need not all be on the thesis itself. The viva is obligatory and normally has to be held in Oxford. It is rarely less than two hours in length, and sometimes much longer. Academic dress (*sub-fusc*) must be worn – see section 3.8.

An important part of preparing for the viva is to read through your thesis, especially if it has been a while since you submitted: it can be embarrassing if your examiners, who will just have read the thesis, are more familiar with your work than you are. It is also worth reading or re-reading some recent or related publications of the examiners, to familiarise yourself with their approach to the subject and to help you anticipate some of their questions and comments. Remember that you may be asked questions that are about the general subject area, too, and not just about the thesis, so spend a little time reviewing, for example, relevant lecture notes or texts.

You are bound to be nervous, but the examiners will usually try to help you relax by starting with some general questions – for example, how you came to be interested in this field of study or how your research on it evolved. Use this early part of the viva to build a relationship with them, but bear in

mind that harder questions may be coming later. Throughout, be open and honest: if you agree that the examiners have detected an error, admit it; but if (and so long as) you disagree with them, then defend your position politely but firmly. They will respect you for arguing with them, if you do so in a reasoned and civil way. If they make helpful suggestions, thank them and remember to make notes.

At the end of the viva, the examiners may ask you to leave the room for a few minutes, during which they will consider how they wish to proceed, and then invite you back. Oxford regulations do not require the examiners to disclose to candidates what their recommendation will be, although frequently the examiners will end the viva by providing an informal sense of the recommendation they will make to the GSC. If they want you to make minor revisions, they may outline and explain these orally to you. You will also get later a written statement of the changes you need to make, but if the examiners choose to mention these in the viva, you should feel free to ask for clarification about what you are being asked to revise, and why – which will help you in making the revisions. **Remember to make notes.**

After the viva, the examiners must decide on which recommendation they will make to the ODID GSC, which is the formal decision-making body. They have a range of options, set out fully in the *Examination Regulations* and on the Oxford Students website:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/news/2024-11-18-changes-postgraduate-research-examination-outcomes>

- award of the DPhil, with no corrections
- award of the DPhil, subject to minor corrections to be approved by them (you will receive a list of the corrections to be made)
- potentially award of the DPhil, subject to major corrections to be approved by them
- potentially award of the DPhil, subject to major corrections, after another viva
- student choice: reference back for further work and re-examination for the DPhil, **or** supplicate for MLitt (a less demanding research degree)
- student choice: reference back for further work and re-examination for **either** DPhil or MLitt
- reference back for further work and re-examination for the MLitt only
- award of the MLitt
- award of the MLitt, subject to minor corrections to be approved by them
- outright failure (no degree and no request to resubmit)

Minor revisions must be completed and approved by the examiners within two months of receipt of the list of required changes.

Major revisions must be completed and approved by the examiners within six months of receipt of the list of required changes. The proposed recommendation for major revisions must be agreed by the Graduate Studies Committee. Further information can be found in the *Examination Regulations*.

(<https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/Regulation?code=grftdodoctofphil>).

Students referred back for further work on the thesis will have one year in which to do the revisions and re-submit.

- For the first DPhil examination, examiners can only choose from recommendations A-F.
- For a second examination, examiners can select from recommendations A-J.
- For a third examination, examiners can select recommendations A, B, H, I or J.
- The examiners write a report to the GSC which must comment on the scope, character and quality of the work submitted. It also usually comments on the student's performance in the viva. If they asked for minor corrections, the examiners will wait to receive and approve these before sending their report to the GSC. In the case of other recommendations, they send their report immediately and you will receive a copy.

3.6.6 Leave to Supplicate - submission of library copy - restricting access

When the GSC has accepted the recommendation of the examiners that you should be allowed Leave to Supplicate for (i.e. be awarded) the degree, an electronic copy of the final thesis must be submitted for deposit in the Bodleian Library (incorporating the corrections, if any were required). Other than corrections requested by the examiners, no other changes should be made to the thesis that is deposited. There is no longer a requirement to submit a hardbound copy of the thesis for those given Leave to Supplicate from the 2021-22 academic year onwards. There is no need to submit a declaration of authorship with this library copy.

The final copy of your thesis must be submitted at least two weeks before your graduation ceremony. You will not be allowed to graduate until this library copy has been received and you are not able to use the title Dr until you have graduated. To graduate at a degree ceremony you will also need to submit an electronic copy to the Oxford University Research Archive (ORA) a minimum of five working days prior to your graduation date.

The Department's preference is to make research widely available but it is possible to apply to restrict access for a longer period after the initial embargo expires, if there is a very compelling reason. The decision will be made by the Graduate Studies Committee.

ODID's GSC will not approve total dispensation from consultation for DPhil theses with no end date. They have agreed as a fundamental principle that research conducted in the Department should be available for other researchers around the world to access.

*We strongly endorse students' impulses to protect research participants and subjects; but we note that this obligation -- spelled out in the Ethics Approval process -- **should already have been reflected** in the conduct of the research and should be manifest in the text, images, and other material in the thesis. In that sense, we view an agreed dispensation as adding only an additional precautionary layer, rather than being a primary mode of protection of the research participants.*

To avoid the need for an embargo:

- data gathered during fieldwork should not make it possible to identify participants unless they have specifically given their approval;
- photos can be blurred so that individuals are not recognisable;
- where it is not possible to anonymise or pseudonymise participants, information can be collected into a section which could be embargoed whilst allowing the rest of the thesis to be available.

On receipt of the GSO.3c form, the GSC will consider an embargo for a period of between one and three years.

During that period, any embargo that is granted will expire if part or all of the embargoed material is subsequently published. In that case, the embargo should expire at the time of publication. *If the published version of the work omits specified portions of the thesis that are viewed as sensitive, the student may, prior to publication, request that a further embargo be granted for that specified portion of the thesis.*

3.6.7 What to do if your thesis is referred back

A significant minority of candidates are asked to revise their theses and resubmit them for further examination (usually described as 'referral' or 'reference back') – which should not be confused with being asked to make minor or major corrections. This is always deeply disappointing for the student concerned, and the strong emotions aroused by referral make it particularly important to plan your next steps carefully and coolly, with advice both from your supervisor and from the DDR (who may

consult the GSC).

The most important thing is to establish as clearly and precisely as possible what revisions are required by the examiners. You want neither to miss any of them in revising the thesis, nor to waste time on making revisions that were not required. The report of the examiners, which will be given to you, will obviously contain a lot of relevant information. However, your supervisor (but not you) is allowed to contact the internal examiner to seek clarification of the report.

One often effective way of 'seeking clarification' is for you, in consultation with your supervisor, to prepare a revision plan that sets out, chapter by chapter (and if appropriate, section by section) the changes you propose to make to the thesis in response to the comments of the examiners. This plan can then be shown by your supervisor to the internal examiner, who can (though is not obliged to) say whether or not the proposed revisions are consistent with what was meant in the examiners' report. The examiners cannot say, however, that if these revisions are made, then the thesis will pass: that is a matter on which they can come to a judgment only after receiving and reading the revised thesis.

When you have the clearest possible understanding of what revisions are required, you should draw up an implementation plan and timetable for making them, again in consultation with your supervisor. You will automatically be given a substantial extension of time as a registered student for making the revisions.

This and other relevant administrative information will come to you in the form of a letter from the Research Degrees Examination Office. And take heart: although the referral is disconcerting and the revisions hard work, most referred theses pass when they are re-submitted.

A report should be included with the resubmitted thesis which should be not more than 1,000 words and should explain the changes which have been made.

3.7 CHANGES IN CIRCUMSTANCES, EXTENSION, SUSPENSION, AND LAPSE OF STATUS

For a variety of reasons, students sometimes need to extend or interrupt their courses of study or to abandon them altogether. Formally, this involves either extension, suspension of status or lapse of status. Information can be found on these two websites:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/changes-circumstances-postgraduate-research-students> and
<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/status>.

Those who hold a Research Council award (or other scholarship) should check with their funder, who would also have to give approval for extensions or suspensions. Normally a separate application must be made by the student to the funding body in parallel to that being made within the University.

3.7.1 Definition of extension and suspension

Extensions of Time

A full-time doctoral student ordinarily has a maximum of twelve terms to complete the doctorate and a part-time student has a maximum of twenty-four terms. An extension of time allows the student to continue to study actively with full student status and access to all University and College facilities.

Requests for extensions of time are made using the online GSO.15 form. Extensions of time will only be granted one term at a time, unless there is an exceptional reason for granting more, but in no case will more than three terms of extension be granted at any one time.

All GSO.15 applications should include a timetable with detailed plans for completion of the thesis

agreed in consultation with the supervisor. This will allow the DDR and GSC to assess progress and how realistic the student's plans are, and could also be referred back to, if a further extension request is submitted.

(i) Students with PRS Status

If, in exceptional circumstances, a student has to attempt Transfer of Status in their fourth rather than third term of PRS status, they are automatically granted one term of extension of PRS status to make a second (and normally final attempt) to Transfer if the first attempt fails. This extension to PRS status does not affect the overall amount of time permitted for the doctorate. In exceptional cases, if a student has not been able to attempt Transfer of Status within the four terms of PRS status, an application for extension of PRS status may be submitted, subject to approval by the supervisor(s), College, DDR/GSC, and the University's Education Committee as this requires dispensation from the Examination Regulations. Again, this extension to PRS status does not affect the total amount of time permitted to complete the doctorate, and should only be used in exceptional circumstances.

(ii) Students with DPhil Status

A full-time doctoral student is permitted by Regulations to apply for a maximum of six terms of extension after completion of the normal twelve terms permitted for the doctorate. A part-time doctoral student is permitted to apply for a maximum of three terms of extension after completion of the normal twenty-four terms permitted. These six or three terms are independent of any extensions granted during PRS status. These extensions of time require the approval of the supervisor(s), College, and GSC. In exceptional circumstances, further terms of extension may be requested beyond the permitted six or three terms. However, these would require the additional approval of the University's Education Committee.

(iii) MLitt Status

An MLitt student is permitted to apply for a maximum of three terms of extension after completion of the normal nine terms permitted for the degree. These extensions of time require the approval of the supervisor(s), College, and GSC. In exceptional circumstances, further terms of extension may be requested beyond the permitted three terms. However, these would require the additional approval of the University's Education Committee.

(iv) Reinstatement

If a student has not previously used all of their terms of extension but does not apply to extend their status and instead allows their student status to lapse, then they can apply at a later date for reinstatement to the Register, and this requires the approval of the supervisor(s), College, and DDR/GSC. If a student has used all allowable terms of extension and has subsequently had their student status withdrawn, they may apply for reinstatement for one term only in which to submit their thesis. This requires the approval of the supervisor(s), College, DGS/GSC and the University's Education Committee.

Suspensions of Time

Suspension 'stops the clock'. A doctoral student may apply for a maximum of six terms of suspension of time, and this requires the support of the supervisor(s), College and the DGS/GSC. Please check the website (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/status>) for any changes to this policy, especially for part-time students.

Suspension of status can be granted for not less than one and not more than three terms at any one time, although the ODID GSC normally grants only one term at a time. The ODID GSC will not normally allow more than six terms of suspension in total for any student. In exceptional cases, additional terms

may be requested, but these need the additional approval of the University's Education Committee as dispensation from the Examination Regulations is required.

Suspension of status is normally granted where the student is not able to study actively. This can be due to a variety of reasons, but the most common is on health-related or personal grounds. Other less common reasons include taking paid employment or taking a degree at another institution. Suspensions are not required while a student is undertaking fieldwork away from Oxford. When a student suspends, the clock stops, and the student returns from suspension at the point when they departed. They retain access to Single Sign On (SSO), online resources (email and libraries) and the Counselling Service. Suspension of status can only be granted while a student still has status available to return to, i.e. a student cannot suspend status after their twelfth term of the doctorate for full-time and twenty-fourth term for part-time, unless s/he has also had an extension of time granted.

Students who fail to pay fees are automatically suspended, and in these cases the University card and access to SSO etc are withdrawn.

Those with Student Visas should contact the Visa Compliance Office (student.visacompliance@admin.ox.ac.uk) as suspending status is likely to have an impact on your visa.

Women students who give birth during their period of registration are automatically entitled to suspend their studies for up to three terms (one calendar year) of maternity leave (online form GSO17b). This maternity leave is considered separately from the six terms of suspension normally allowed. Similar policies apply to students who become fathers during their time as DPhil students; they may request suspension of status over and above the normally allowed six terms. The policy on parental leave is available in the 'Welfare and Wellbeing' section of the Oxford Students website (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/furtherstudentsupport>).

Students submit the online GSO.17 form, which will also require support from their supervisor(s) and College. (ESRC-funded student applications will be shared with the ESRC Studentship Officer in the Social Sciences Division.)

If the application is approved, students do not pay fees during the period of suspension and they automatically resume their former status (and any remaining fee liability) at the end of the period. It should be noted that Oxford City Council no longer offers an exemption from Council Tax to students who have suspended status.

For students who are well past the original number of terms for the course concerned (twelve for full-time DPhil, twenty-four for part-time DPhil, nine for MLitt), the GSC will consider whether letting the student's status be withdrawn, and allowing reinstatement when the thesis is ready for submission, is not a more appropriate option.

3.7.2 Withdrawal and reinstatement

When a student is withdrawn they cease to be registered on the University's books, so they do not have the right automatically to resume status after a period of absence (unlike suspension of status, during which students' names remain on the register and they can automatically resume their status after the agreed period of suspension as long as any conditions set on return are achieved). A student whose status has been withdrawn may be able to apply for reinstatement, as explained below, but this will not necessarily be granted.

Withdrawal may occur because a student voluntarily withdraws from the course (without being granted a suspension of status), or because a student fails to conform to degree regulations or meet course requirements. This may arise from outright failure at some stage (for example, not passing an examined course even after a re-sit, in which case an application to return is not possible). It may also

arise from failure to meet the prescribed time limits (including any approved extensions) for Transfer or Confirmation of Status or for final submission and examination of the thesis.

If the withdrawal is voluntary or is as a result of failure to meet time limits, students can apply for reinstatement of status if and when they wish to resume their studies and/or to submit their thesis or other work whose non-submission caused the withdrawal.

Reinstatement is not automatic. For students who withdraw before submitting their thesis for the first time, we are able to consider reinstatement if there is support from the former supervisor and College, and the student has been enrolled for fewer than the maximum number of terms **and** no more than twenty four months have passed since the withdrawal. It also requires convincing evidence to show that a student returning after withdrawal would be able to complete the course and/or that substantial progress had been made with relevant written work. If more than twenty-four months have passed since withdrawal, an application for reinstatement will require more authorisation outside the Department and is less likely to be approved.

Applications to the GSC for reinstatement are made on form GSO.23. They require input from the student's College and former supervisor(s). Where the former supervisor is no longer available, the GSC will appoint an assessor to evaluate the appropriateness of reinstatement and, if the assessment is satisfactory, seek a new supervisor. Where the withdrawal was caused by failure to submit written work on time, reinstatement is usually for one term only and the student must submit the thesis, or other work, within that term (and in the case of Transfer or Confirmation of Status, complete the process within the same term). Any outstanding fee liability resumes upon reinstatement. More information is on the 'Changes in student status' webpage (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/status>).

3.7.3 Examination regulations for students requiring adjustments on grounds of ill health or disability

The *Examination Regulations* include information for students who are taken ill or require special arrangements for examinations. If you are prevented from taking an examination because of illness, your college will be able to contact the Proctors on your behalf.

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

If you need specific adjustments for examinations, you should make sure to make an application no later than **Friday of 4th Week** of the term before the exam takes place. Further information can be found on the Oxford Students webpages on examination adjustments (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/examination-adjustments>).

3.7.4 Oxford email access after achieving Leave to Supplicate

Your Oxford email will remain accessible for three months after you receive Leave to Supplicate. It is no longer possible to set up email forwarding. More information is here: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/graduation/leaving>

3.8 ACADEMIC DRESS (OR SUB FUSC)

There are various occasions at which academic dress, known as *sub fusc*, is required and others where just a gown is worn (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/dress>). If you are taking an examination, you will need to wear *sub fusc*, however, as mentioned earlier, we do not require this for Transfer of Status or Confirmation of Status meetings. To find out what to wear and when, please see the *Regulations relating to Academic Dress* on the website: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/how-we-are-run/governance-finance/legislation/vice-chancellors-regulations-1-of-2002>.

4. SUMMARY OF GSO FORMS

The following forms issued by the Graduate Office are relevant to ODID doctoral students and can be downloaded from www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/progression.

Please note that some of these forms are now online and links are on the above websites.

GSO.2	Application for Transfer of Status: To be used for Transfer from PRS to MLitt or DPhil status; for Transfer from MLitt to DPhil status or for Transfer from DPhil to MLitt status	GSO.3	Application for Appointment of Examiners for DPhil or MLitt (includes application for a time-specific viva, previously GSO.16)
GSO.14	Application for Confirmation of DPhil Status	GSO.20a	Notes of guidance for research examinations
GSO.2b	Application for deferral of Transfer	GSO.3c	Application for dispensation from consultation of thesis
GSO.14b	Application for deferral of Confirmation of Status		
GSO.15	Application for Extension of Time	GSO.25	Change of Supervisor or Appointment of Joint Supervisor(s)
GSO.17 GSO.17a	Suspension of Status Return from suspension	GSO.23	Reinstatement to the Register of Graduate Students
GSO.17b	Suspension of status for maternity, extended paternity and adoption leave	GSO.26	Information for thesis cataloguing (to be submitted to the Examination Schools)
GSO31 SSD	Application to submit an integrated thesis	GSO.28	Change of programme of study
GSO.19	Application for adjustments to assessment arrangements	GSO.6	Application for Change of Thesis Title (MLitt or DPhil)
GSO.18	Application for Extension of Time to Complete Minor or Major Corrections	GSO.8	Dispensation from Statutory Residence
GSO.4	Application for change to mode of study (from full-time to part-time or PT to FT)	GSO.29	Notification of withdrawal from programme of study