UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Refugee Studies Centre

OXFORD DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies

Course Handbook 2026-2027



MSc RFMS 26-27 Course Handbook (V1.2)

This handbook is for all students commencing the MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies in Michaelmas Term 2026. The information in this book may be different for students starting in other years.

The MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies is a 9-month Master's degree placed at Level 7 of the UK Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), which is equated to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and European Qualifications Framework (EQF)
Academic Credit

The University does not routinely apply credit weightings to its programmes and its courses are not generally taught on a modular basis. For more information about credits and equivalency see:
https://lifelong-learning.ox.ac.uk/about/cats-points

NB: ODID is striving to become a low waste, low carbon department. In line with our mission, this handbook has only been made available in electronic format on CANVAS in order to reduce the department's carbon footprint, so please think carefully before you print any of it.

DISCLAIMER

The Examination Regulations relating to this course are available online at:

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

If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the online Examination Regulations, then you should follow the Examination Regulations. If you have any concerns please contact Andrea Smith at the Department of International Development on andrea.smith@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 at https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses webpage. If such changes are made the department will publish a new electronic version of this handbook on CANVAS, together with a list of the changes, and students will be informed.

Handbook Edits

V1.1 - Correction to Submitted Work Format and Presentation section (to include all submissions)

V1.2 – Update to CUREC form submission deadline in key dates and deadlines

Photo: Balukhali camp, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Credit:
Credit: Andrew Philip

HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook includes essential information that you will need in the course of your studies. It is intended to be as concise as possible, in order to make it useful for you as a quick reference guide. To find specific information, you can navigate to parts of the handbook using the hyperlinks in the Contents Page, and also via hyperlinked cross-references throughout the book. You can also key ctrl + F to bring up a search bar, and enter key words to be found within the text.

Abbreviations/symbols used

ODID	Oxford Department of International Development
RSC	Refugee Studies Centre (within ODID)
SCC	Student Consultative Committee
TC	Teaching Committee
💻	You will find resources available on CANVAS, Oxford's Virtual Learning Environment
🕮	See another section within this Handbook

Signposts to further reading online

Throughout this handbook you will also be directed via hyperlinks to information available online. Please take the time to investigate these links for yourself.

CANVAS and Inspera (💻)

CANVAS is a Virtual Learning Environment, a structured web-based system to support and enhance teaching and learning at the University of Oxford. https://login.canvas.ox.ac.uk/. All the MSc course materials (pre-recorded lectures, reading lists, schedules, etc.) are held here. You will use your Oxford Single Sign-On (SSO) username and password to log in.

Inspera is a web-based system that you will use only for the purpose of submitting summative work or sitting in-person, computer-based exams.

In parts of this handbook where you are referred to material that is on CANVAS, or to tools on Inspera, you will see this symbol: 💻

Course Coordinator: Andrea Smith

Andrea should be your first port of call for any non-academic and procedural queries.

Contact:	andrea.smith@qeh.ox.ac.uk / ☎ 01865 281701 or via **TEAMS**
*Usual Term Time Location (***subject to change**):	Tuesdays 0930-1730 - First floor Old Building, Room 20.04 Wednesdays 0930-1730 - available via email/Teams all day Fridays 0930-1730 - First floor Old Building, Room 20. 04

Course Director 2026-27: Matthew Gibney

The Course Director has overall responsibility for the organisation of the degree and convenes the Teaching Committee and Student Consultative Committee meetings. Whilst your supervisor is your first point of contact for teaching and academic matters, you can also contact Matthew to discuss any course-related issues.

Supervisor

Your supervisor oversees your overall academic progress throughout the year. For further details, please see 🕮 SUPERVISION.

Chair of Examiners 2026-27: Naohiko Omata

Queries relating to exams and assessments should be directed to the Course Coordinator (Andrea Smith) in the first instance.

External Examiner 2026-27: Cathrin Brun, Professor of Geography and Deputy Director of the Centre for Lebanese Studies, Beirut.

Please note: Students are strictly prohibited from contacting external examiners directly

WEB LINKS AND MAILING LISTS

WEB-LINKS

CANVAS is the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Most course materials relating to the MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration course will be hosted here, along with a variety of other useful information and announcements. **Please check CANVAS regularly**. CANVAS is accessed using your Oxford single sign-on, at:

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

Links to other key sources of information on the University and departmental websites:

- University of Oxford: http://www.ox.ac.uk
- Department of International Development: http://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/
- Examination regulations: https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/
- Oxford students: http://www.ox.ac.uk/students
- Central University Student Handbook: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/student-handbook.

MAILING LISTS

Your Oxford email address will be included in the class mailing list which you can use to email your whole cohort:

odid-mscfm@maillist.ox.ac.uk

This list will be used by the course director, teaching faculty and the course coordinator to inform you of urgent day-to-day developments and course news additional to any announcements published on CANVAS. **The list only contains the MSc RFMS students – to reach the faculty, please use/copy in their personal emails.**

All our email communication with you will be through your Oxford email address. We do not add non-Oxford University email addresses to this mailing list. If you use another email address, please make sure your Oxford email is forwarded on.

It is your responsibility to read your Oxford email. Anything emailed to you at your Oxford address will be deemed to have been read by you. Failure on your part to do so will not be accepted as an excuse for any resulting problems.

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1. WELCOME

GREETINGS FROM THE MSC COURSE DIRECTOR

To all new students for the Master of Science in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies

Welcome to Oxford, to the Refugee Studies Centre (RSC), and to the Department of International Development (ODID). This handbook is designed to be your primary source of reference for all matters relating to the MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies in 2026-7.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that, at the end of 2024, 123.2 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced as a result of persecution, conflict, and human rights violations. Major displacement crises, including those in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central Sahel, Gaza, Haiti, Myanmar, Sudan and Ukraine, remain acute or have intensified. Yet in many places, the political will to respond to and meet the needs of refugees and other forced migrants is declining. Policies that restrict, repel and criminalise those seeking asylum enjoy widespread popular support in many countries, while creative and cooperative attempts to address the pressing needs of refugees continue to be limited. Against this backdrop, scholarship, intellectual engagement and leadership on forced migration are needed more than ever.

You may be starting the new academic year with a sense of trepidation, as well as of excitement, uncertain of what the next few weeks and months may hold. The past few years have been extraordinary in many respects and you may have experienced periods of separation from friends and family or disruption to your work or education. Let me assure you that the Refugee Studies Centre is an extraordinary place to be. Together, we will engage with challenging global issues and acquire a wide range of knowledge and skills from the degree. The RSC is a particularly wonderful place to study because of the people who make it up, each contributing to a collaborative and vibrant intellectual and social life. In the pages that follow we set out how we intend to provide you with an enriching and exciting course of study for the next year, providing some crucial information that you can use as a reference point during your studies.

During this nine-month course you will, for example, be introduced to a number of perspectives that will both broaden and deepen your understanding of forced migration. Our teaching remains grounded in a multi-disciplinary approach that includes the perspectives of anthropology, international relations, history, law, politics, ethics and social theory. Taken together, these perspectives will provide you with a rich and diverse training in the social sciences. Another strength of the MSc programme is the individual supervision that we provide to our students. You will be assigned a supervisor at the start of the year and you are expected to meet regularly with them to discuss the essays that you write, your academic progress and your research plans.

Another wonderful thing about studying in Oxford is its libraries. The Social Sciences Library on Manor Road contains the RSC's collection, the world's largest unpublished collection of literature in refugee and forced migration studies. The Social Science Library also contains an excellent collection of books on conflict, development, forced migration, humanitarianism, politics and international relations. The Law Library in the St Cross Building similarly contains a wealth of international and comparative legal materials. Then there is the historical core of the Bodleian library, which, as a legal deposit library, holds every book published in the UK. This library has many beautiful reading rooms, historical buildings, and a wealth of archival materials. You can study under the spacious dome of the Upper Radcliffe Camera, or read alongside the creaky medieval bookshelves of Duke Humfrey's Library.

To help us work together, and to be the contact point between us in course-related matters, I would like to encourage you to identify three fellow MSc students to be your Student Representatives. One of these representatives will take on the role of Social Secretary and organise events for the group. I will meet with the three representatives at the end of each term, to see how things are going. In addition, if you have any questions about the course or need advice about your studies, you can speak to your supervisor or contact me directly.

Finally, our MSc is more than a course of study. It is about people; it is about you. I would encourage you to engage with the wealth of social and cultural activities that Oxford, the University and the city, has to offer. Your college will also provide you with an opportunity to meet people from many different fields of study. Take the time to share experiences with them. You never know what connections you might make and what you might learn.

I wish you well and hope you find your time with us challenging, exciting and fulfilling.

Warm wishes



Matthew Gibney
Elizabeth Colson Professor of Politics and Forced Migration
Course Director, MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies 2026-27

WELCOME FROM LAST YEAR'S CLASS

Dear incoming Refugee and Forced Migration Studies class:

The 2025-2026 Refugee and Forced Migration Studies cohort would like to welcome you to Oxford University, the Department of International Development, and the Refugee Studies Centre!

Speaking from experience, we have no doubt that your time at Oxford will be intellectually stimulating and personally enriching. The RFMS course – from lectures and readings to informal discussions – will challenge you academically and push you to produce high-quality research. However, beyond the academic rigor and a space for learning, the program also fosters friendships, support networks, and mentorships. Work hard, but also have fun and support each other along the way.

The course is only nine months long, making it both intense and demanding from the outset. While it can feel overwhelming at times, it is as manageable as it is rigorous. Here are a few tips to keep in mind as you get started:

- Embrace the diversity of backgrounds and experiences: Your peers will come from a variety of academic and professional backgrounds — political science, history, law, and beyond. Some may have a few years of work experience, while others have just completed their undergraduate studies. You'll feel more comfortable with some topics than others, and your peers may excel in areas where you feel less confident. Rather than comparing yourself, appreciate the diverse perspectives everyone brings, and challenge yourself to engage with subjects (e.g. law, ethics, or anthropology) that may be new to you. This course is an incredible opportunity to learn not only from leading scholars in the field but also from your peers, who bring unique perspectives and experiences that will enrich your learning and form connections that last well beyond the course. We recommend setting up a WhatsApp group right from the start to arrange study groups and social gatherings!

- Trust in your abilities: Sometimes looking around the room between the faculty and your peers can feel intimidating. Remember, the admissions committee doesn't make mistakes — you've earned your place here because they recognised your passion, talent, and potential. You deserve to be in the room and your opinions are always an added value to the discussion, even (or especially) if you're going against the grain. Imposter syndrome is common and most of us have felt it particularly at the beginning of the term. When the pressure builds, remind yourself of how far you've come and focus on making the most of this experience instead of stressing yourself out!

- Stay on top and be strategic with readings: There's always something happening in Oxford — events, lectures, and social gatherings — so it's a good idea to start your readings early. Consistency is key; try to do a bit each day to avoid cramming before seminar discussions. Leaving time for other activities allows you to fully enjoy everything Oxford has to offer. You will naturally get the most out of class discussions if you do the required readings, but for the additional readings, select what interests and challenges you most. Some weeks, completing all the readings might seem impossible — and that's okay. Focus on identifying key arguments and forming your critical analysis, even if you can only skim. Remember, you're more likely to remember core concepts or arguments, rather than every detail from the readings, which is what really counts for exams.

- Study selectively for the assessments: Remember to answer the question instead of showing off your knowledge on a certain topic. Remember that you will not be examined on every week of material, so prioritise revising topics that interest you most or where you feel most confident. Reviewing past exam questions is a great way to prepare – while they change every year, they provide an idea of what to expect. It's also helpful to create essay plans for key topics you plan to answer. For international students – familiarise yourself with the British marking system and stylistic standards early on – your supervisor and classmates are a great resource for this! After the Hilary term, it's a really good idea to do a timed mock exam.
- Putting in effort in the formative essays pays off: Although not formally graded, these essays help you practice writing under pressure and clarify your thoughts on paper. Putting in the effort now can make

a big difference in your exams and thesis. The feedback you receive is especially valuable early in the term when you're still adjusting to Oxford's writing style and grading system. Questions asked for the formative essays may be similar in theme and will require the same skills as those asked in the exams. If you intend to apply for the DPhil, the department may request your formative grades.

- For your thesis, be open to evolving research interests: You may have come into the program with a clear thesis topic or unsure about what to focus on. Either way, it's common for your research interests to shift as you engage with new ideas and disciplines. The course is designed to broaden your horizons, so don't be afraid to explore topics outside your comfort zone. Your supervisors are there to guide you — use your meetings to brainstorm and refine your research direction. Keep a journal to track your ideas; writing down and working through your ideas is an extremely important part of the process. Your supervisor will provide more specific feedback once you articulate your ideas on paper. Being proactive does not mean rushing: it is equally important to be patient and to take your time exploring topics to find something you are excited about. Your supervisor is your primary point of contact for your thesis, but other faculty — inside and outside the RSC — could also provide valuable input on your thesis research or your future career path. Lecturers are approachable and are willing to meet with you one-on-one if you ask. This year is an opportunity to form mentorships and to seek advice from the very scholars whose books we read in class.

- Make use of both breaks: Feeling wiped out after the semester? Totally normal — eight weeks at Oxford really take it out of you. Take real and well-deserved time off during both breaks, but also make good use of the time away from classes. During the first break, catch up on readings that fell through the cracks during the term, consider starting to revise material for exams, and dedicate some time to your thesis. During the second break, focus on exam revision but also work on your thesis if possible. Create a schedule to keep yourself on track for exam revision.

- Take full advantage of being in the Oxford system: Being a student at Oxford is about more than just academics — it's also a unique opportunity for personal growth and exploration. Taking mindful breaks will not only boost your productivity but also allow you to fully enjoy what Oxford has to offer. Get involved in student societies and don't hesitate to network with undergraduates and MBAs — it will open up new perspectives. Consider joining the rowing or field hockey teams and represent your college with pride. Make sure to attend at least one Oxford Union debate (you can always find a friend who is a member). Don't miss out on formal dinners at other colleges either! The 2025/26 cohort even organized a formal exchange within the group, and it was one of the most memorable experiences. Finally, check out the Oxford Graduate Society for more ways to connect and make the most of your time here.

- Attend additional talks within and outside ODID: In addition to course lectures, try to make time for a few additional talks when possible. The weekly Refugee Studies Centre Seminar Series is terrific and amazing talks also take place outside the department. You may choose to attend seminars that might help your thesis research or you may find it refreshing to hear about unrelated topics to broaden your perspective. Look out for the email you'll receive at the beginning of each week from ODID summarising talks in Oxford you may be interested in.

- Join course socials: Getting together as a course is especially important in the first few weeks as you get to know each other. One of the highlights for us has been the biweekly film screenings, followed by an opportunity to discuss the film or just socialise with your peers and faculty members at a tea/drinks reception. Course events are also a great way to celebrate the amazing achievements and milestones you'll reach over the next nine months. Each year, there are typically two students (we definitely recommend at least two!) from the cohort who represent you as social reps, working with a small budget to host events both in and out of the department. We've also organised smaller and more casual events such as picnics, potlucks, pub nights, board games, and dinners! Reach out to the Migration Studies course reps as well and do some joint socials, you'll already have a lot in common!

- Lean on Oxford's support system: The workload can be intense, but you're not alone. While some peers may seem to manage everything effortlessly (which is hardly the case!), everyone faces challenges. Always check in on each other. The course brings together so many wonderful people and our cohort

has proven to be an invaluable support network — so make the most of it. Academic and social reps can help coordinate study groups or book study spaces, and both ODID and your college offer resources for academic and mental health support. Don't hesitate to reach out — they're always here to help.

"I envy you going to Oxford: it is the most flower-like time of one's life," Oscar Wilde once famously said. Your year here will pass faster than you expect. We hope these tips help you make the most of both the program and the Oxford experience. Best of luck!

Refugee and Forced Migration Studies Class of 2026-27.

OVERVIEW OF DEGREE ADMINISTRATION

Teaching Committee (TC)

The MSc RFMS Teaching Committee meets every term. It deals with matters related to the MSc degree programme such as the organisation and content of teaching, policy, examination performance, staff and personnel, equipment, scheduling, publicity, and funding.

Student Consultative Committee (SCC)

During induction week, students are asked to nominate 2-3 fellow MSc students to be their Student Representatives.

SCC meetings are scheduled every term. These meetings serve as a forum for discussing students' reactions to the course as well as other related issues – student representatives can put forward ideas from their fellow students and are expected to pass back any points of interest that are discussed in the meetings. The SCC also deals with student issues related to theses and examinations. The meetings are chaired by the Course Director.

Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)

Responsibility for the programme is vested in the Graduate Studies Committee of the Department of International Development, which reports to the Social Sciences Division. The Divisional board has formal responsibility for the maintenance of educational quality and standards in its broad subject area and exercises its responsibility through its Academic Committee, which scrutinises proposed course revisions, reports of examiners, and other questions of academic policy. The ODID Graduate Studies Committee meets twice per term. At the University level, the Education Committee is responsible for matters of academic policy.

Your College

All students are full-time, matriculated college members. The colleges have no formal role in graduate teaching, but all students have college advisors who can discuss both personal and academic matters.

Please note that the academic side of graduate education is the primary responsibility of the University and your department, with colleges in a secondary role.

Some colleges host a wide range of general seminar series in the field of politics, international relations, and area studies. They also have active cross-disciplinary, and cross-area postgraduate student discussion groups. These provide additional networks for informal learning and networking.

CORE TEACHING STAFF

Matthew Gibney (Course Director)

Elizabeth Colson Professor of Politics and Forced Migration



College:	Linacre
Office Location:	2nd Floor RSC, Room 30.30
Contact:	matthew.gibney@qeh.ox.ac.uk
Office Hours:	MT - Weds 1300-1400 (term time only) HT - TBC
Courses Taught:	- Politics of Forced Migration (MT) - Movement and Morality (HT)
Research Interests:	Political and ethical issues raised by refugees, immigration, statelessness; and citizenship; contemporary political theory

Catherine Briddick (RSC Director)

Andrew W Mellon Associate Professor of International Human Rights and Refugee Law



College	St Antony's
Office Location:	1st Floor RSC, Room 20.10
Contact:	catherine.briddick@qeh.ox.ac.uk
Office Hours:	Email to book an appointment (term time only).
Courses Taught:	- International Human Rights and Refugee Law I and Research Methods I (MT) - Option Course: International Human Rights and Refugee Law II (HT)
Research Interests:	Feminist jurisprudence and intersectionality; international protection; discrimination; gender and forced migration.

Naohiko Omata (Chair of Examiners)

Associate Professor



College:	St Antony's
Office Location:	1st Floor RSC, Room 20.07
Contact:	naohiko.omata@qeh.ox.ac.uk
Office Hours:	Please email to book an appointment (term time only)
Courses Taught:	- Anthropology of Forced Migration (Michaelmas) - Refugee Economies (Hilary)
Research Interests:	Refugee livelihoods, durable solutions (repatriation, integration, resettlement, networks and mobility, relationship with host states and populations, urbanisation

Uttara Shahani (Course Convener, Research Methods I)

Research Fellow in the History of Forced Migration



Office Location:	1st Floor RSC, Room 20.08A
Contact:	uttara.shahani@qeh.ox.ac.uk
Office Hours:	Please email to book an appointment (term time only)
Courses Taught:	Postcolonial Borders and Forced Migration (Hilary)
Research Interests:	South Asia, Sindh and the Sindh diaspora, the history of the British Empire, partitions, decolonisation, and refugee regimes.

OTHER STAFF TEACHING ON THE DEGREE



Ammar Azzouz British Academy Research Fellow, School of Geography and the Environment	
Research Interests:	Cities and conflict, post-war reconstruction, refugees' art and culture in exile, preservation of cultural heritage and destruction of memory
Teaching:	- Option course - Violence and Cities: From Destruction to Reconstruction (Hilary term)



Dawn Chatty Professor Emerita	
Research Interests:	Conservation-induced displacement, tribal resettlement, modern technology and social change, gender and development and the impact of prolonged conflict on refugee young people
Teaching:	- Supervision - Option course – Dispossession and Displacement in the Modern Middle East (Hilary) (Run at Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Department)



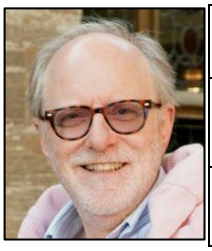
Sam Ritholtz Postdoctoral Research Fellow at DPIR and All Souls College	
Research Interests:	LGBT experiences of conflict and displacement in Latin America; I combine qualitative, comparative, and historical empirical methods with political theory to understand how violence reshapes social and political life, and what those transformations mean for people navigating crisis
Teaching:	- Option course Home, Displacement, and the Politics of Sanctuary (Hilary)



Hiba Salem Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies	
Research Interests:	Refugee education, inclusion, life trajectories, refugee youth, hope and agency, teachers, return
Teaching:	- Supervision - Option course Politics of Education in Forced Migration (Hilary)



Carlos Vargas-Silva Professor in Migration Studies and Director of COMPAS	
Research Interests:	The interaction of migration with labour markets, public services, and health outcomes, with a key focus on the role of policy in affecting those interactions
Teaching:	Research Methods II (Quantitative) (Hilary)



Roger Zetter Professor Emeritus	
Research Interests:	Environmental displacement; refugees and labelling; development and protection challenges; undocumented migrants; asylum and refugee identity
Teaching:	Supervision

OTHER STAFF AT THE RSC

Academic Staff

Professor Alex Betts	Leopold Muller Professor of Forced Migration and International Affairs

Library Staff *(based at the Bodleian Social Sciences Library, Manor Road Building)*

Sarah Rhodes	Forced Migration, African and Commonwealth Subject Consultant
Joanna Soedring	Senior Library Assistant, Reader Services/Refugee Studies
Emma Yendell	Cataloguer

Refugee Led Research Hub

The Refugee-Led Research Hub (RLRH) supports people with lived experience of displacement to become thought-leaders and changemakers across society. RLRH achieves this by delivering academic programmes that support access to graduate degrees, championing a refugee-led research agenda, and providing professional training and career development opportunities in fields that contribute to positive social impact.

RLRH's global work is guided by the priorities and knowledge of forcibly displaced communities, with a committed team working closely with 1,400+ affiliates and a network of partners. The organisation has hubs in Nairobi, Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kampala, Kuala Lumpur, and Oxfordshire (Oxfordshire Community Hub), alongside an active affiliate community in Amman.

*Staff based at the Oxford hub include:**

Andonis Marden	Executive Director
Delphine Boagey	Oxfordshire Community Hub Programme Officer
Abdulmajid Chahrour	Director of Operations and Strategy
Hana Davis	Livelihoods Programme Officer
Florin Najera-Uresti	Operations and Strategy Coordinator
Karolina Zwierzyk	Finance Officer
Oudai Tozan	Director of Academic Programmes

**RLRH operates with a larger global team across its hubs. Discover more about the full team on RLRH's people page.*

Administrative Staff

Felicity Leary	RSC Manager
Laurence Medley	Accounts Officer
Catherine Meredith	Communications Manager

Outreach and Publications Staff

Annelies Lawson	International Summer School and Conferences Manager

Forced Migration Review

Alice Phillip	*FMR* Managing Editor

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Contact Details of Administrative Staff at QEH			
Dominique Attala	Graduate Studies Manager	☎ (2)81806 Room 20.24	dominique.attala@qeh.ox.ac.uk
Peter Franklin Routh	Head of Administration and Finance	☎ (2)81804	peter.franklinrouth@qeh.ox.ac.uk
Salma Sayyaj	ODID Receptionist	☎ (2)81800	reception@qeh.ox.ac.uk
Gulen Acikgoz	Executive Assistant to the Head of Department	☎ (2)81803	odid-ea@qeh.ox.ac.uk
Gary Jones	ODID Caretaker	☎ (2)81818	caretaker@qeh.ox.ac.uk
Shuqin Zhang	ICT Manager	☎ (2)81821	odidit@qeh.ox.ac.uk
Max Mak	ICT Officer	☎ (2)81743	odidit@qeh.ox.ac.uk
Sally Jones	Admissions Officer and Travel Administrator	☎ (2) 81800	admissions@qeh.ox.ac.uk travel@qeh.ox.ac.uk

The contact details of all University staff can be found on the main University website

Department and Centre contact details

These can be found on the web as follows:

	Departments		*Centres*
ODID	http://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/	RSC	http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/

2.
SCHEDULES

TERMLY OVERVIEW OF CORE CLASSES AND SEMINARS

💻 TERMLY OVERVIEWS WILL BE PUBLISHED ON CANVAS AND INDIVIDUALISED TIMETABLES WILL BE SENT TO YOUR NEXUS/OUTLOOK CALENDARS PRIOR TO THE START OF EACH TERM
Please be sure to check any emails from the Course Co-ordinator, or announcement notifications from CANVAS, as this is how any last-minute amendments or additions to your timetable will be communicated.

MICHAELMAS TERM 2026

Students will attend four core courses: International Human Rights and Refugee Law, Anthropology of Forced Migration, Politics of Forced Migration and Research Methods I.

The term will commence with a mini-module, Conceptualising and Historicising the Study of Forced Migration. Students will also be given the opportunity to attend a variety of academic enrichment events.

HILARY TERM 2027

Students will again attend four courses this term: two core courses, Research Methods II and Movement and Morality, plus the two option courses they signed up to in Michaelmas Term.

TRINITY TERM 2027

There are no taught courses in Trinity term, as this term is spent doing the written exams (in week 1/2) and writing your thesis. There will, however, be one-off events such as thesis workshops and other events taking place during the term, in addition to the regular RSC seminar series.

OVERVIEW OF KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

NOTE: It is essential that submission deadlines are adhered to exactly. Late submission requests have to be approved by the Proctors. ***Failure to hand in submissions by the deadline may result in failure to complete****.*

MICHAELMAS

(Sunday 11 October to Saturday 5 December)

Week 0	- Submit *Avoiding Plagiarism* and *Harassment training* completion certificates to Course Coordinator by 12 noon on **Friday (9 October 2026**)
Week 0-1	- Elect two class representatives and a Social Secretary and let the Course Coordinator have a note of their names by the end of Week 1 **(Friday 16 October 2026)** - Quantitative Research Methods Essay and Research Design Essay instructions released
Week 0-2	Option course sign up: Review option course offerings and sign up to two Hilary Term options courses by Monday of week 2 **(19 October 2026)**
Week 8	**[RECOMMENDED DEADLINE]** Submit draft *Thesis Topic Approval Form* (💻) to your supervisor by 12 noon on **Friday (4 December 2026**) NB: You will need to have a final, approved copy of this form signed off by your supervisor by Week 3 in Hilary Term
Week 9	Research Design Essay to be submitted via Inspera by 12 noon GMT on **Thursday (10 December 2026)**

HILARY

(Sunday 17 January to Saturday 13 March)

Week 2	**Submit CUREC form for ethics approval (and travel insurance form if applicable) to supervisor** for any fieldwork research planned for Easter Vacation or early Trinity by 12 noon on **Friday (29 January 2027)** **NB: Any late forms received will not be considered until next term. No fieldwork can be carried until CUREC approval has been granted.**
Week 3	Submit *Thesis Topic Approval Form*, approved in writing by your supervisor, to the Course Coordinator (for submission to the Chair of Examiners) by 12 noon on **Tuesday (2 February 2027)**
Week 4	Submit a completed *Thesis Support Fund Application Form* for any thesis related activities planned **Friday (12 February 2027)**
Week 7	Options Essay Questions released at 5pm BST on **Friday (5 March 2027)**
Week 9	Quantitative Research Essay to be submitted via CANVAS (💻) by 12 noon GMT on **Thursday (18 March 2027)**

TRINITY

(Sunday 25 April to Saturday 19 June)

Week 0	Option course essays to be submitted via Inspera by 12 noon BST on **Friday (23 April 2027)** **(NB: option courses external to the degree may set different submission deadlines).**
Week 1/2	Two x 3 hour in person, computer-based core exam papers - usually in week 1 (commencing **26 April 2027***): Paper I: International Legal and Ethical Frameworks Paper II: Political and Anthropological Frameworks 2-hour Option course in-person, computer-based exam (during weeks 1/2*) for students who choose courses assessed by exam. **(NB: option courses external to the degree may timetable exams on different dates)** ***Please note that exact dates will be confirmed approx. 5 weeks beforehand when Exam Arrangements release exam timetables**
Week 3/4	*Thesis Workshop Preparation Form* to be submitted to workshop leader Exact deadline TBC
Week 3/4	Thesis Workshops Dates TBC
Week 8	Theses to be submitted via Inspera by 12 noon BST on **Thursday (17 June 2027**)
Week 11	Final exam board where students' marks and awards are agreed and final results published on Evision
July	Student graduation ceremonies – organised and scheduled by Colleges (dates may be different for each college)

[See also FORMATIVE ESSAY DEADLINES for your essay submission schedule]

KEY EXAMINATION DEADLINES

(💻 = on CANVAS)

Research Design Essay, Thesis and Papers			
	Michaelmas Term 2025	**Hilary Term 2026**	**Trinity Term 2026**
Qualitative Research Design Essay 2,500 words	**Start of term (week 0)** Research Design Essay instructions released **Wk 9** [By *12 noon GMT, Thursday 10 December]* Electronic copy to be submitted via Inspera/*Turnitin*		
Quantitative Research Methods Essay 2,500 words	**Start of term (week 0)** Quantitative Research Methods Essay instructions released	**Wk 9** [By *12 noon GMT, Thursday 18 March]* Electronic copy to be submitted via Inspera/*Turnitin*	
Papers I and II Core Examinations 3 hour in-person exam			Likely to be in **Week 1** (w/c 26 April). This may change, but dates will be confirmed at least 5 weeks before the date of the exams
Papers III or IV Options Essays 3,000 words		**Wk 7** *[5pm GMT, Friday 5 March]* Options Essay Questions Released	**Wk 0** [*By 12 noon BST, Friday 23 April*] Electronic copy to be submitted via *Inspera/Turnitin**
Papers III or IV Options Examinations 2 hour in-person exam			Likely to be in **Weeks 1 or 2**. This may change, but dates will be confirmed at least 5 weeks before the date of the exams*
Thesis Between 10,000 and 15,000 words	**Wk 0** [*By 12 noon GMT, Friday 16 October*] Avoiding Plagiarism programme certificate to Course Coordinator **Wk 8** [*By 12 noon GMT, Friday 4 December*] **[RECOMMENDED DEADLINE]** *Thesis Topic Approval Form:* draft must be submitted to your supervisor for approval	**Wk 3** [*By 12 noon GMT, Tuesday 2 February*] *Thesis Topic Approval Form* (:) (signed by your supervisor) to Course Coordinator (for approval by Chair of Examiners) **Wk 2** [*By 12 noon, Friday 29 January*] Complete and sign CUREC form and submit to Supervisor for any research planned for Easter Vacation	**Wk 4** [*exact date TBC*] *Thesis Workshop Preparation Sheet* (:) to be submitted to your supervisor **Wk 8** [By 12 noon BST, Thursday 17 June] Electronic copy to be submitted via *Inspera/Turnitin*

***NB: Essay deadlines or examination timings for external options taken may differ from these**

REGULAR EVENTS AND SEMINARS AT THE RSC

On top of a busy schedule of lectures, seminars and supervisions, you are also encouraged to attend and participate in the RSC seminar series which run each term. See below for details. The series feature invited speakers and are an excellent introduction to cutting-edge forced migration research. See the RSC website for further information.

	MICHAELMAS TERM	HILARY TERM	TRINITY TERM
RSC Public Seminars	Usually Wednesdays in term time at 5pm, either in person or online. (see RSC website for details)		
Annual Elizabeth Colson Lecture			Speaker, date, venue and title TBC
Annual Barbara Harrell-Bond Lecture		Barham Salih, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, will discuss the challenge of protecting refugee rights, as we mark the 75th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention **Monday 26 October 1700-1800** Magdalen College - Grove Auditorium	

RSC SPECIAL EVENTS IN MICHAELMAS 2026

You should check the events page on the RSC website for regular updates:
http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/events

3.
THE DEGREE

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE DEGREE

The course aims to offer you an understanding of the complex and varied nature of forced migration and refugee populations, of their centrality to global, regional and national processes of political, social and economic change. It will also help you develop a broad understanding of academic research related to forced migration and refugees, as well as critical thinking and sound evaluative tools.

Teaching programme and lecture lists

Oxford University operates a three-term academic year. Each term consists of Weeks 1 - 8 of classes. In addition, in Michaelmas Term, Week 0 is a time when introductory meetings take place; and Weeks 9 and 10 after Trinity Term are when exam marking and final examination board meetings take place.

As members of the University, you may attend most lectures and seminars held by the University. Occasionally special lectures may require advance permission to attend. Lecture Lists are available from the University Offices on Wellington Square during Week 0 of each term. A copy is also kept at ODID and they also appear on the University's website accessed from:
http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/lectures/

Aims and objectives

- To help students understand the complex and varied nature of forced migration and refugeehood and their centrality to global, regional and national institutions and processes of political, legal, social and economic change.
- To contribute to a better understanding of the rights and entitlements of forcibly displaced people.
- To gain a broad understanding of the literature on forced migration and refugees.
- To contribute to a better understanding of the various research methodologies and approaches relevant to the field of refugees and forced migration studies.
- To contribute to the development of original thinking, unique research skills and sound evaluative tools.
- To understand the contribution of various social science disciplines to the study of refugees and forced migration.

Programme outcomes

A. Students will develop a knowledge and understanding of:

- Key theories of migration as they relate to the complex processes and causes of forced migration and refugee flows.
- Global processes of social, economic and political change.
- Ethical, political and sociological issues associated with responses to forcibly displaced people.
- The nature of the international human rights and refugee regime, international law related to refugees, and associated legal and normative frameworks.
- Research methods, including quantitative, qualitative and participatory techniques and research designs relevant to the study of refugees and forced migration.
- The historical evolution of responses to refugees, asylum seekers and other forced migrants.

B. Skills and other attributes
Students have the opportunity to develop the following skills during the course:

I. Intellectual skills

- The ability to undertake critical analysis of key research (particularly in the field of forced migration and in relation to refugees).
- The ability to identify the major ethical, political, legal and sociological issues raised by forced migration.
- The ability to plan and organise empirical research into aspects of forced migration and refugee studies, and the construction of a 10-15,000 word thesis.
- Familiarity with the needs and rights of refugees and other forced migrants and to contribute to academic and practitioner dialogues in the field of humanitarian aid and forced migration policy.
- The ability to contribute new perspectives to forced migration and the study of refugee issues using a combination of theoretical and practical approaches.

II. Transferable skills

- Independent learning.
- Critical analysis.
- Presentational and writing skills.
- A range of research and information technology skills.
- Time management skills.

Related teaching/learning methods and strategies

The MSc has a strong focus on small-group teaching as well as individual and group supervision.

Students are expected to prepare for each taught element or essay by reading a selection of recommended book chapters, articles and working papers. Teaching staff specifically refer to exemplary studies in forced migration and the literature on refugees to illustrate important theoretical, ethical, methodological and practical issues and whenever possible, involve students in aspects of their own research activity.

Assessment

Course assessment is made up of seven elements: a Research Design Essay and assessment for qualitative and quantitative research methods, a thesis, two core course examination papers and two option course papers (either examination or essay). These summative assessments measure the extent to which students are able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the points outlined above. The process and production of the Research Design Essay will assess the students' ability to plan and apply the research techniques they have learned. The assessment of the thesis measures the individual student's ability to work independently and with sustained analytical focus on a multi-disciplinary issue related to refugees and forced migration.

Formative assessment provides regular feedback on progress. This is complemented through feedback provided in supervision meetings and seminars. The provision of ongoing feedback allows for comment on individual strengths and weaknesses and allows for identification of any student requiring additional support.

STRUCTURE OF THE DEGREE AND TEACHING PROGRAMME

The MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies offers four core courses in Michaelmas term; in Hilary term, students undertake two further core courses, as well as choosing two additional courses from a list of options. The core courses offered on the MSc feed into either Paper I (International Legal and Normative Frameworks) or Paper II (Political and Anthropological Frameworks). Option courses are assessed individually either by an in-person, computer-based examination or an essay. Research Methods is assessed by means of a research design essay in Michaelmas and a quantitative assessment in Hilary. All course syllabi and reading lists can be found on CANVAS (💻).

CORE COURSES

In Michaelmas Term the following courses are provided, which you are expected to attend in their entirety:

- *International Human Rights and Refugee Law I* (taught by Catherine Briddick)
- *The Anthropology of Forced Migration* (taught by Naohiko Omata)
- *The Politics of Forced Migration* (taught by Matthew Gibney)
- *Research Methods (Part I)* (taught by Uttara Shahani and Catherine Briddick)

In Hilary Term students on the MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies must undertake four courses, two of which must be:

- *Movement and Morality* (taught by Matthew Gibney)
- *Research Methods (Part II)* (taught by Carlos Vargas-Silva)

Formative work

As part of these courses, students are usually expected to present essays of approximately 1,500 words in length (📖 see FORMATIVE ESSAYS). There will be one essay for each of the core courses, (except Research Methods), and one essay based on the introductory module *Conceptualising and Historicising the Study of Forced Migration* at the start of Michaelmas. Essays will be assessed by the appropriate course lecturers, except the first essay in Michaelmas, which is assessed by your supervisor. You may also be required to write an essay for the option courses you choose in Hilary term.

CORE COURSE OUTLINES

The Anthropology of Forced Migration (Naohiko Omata) [Michaelmas]

This course explores the lived experiences of forced migrants through an anthropological lens. It looks into how refugees' identities as well as notions of home and belonging have been affected by displacement, investigates the social, cultural and economic lives of refugees, and examines how they interact with UNHCR, aid agencies and host governments. The course is structured as an investigation of the archetypal stages of forced migration: human movement, life in camps, interaction with relief agencies, making a living, claiming asylum, and then return and resettlement. Each week will be taught through close reading of first-hand ethnographic materials, combined with lectures, class discussions, guest talks, and workshops. The overall aim of the course is to enable students to study in detail how anthropological thinking, concepts, and methods can be applied and contribute to understanding of experiences of forced migration as well as equipping students with a broad overview of contemporary anthropological concerns.

International Human Rights and Refugee Law I (Catherine Briddick) [Michaelmas]

This course covers the core issues in international refugee law and international human rights law that define the scope of international protection. It focuses on the definition of a refugee under the 1951 Refugee Convention and pursuant to regional instruments and agreements. It also explores the role of human rights law in offering protection to refugees and other forced migrants.

Overall, the course provides students with a critical understanding of the content, workings, and shortcomings of international legal responses to refugees, so that by the end of the term, students will understand both the potential, and the limits, of this body of law. By engaging with the readings, lectures, and class activities, students will also develop their abilities in legal analysis, synthesis, and argumentation. The course is cumulative, building week on week, and moving across regions, to provide a comprehensive overview of the international protection regime. The introductory weeks will, therefore, raise issues that will be returned to throughout the course (and in the advanced law option, should students choose to undertake it) with students gaining greater understanding and insight as the term (and year) progresses.

The Politics of Forced Migration (Matthew Gibney) [Michaelmas]

Forced migration is inherently political. Its causes, consequences, and responses to it cannot be understood without looking at the role of power, interests, and ideas. The movement of people across communities, especially when forced, necessarily leads to competing claims and political conflicts. In order to understand both the significance of forced migration and the tensions it generates, an analysis of both historical events and political ideas is essential. This course is divided into two substantive sections. The first three weeks look at the drivers of forced migration, focusing on central causes of displacement: authoritarianism, disorder, and colonialism. The next five weeks look at key political responses to forced migration, focusing in particular on externalisation, the use of refugees as weapons, expulsion, hospitality and resistance. Each week we will draw upon at least one empirical case study that illustrates the topic. These are often historical, and will give us the benefit of a rich scholarly literature and the possibility of deeper analysis. After outlining some of the key debates surrounding each topic, we will then read the work of political or social theorists to develop our understanding of the topic and provide a platform for discussion in seminars via key questions.

Movement and Morality (Matthew Gibney) [Hilary]

Human movement across borders raises complex moral questions. States, humanitarian organisations, and individuals often justify their various positions on immigration and refugee movements on moral grounds. This course aims to explore a range of moral issues raised by contemporary border controls. We critically consider questions like: whether people should have the right to move freely between states; whether states should be allowed to trade responsibility for refugees amongst themselves; under what, if any, circumstances disobeying or resisting immigration controls might be justifiable; whether states have a duty to grant admission to non-citizens from countries they have formerly colonized; and if it is morally acceptable to denationalize and deport citizen terrorists. These questions raise controversial and contested issues. We will map the contours of these lively and important debates and identify the positions that we find the strongest. By the end of this course students should have gained a greater awareness of the moral controversies that underpin contemporary debates on border control; an improved understanding of why actors use moral arguments as a resource in political debates; and an introduction to some key debates in moral and political theory.

Research Methods I (Uttara Shahani and Catherine Briddick) [Michaelmas]
Research Methods II (Carlos Vargas-Silva) [Hilary]

What is distinctive about scholarly research, and how can we produce it most effectively? What methods can scholars use to examine forced migration in ways that are valuable and ethical? This course examines these questions, with the aim of developing essential skills for understanding the complexities around research related to forced migration. The course is presented over two terms. In Michaelmas term (Part 1), the focus is on qualitative methodologies, research design, and data collection. The emphasis on the first four weeks of this term will be on posing effective research questions, preparing students to produce a proposal in response to a call from funders. The second four weeks of term will turn to specific case studies of 'research in practice', drawing on recent research projects from the Refugee Studies Centre and Beyond.

In Hilary term (Part 2), lectures and classes will turn to quantitative data analysis, led by Carlos Vargas-Silva. The discussion will include aspects related to sampling different populations, developing questionnaires and analysing the collected data. There will also be discussion about ways of 'mixing' these quantitative techniques with the qualitative methods introduced in Part 1. Students will prepare for a final assessed exercise, which examines their ability to critically analyse quantitative research findings.

OPTIONS COURSES [Hilary Term]

The remaining two courses in Hilary Term will be chosen by the student from a list of options. The Home pool options for 2026-27 are:

- *The Economic Lives of Refugees (Naohiko Omata)*
- *Home, Displacement and the Politics of Sanctuary (Sam Ritholtz)*
- *International Human Rights and Refugee Law II (Catherine Briddick)*
- *The Politics of Education in Forced Migration (Hiba Salem)*
- *Postcolonial Borders and Forced Migration (Uttara Shahani)*
- *Violence and Cities: From Destruction to Reconstruction (Ammar Azzouz)*

Students may also be interested in this approved external option:

- *Dispossession and Displacement in the Modern Middle East (Dawn Chatty, based at Asian and Middle Eastern Studies)*

There will also be a pool of options from the other four ODID degrees to choose from. Students will have to make their first option choice from the Home Pool only, but for the second option choice students can also select from the departmental shared options list. It is permissible for students to take a course from another department, but this will require Teaching Committee approval. The availability of any particular options course will be dependent on numbers and with regard to other degree's options, compatible timetabling and assessments. Students should be aware that if they choose an option external to the RFMS degree, they will be assessed in the mode and timeframe as set by the owning degree. This may mean, for example, sitting an examination in week 8 of Trinity in the same week that the thesis is due.

Descriptions of the Home Pool courses can be found below, and the students will be presented with more information on the available options in Induction Week, and will need to make their choices by the **beginning of Week 2**.

The first option course sign-up window will be **between 0900 and 1200 on Friday of week 1 (16 October)**

The second option course sign up window will be between **the afternoon of Friday 16 October and 0900** on **Monday of week 2 (19 October).**

All options, except International Human Rights and Refugee Law II (which is uncapped), will usually be capped at **15 students** and where students signed up exceed the cap, places will be allocated randomly using an Excel formula. You may, therefore, find that your first choice is not available and so you will be allocated your second choice. You will be informed of what course you have managed to get a place on for your first choice before you have to select your second choice.

Please note it is possible a course could be cancelled if not enough people sign up for it.

Short videos given by Option Conveners, together with draft course outlines and indicative reading lists, will be placed on Canvas at the start of Induction week (week 0) giving you two weeks to make your choice. Students are welcome to contact the conveners directly if they have any questions.

OPTIONS COURSE OUTLINES

HOME POOL

The Economic Lives of Refugees (Naohiko Omata)

Amidst the daunting scale of protracted displacement worldwide, there has been growing interest in the economic and development potential of refugees across policy and academic arenas. In this course, we explore the economic lives of refugees in a variety of contexts through systematic and theoretical approaches. The guiding question of the course is: *What difference does it make, in economic terms, to be a refugee?* While refugees engage in economic activities and participate in markets in their host states, their economic lives are shaped by various aspects of 'refugeehood' – defined here as the legal, social, political and/or institutional contexts in which refugees find themselves in exile. By examining a range of factors that influence refugees' economic decisions, strategies, and outcomes, we investigate the ways in which their economic lives are analytically distinct. Building upon this micro-level knowledge, we will also critically interrogate influential developmental ideas promoted by the international refugee regime, such as *the humanitarian-development nexus, self-reliance,* and *economic inclusion*, and discuss what they mean for refugees' well-being and protection. The course takes an interdisciplinary approach by integrating the work of anthropologists, sociologists, geographers, political scientists, economists, lawyers, and practitioners. The geographical scope is global, covering refugees in both the Global South and Global North.

Home, Displacement and the Politics of Sanctuary (Sam Ritholtz)

Home has long been central to Forced Migration Studies. It can be a place of safety that people are forced to leave, or a place of harm from which they flee. Home can be a physical location lost in flight or an imagined future destination to be made anew. This course examines the political significance of home across experiences of displacement, considering how ideas of home shape refuge and belonging, as well as the politics of sanctuary. It treats home as a site whose social and political value depends in part on expectations of protection and immunity, thereby considering what happens when violence or exclusion violates those expectations.

The course follows the making and unmaking of sites of refuge across displacement. It examines how states and humanitarian institutions govern access to protection amid insecurity, and how displaced people, in turn, make home, tying their homemaking practices to political claims of recognition and relief. In exploring the home, the course ultimately examines the politics of sanctuary, treating it as a practice through which refuge is created and sustained, and as a political objective against which institutions of protection and the potential of durable solutions can be evaluated.

The course begins by examining the relationship between home and refuge, before turning to the ways states bind home to territory through citizenship and return. It then considers forms of home that extend beyond territory and the ways home itself can become a site of harm. From there, the course turns to political violence and the violation of spaces understood to offer protection, followed by the practices through which displaced people make home under conditions of insecurity. The final weeks examine how humanitarian and security institutions govern refuge, then bring these themes together by exploring sanctuary as both a social practice and a political objective.

International Human Rights and Refugee Law II (Catherine Briddick)

This advanced law option provides students with a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the law on international protection.

The course commences by considering how refugees are recognised as such, explores the use of Temporary Protection in Europe and Latin America, and then examines legal questions relating to exclusion from refugee status and cessation of refugee status. These topics are followed by a discussion of key refugee rights, including non-penalisation. Finally, we consider the relationships between IRL and other areas of law, including International Humanitarian Law, Trans-national Criminal Law (in relation to trafficking) and the Law of the Sea.

The Politics of Education in Forced Migration (Hiba Salem)

What is the purpose of education in contexts of displacement, and who gets to decide? This optional module brings education into conversation with wider debates in refugee and forced migration studies, examining how education is entangled with refugee governance, political priorities, and imagined futures. It traces shifts from humanitarian and community-led approaches to the contemporary emphasis on inclusion in national education systems, asking how competing state, donor, institutional, and displaced community priorities shape education and different visions of refugees' futures. Drawing on diverse contexts of displacement, students will examine the tensions between education's promise of inclusion and better futures and the legal, political, and economic realities of displacement. We consider how rights are understood and realised across different contexts; how categories such as refugee, emergency, and integration shape educational responses; and whose knowledge, languages, and aspirations are valued. Throughout, we examine education as a site through which inclusion, exclusion, protection, and power are negotiated, ultimately asking how refugee education might be reimagined in response to uncertain futures.

Postcolonial Borders and Forced Migration (Uttara Shahani)

To be recognised as a refugee, a person must cross an international border. Yet, many borders as we know them today are the product of colonial dynamics. Through case studies from the United States, Africa, the Middle East, Haiti, and Asia, students examine the colonial origins of modern borders, migration control, and citizenship. Some questions we ask are: How do colonial histories of forced and free migration, relocation, and displacement, as well as the concomitant phenomenon of immobility, shape modern postcolonial borders and nation-states as we know them today? How did colonial rule and movements for national self-determination produce different forms of bordering, such as apartheid and partition? How did decolonisation and postcolonial citizenship regimes create new waves of displacement? Are colonial legacies relevant to contemporary refugee and migration regimes? Although each case study is taught as a discrete topic, they are connected, and each week builds on the previous weeks.

Violence and Cities: From Destruction to Reconstruction (Ammar Azzouz)

Mass destruction of cities is at its worst levels since World War II. Only in the last fifteen years, we have witnessed how rich and diverse cities have been brutally turned into sites of urban misery, devastation and ruins. Peoples' achievements of hundreds and thousands of years old have been destroyed in seconds. From Aleppo in Syria, to Gaza in Palestine, from Benghazi in Libya, to Kharkiv in Ukraine, cities have been radically reshaped by the killing and displacement of their people, and the destruction of their architecture. Whilst destroyers label their harms as "collateral damage" or "war on terror", destruction has become a tool to punish local communities and destroy their sense of belonging, dignity and freedom. In a damaged world filled with ruins, a global sense of despair, suffering and pain emerges.

In this course, we examine the impact of destruction on local communities and research how they approach the future reconstruction of their cities. Do we rebuild these cities exactly as they looked like before the war? Who decides? What does the reconstruction of a homeland mean for those forcibly displaced in exile? As politicians, architects, urban planners and policy makers struggle with the dilemmas and complexities of these questions, local communities continue their everyday life in ruins, waiting for a future reconstruction yet to come. In Violence and Cities, we answer these questions by examining several themes such as the rule of heritage during and after conflicts, the destruction of people's homes (domicide), and the politics of reconstruction.

APPROVED EXTERNAL OPTION

Dispossession and Displacement in the Modern Middle East (Dawn Chatty)

Dispossession and forced migration have come to be a defining feature of the contemporary Middle East. Yet involuntary movement of peoples has indelibly marked the region throughout the last 150 years. This course examines the history of forced migrations through an anthropological lens, engaging with concepts such as: space and place; ethnicity, identity; belonging, nationalism; cosmopolitanism, hybridity and local conviviality; colonialism and orientalism: and resilience, and integration. It engages with the forced migrations of the Circassians from the border lands of Imperial Russia, the Armenians and Assyrians, the Kurds from Anatolia, Palestinians, Iraqis and Syrians in the Levant. The course addresses these dispossessions as part of the clash of empire, carried further by the colonial, neo-colonial as well as the contemporary neo-conservative political encounters. It engages with the ways in which these peoples have developed a local cosmopolitanism and examines whether such local conviviality can survive the current displacements and evictions in the region.

FORMATIVE ESSAYS

During the course of Michaelmas and Hilary Terms, you will be asked to write seven short, formative essays. The essays 1,500 words in length and deal with the substantive, theoretical and/or methodological aspects of the material covered in each core and options course.

The purpose of these short essays is to hone your analytical skills and to prepare you for the challenge of writing the short, summative essays for your written exams at the start of Trinity Term. They are intended to be an opportunity for students to get constructive feedback from their lecturers, rather than mandatory assessments. **The submission deadlines for these are not flexible. You may, in certain circumstances, be permitted an extra day or two, but late submissions will not generally be accepted.**

The formative essays, therefore, are intended:

1) To prepare and equip students with a variety of skills required for their summative assessment.
2) To create a good basis for discussion and subsequent subject learning.
3) To give students the opportunity to present a succinct argument.

What makes a good short essay?

- ✓ Concision
- ✓ Structure
- ✓ Clarity
- ✓ Evidence
- ✓ Acute attention to question
- ✓ Theoretical engagement where relevant
- ✓ Good argumentation
- ✓ Independence of thought
- ✓ Awareness of relevant literature and accurate citation

What the short essays are not:

- Literature reviews or summaries – they must contain an argument!
- A general discussion of an issue – they must stay focused on the question!
- In need of an extensive bibliography.

Your course lecturer and supervisor will expect your essay to be a well-written piece of analytical work which is based on, perhaps, half a dozen or so readings around a specific topic. The topic may have been one of the discussion topics of the course outline, or it may have been one which has been specifically assigned in class. Alternatively, it may have been a question from a previous year's examination (available in the library or from Oxford's online Exam Paper Archive here: https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/discovery/search?vid=44OXF_INST:SOLO&search_scope=EXAMP

Your supervisor and course lecturer will expect a piece of work which sets out an argument; engages in analysis; and draws a conclusion. The writing guidelines in this handbook (see 🕮 WRITING) should be useful to follow in preparing for your first few essays. In Michaelmas term, your course convenors will tell you in advance what topic the essay question/s will be on and you should spend a few days reading up on it. The essay question/s will be released at 9am on each Friday submission day, and you will then have until 5pm on that day to write and submit your essay.

Your supervisor or course convenor will provide you with feedback via CANVAS (💻), usually within two weeks of the submission date, for discussion at your next meeting.

The first essay of Michaelmas Term, due in Week 2 and marked by your supervisor, will be on a subject discussed in the introductory module: *Conceptualising and Historicising the Study of Forced Migration.* All other essays will be assessed by the relevant course convenor, who will provide you with written feedback and an indicative mark (via CANVAS (💻)). You are encouraged to discuss this feedback with your supervisor.

FORMATIVE ESSAY SUBMISSION DEADLINES

ESSAYS ASSESSED BY SUPERVISOR/COURSE CONVENER		
	Michaelmas Term	**Hilary Term**
Essay 1 - topic from Conceptualising and Historicising Forced Migration Seminar	Week 2 – to Supervisor	
Essay 2 - topic from the Anthropology of Forced Migration	Week 4 – to Course Convener	
Essay 3 - topic from The Politics of Forced Migration	Week 6 – to Course Convener	
Essay 4 - topic from International Human Rights and Refugee Law I	Week 8 – to Course Convener	
Essay 5 - topic from Movement and Morality		Week 4 – to Course Convener
In addition, you will also write formative essays for your two option courses		
A **Word** version of your essay should be submitted via **CANVAS** (💻) by **5pm** on the **Friday** of the week in which the essay is due in Michaelmas. In Hilary, submission days will differ – a schedule of essay deadlines will be published nearer the time.		

TEACHING ENRICHMENT

Throughout the year students will have the opportunity to engage in additional activities. These include a Forced Migration Film Series. Further details will be on **CANVAS** (💻)

TYPICAL STUDENT SCHEDULE

Michaelmas	Hilary	Trinity Term
Classes/Supervision (Weeks 1-8)	**Classes/Supervision (Weeks 1-8)**	**Supervision**
· *Core course*: Politics of Forced Migration · *Core course*: Anthropology of Forced Migration · *Core course*: International Human Rights and Refugee Law I · *Core course*: Research Methods I · *Thesis*: identify topic and title; preliminary literature review - *Research Design Essay*: Ongoing research design training; Instructions released in week 2	· *Core course*: Movement and Morality · *Core course*: Research Methods II · *Options course* 1 · *Options course* 2 · *Thesis*: confirm topic and title; develop abstract; start work	· *Thesis*: complete work and write up
Assessment	**Assessment**	**Assessment**
Submission: Research Methods Research Design Essay 2,500-word essay (Thursday Week 9)	*Submission*: Quantitative Research Methods Essay 2,500-word essay (Thursday Week 9)	- *Examinations*: 2 x in-person core course exams (Week 1 expected) - *Option course assessments:* ▪ *Submission/s:* 3,000 word essay/s (Friday Week 0)* ▪ *exam/s:* 2hr in person computer-based in halls (week 1 or 2 expected)* - *Submission*: Thesis (Thursday Week 8)
Vacation	**Vacation**	
· *Courses*: catch up on reading · *Thesis:* continue work	· *Courses*: exam revision · and/or preparation for options essays · *Thesis*: continue work	

***Assessments for options external to the degree may have different timings**

Full-time MSc students should generally regard their studies as a full-time occupation of 40 hours per week during term time, and should normally be available for academic commitments during core working hours (i.e. 9 am to 5 pm on weekdays).

Students who feel they would benefit from further support and training, including help with their study workloads can sign up for skills training (for further information see 🕮 OPPORTUNITIES FOR SKILLS TRAINING and CANVAS (💻)).

STUDENT GRANTS

The Grants Committee is able to make small grants available to students on the MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies, as detailed below.

Thesis Support Fund

This is designed to support students on the MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies in the preparation of their theses. Students will be able to apply for funds *up to* £250 that are needed for activities relating directly to their thesis. While we generally discourage primary fieldwork (given the tight timetable of the course), this money may be used for travel and fees in respect of activities such as the following:

- Consulting archives or library collections outside Oxford.
- Meeting with academics or other experts in institutions outside Oxford.
- Participating in workshops or conferences relating to the theme of the thesis.
- Technical support in the preparation of the thesis.
- Primary research costs in exceptional cases

Sally Hogg Student Conference Fund

This fund, created in 2000 by generous endowments to the RSC from Sally and John Hogg, is intended to award small travel grants, primarily for students from developing countries, to present their work at a conference. Before applying, please discuss the reason for the grant with your supervisor and then contact the Course Coordinator for guidance regarding the application process. Students will be required to submit information about the conference, a copy of their invitation to present and an abstract of their paper. Written submissions to such meetings must identify the student as an MSc student at the Refugee Studies Centre.

ODID Hardship Fund

As a last resort, the department has a hardship fund that is intended to award small grants to help students who have found themselves in unexpected financial difficulties. These grants are intended only for self-funded students. Please email the Course Coordinator for details.

CAREERS INFORMATION AND ADVICE

There is a *Careers Orientations Session* held in Michaelmas led by Damilola Odimayo from the University's Careers Service.

The University's Careers Service is situated at 56 Banbury Road Oxford. The Careers Service exists to enable current and recent Oxford University students to make and implement well-informed decisions about their careers. The Careers Service holds a yearly information session at the Department of International Development, open to all students.

For advice and more information regarding internships, job opportunities please see the Oxford Student website (www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/experience) and the University Careers Service website (www.careers.ox.ac.uk).

Other careers events to look out for:

- International Organisations' Day – London School of Economics – November
- International Careers Day – January

OXFORD MIGRATION STUDIES SOCIETY

The Oxford Migration Studies Society is a student-run University Society that aims to connect people in Oxford examining any facet of migration and cultural pluralism, and to build dialogue and relationships across disciplines, organising forums for socialising, resource and information sharing, and research support.

Society members are usually students and researchers from the Refugee Studies Centre (RSC), international development and anthropology. The society's projects have included regular social events, research presentation seminars, publications, and special events such as speakers, field trips, workshops, and an annual conference in Trinity term.

MIGRATION AND MOBILITY NETWORK

Researchers of migration and mobility across the University have the possibility to join a new network: (http://torch.ox.ac.uk/migration-and-mobility#quicktabs-theme_term_quicktab=0) which reaches across the University's migration research centres as well as beyond: it aims to be a platform for anyone working on themes relating to migration and mobility. We consider the Oxford Migration Studies Society OMSS as the 'student arm' of this network, and would be delighted to assist with any events if required, and advertise for them on the network website.

For regular network newsletters, as well as general enquiries, please email the generic network email address (migration-mobility@torch.ox.ac.uk).

OXFORD MONITOR OF FORCED MIGRATION

The *Oxford Monitor of Forced Migration* (*OxMo*) is an independent, student-run publication that moves to engage with various aspects of forced migration through academic scholarship. At its core, *OxMo* is dedicated to protecting and advancing human rights of individuals who have been forcibly displaced. By monitoring political, legal and practical developments, we seek to draw attention to the plight of forced migrants, identify gaps within existing international and national protection regimes and engage with the many practical and conceptual concerns which perpetuate displacement. We seek to present critical yet balanced analyses of forced migration issues, placing particular emphasis on monitoring the policies and actions of governments, international organizations, and local and international NGOs. Equally, we are committed to giving expression to innovative undertakings that move to alleviate and counter the numerous difficulties that forced migrants face.

Aside from serving as an important academic forum, *OxMo* is unique in that we seek to establish a space for students to meaningfully take part in the ongoing discourse between scholarship and practice that underpins Forced Migration Studies. We believe that students remain a highly valuable yet under tapped resource in the effort to allay forced migration predicaments and advance human rights. Overall, *OxMo* aims to foster a truly global dialogue that moves beyond the "north/south" dichotomy by cultivating intellectual exchanges between equals.

More information is available from *OxMo*'s web site: https://oxfordmonitor.wixsite.com/website-1

If you are interested in getting involved in any of the above you can find more information on CANVAS (💻)

4.
SUPERVISION

SUPERVISION

You will have been assigned an individual supervisor, with whom you will have a short, introductory meeting in Induction Week. During this meeting you and your supervisor should discuss your needs, expectations and ways of working and what your responsibilities are. You might also want to discuss your thesis topic ideas and option course choices with them, as you will need to sign up to your Hilary term options by the end of week 1/early week 2.

After this initial meeting, you will be expected to meet regularly with your supervisor to discuss your progress, programme of study, research interests and formative essays. These meetings may be scheduled in advance for the whole term. The recommended supervision programme for Michaelmas is:

Week 0 – Short individual introductory session (20 minutes)
Week 2 – Individual meeting and essay writing discussion (30 minutes)
Week 4 – Group meeting to discuss essay feedback (1 hour)
Week 6 – Group meetings to discuss thesis *ideas* (1 hour)
Week 8 – Individual meeting to discuss Draft Research Proposal/Design Essays (RM summative assessment for Michaelmas Term) (1 hour)

It is up to you and your supervisor to agree exactly when meet, but it is a good idea to get this into your diaries at the start of each term.

Your supervisor will help you to start thinking about your thesis from the start of the course, and will suggest preparatory readings to help you develop your thinking. Come prepared to discuss your ideas from the start, as your supervisor will help you to identify a suitable topic and questions. By the end of Michaelmas term, you have to submit a draft *Thesis Topic Approval Form* to your supervisor for feedback; and your supervisor must have approved this by the **Tuesday of Week 3 in Hilary**, when it is submitted to the Course Coordinator for approval by the Chair of the Examiners (see 📖 EXAM DEADLINES).

Your supervisor will have access via CANVAS to your essay feedback from your course lecturers. They may discuss with you any challenges you are facing in the writing of these essays, and suggest measures for improvement.

Although your supervisor will be in close and regular contact with you throughout the year, supervision should focus on your academic progress. If you have any queries about procedural or administrative matters to do with degree or exam administration, you should contact the Course Coordinator. Other personal, logistical, pastoral or financial matters should be directed to your College Advisor.

Supervisors are drawn from the teaching and research staff based at the Refugee Studies Centre, although on occasion we may appoint a supervisor from another department or centre if this would be more appropriate for your thesis subject.

Reporting Supervision Issues

If you have any issues with your supervision, please raise these as soon as possible so that they can be addressed promptly. It is very important for a student to be able to work well with their supervisor, so any problems raised will be taken seriously and considered carefully. Reports should be made to the Course Director, via email. All such reports will be treated in the strictest confidence and handled tactfully. (See also 📖 SUPERVISION OF THESIS for more information)

FEEDBACK ON LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Feedback on both formative and summative assessment is an important element of all programmes at Oxford and may be provided informally and/or formally.

Feedback on formative assessment and other informal feedback

Feedback on formative assessment e.g. course essays or assignments, should:

- ✓ Provide guidance to those for whom extended pieces of writing are unfamiliar forms of assessment.
- ✓ Indicate areas of strength and weakness in relation to the assessment task.
- ✓ Provide students with an indication of the expectations and standards towards which they are working.

Students can expect to receive feedback on their progress and on their formatively assessed work submitted during Michaelmas and Hilary. This will take the form of:

- ✓ Informal feedback provided during classes/tutorials and other interactions with teaching staff.
- ✓ Your essays returned to you within two weeks of the submission, and written feedback via CANVAS (💻) giving you overall comments on your work and an indicative mark. In addition, the lecturer may have annotated your essay, highlighting individual points of strength and weakness in your argument.
- ✓ Your supervisor will be able to view your essays and feedback via the Grades tool on CANVAS (💻), so you should expect to discuss these during your regular supervisions.

Feedback on summative assessment

Summative assessment contributes to your degree result and is used to evaluate formally the extent to which you have succeeded in meeting the published assessment criteria for your programme of study.

The purpose of feedback on summative assessment e.g. theses, is to provide a critical review of the work and suggestions for improvements and future development of the research topic to enable students to develop their work for doctoral study, if appropriate.

Feedback on theses

Under the direction of the Chair of Examiners, we provide written feedback to all students on their theses. The principal component of these are the assessors' reports as added to (and edited, if required) by the Chair of Examiners. The Chair ensures that the feedback is consistent with the final agreed mark in cases where, for example, assessors disagreed, and appropriate synthesis of the feedback is provided. Students will receive one report only and we aim to distribute it within two weeks following the meeting of examiners at which the marks are ratified.

Under no circumstances should any academic staff be contacted with regard to formal extension requests for assessed elements as this could undermine the impartial assessment process. Requests MUST go through your college tutor.

Other information about assessment standards

Students are advised to read the internal and external examiners' reports for the last cohort (published on CANVAS (💻) under 'Summative Assignments and Exam Resources' in Michaelmas) which can provide valuable insights and contribute to students' preparations for examinations and other forms of assessment.

OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

Students will be asked to complete an evaluation form for each of the courses they take at the end of Michaelmas and Hilary terms. This is a valuable opportunity to feedback your thoughts about the course to us to help improve the course and the degree, both for yourself and for future students. All feedback provided is completely anonymous.

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

GRADUATE SUPERVISION REPORTING (GSR)

At the end of each term, your supervisor will submit a report on your academic progress. To facilitate this reporting, the University operates an online Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) system. You have the opportunity to contribute to your termly supervision reports, **via Student Self Service** (link below), by reviewing and commenting on your own progress.

You are strongly encouraged to take the opportunity to review and comment on your academic progress, any skills training you have undertaken or may need to in the future, and on your engagement with the academic community (e.g. seminar/conference attendance).

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

When reporting on academic progress, students on taught courses should review progress during the current term, and measure this progress against the timetable and requirements for their programme of study. All students should briefly describe which subject-specific research skills and more general personal/professional skills they have acquired or developed during the current term. You should include attendance at relevant classes that form part of your programme of study and also include courses, seminars or workshops offered or arranged by your department or the division. Students should also reflect on the skills required to undertake the work they intend to carry out. You should mention any skills you do not already have or you may wish to strengthen through undertaking training.

If you have any complaints about the supervision you are receiving, you should raise this with your Course Director or the ODID Director of Graduate Studies. You should not use the supervision reporting system as a mechanism for complaints.

Students are asked to report in **Week 7** of term via the Student Self Service portal, using their Oxford SSO sign in details. Once you have completed your sections of the online form, it will be released to your supervisor for completion and will also be visible to your course director, director of graduate studies and to your college advisor. When the supervisor's sections are completed, you will be able to view the report, as will the relevant course director, director of graduate studies and your college advisor. Directors of Graduate Studies are responsible for ensuring that appropriate supervision takes place, and this is one of the mechanisms they use to obtain information about supervision. College advisors are a source of support and advice to students, and it is therefore important that they are informed of your progress, including concerns (expressed by you and/or your supervisor).

5.
WRITING AND REFERENCES

WRITING ESSAYS AND PREPARING PAPERS FOR CLASS WORK

Introduction

These notes are guidelines on preparing the essays which you are asked to give in the course of reading for the degree. They are plainly stated, so as to render them easy to follow. But they are not meant as dogmatic instructions to be followed unquestioningly. There is no such thing as the perfect essay. What follows are suggestions on how to write a good essay.

At the basis of an essay question, there usually is a problem. The problem may not have any solution, and the task may consist of explaining the nature of the problem or perhaps presenting several imperfect solutions with their criticisms. But essay writing is really about understanding problems.

When you write an essay, you are an author. Essay writing is an exercise in thinking. Always state what you think and back it up with good arguments. Do not just set out an assortment of the paraphrased opinions of the *cognoscenti*, without comment, acknowledgement or criticism.

Step One: Decide what the problem is all about

Underline the key words in the essay question and set out the relationship between them. Ask yourself simple questions such as: 'What is ....?', 'Why is ....?', 'How does ....?', or even 'Is/are .....?'
For example, if you were writing an essay entitled:
Compare and contrast legal pluralism and legal culture as ways of studying migrants' relationship with the law

You might underline legal pluralism, legal culture, relationship with the law, and especially ways of studying, and then ask yourself: 'what is legal pluralism?', 'what is legal culture?', 'what is meant by relationship with the law?'.

Some further questions to ask yourself might be:

- Should I focus on laws in the destination country only?
- Should I focus more on migrants' perceptions of laws, or their formal normative relationship to the law, or the relationship as actually experienced?

You should also ask yourself: 'What is the point of the question?' or 'What is the question driving at?'. It is important to note that in the question 'legal pluralism' and 'legal culture' are two *perspectives* rather than actual situations. The question is thus asking for a theoretical or methodological evaluation of the two approaches. If you elaborate how migration may affect the legal culture of the receiving society, then you are probably missing the point.

If you were unable to break down the question in this way, you would not be able to answer the question. It could be that you had not done the required reading or had not attended classes. There is no substitute for this. However, if you have read widely and attended classes and are still uncertain or confused about the terms being used, it is useful to consult the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* or even the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*.

Step Two: Find the missing link

Very often the relationship between the key words is not simple and direct. There may be unstated assumptions, other factors than the plain and obvious, theoretical dimensions and so on which also need to be taken into account.

To take an example, if the question being asked were:

How can we reconcile the idea that human and economic development tends to increase migration and mobility, with the fact that the proportion of international migrants has not increased significantly over the past century?

The missing links would be that:

· The last century experienced significant human and economic development; and
· There is a causal relation between development and migration (i.e., development causes migration).

Unpacking this second assumption could be a way to address the question.

Step Three: State your major points

When you have located the missing links you should be able to state the major points of your essay in the form of short, linked statements. This is an essential part of preparing your explanation. Very often students (and lecturers) find they can explain something better the second time around. It may be that they were not sure what the major points were, or how they were linked, the first time. Usually, it is because they were not rigorous enough about isolating the major points and indicating how they were linked. When you know what the major points are and thus what you want to leave out, you can begin to plan your essay.

In planning your essay, you will find that each of the major points you want to make will form the focus of a major section. Typically, each major section will consist of the statement of the major point (the principle at issue); evidence (examples, illustrations, analogies, diagrams); qualifications (elaborations and important exceptions); and, finally, a restatement of the major point.

Step Four: Structure each section

- Express the point at issue in a simple, direct statement. Keep technical terms to a minimum, though some will be unavoidable, and avoid complex grammatical structures. Useful introductions to your major sections could be: 'Now the next point is ...', 'A second feature is ...'. These serve as markers between sections and draw attention to the major points.
- Choose one or two apt examples or illustrations. They should be short and appropriate. Little point is served by dredging up vast chunks from your sources, unless you wish to work out theoretical implications arising from the texts at length. If you are discussing the economic consequences of labour migration, do not digress into the ecological consequences of labour migration.
- Give any important qualifications. Again, it is more helpful to give 'lead-ins' such as 'Of course there are exceptions ...', 'Now there are problems / difficulties ...'. In writing up your essay you will naturally wish to select more elegant phrases and ring the changes but these act as clarifiers. Remember to give only the main elaborations and leave out vague cases which are not essential.
- Restate your major point. At the end of each section you should restate the point at issue in a slightly extended form and in different words. The use of alternative words increases the chances of being understood and enhances your own understanding. Often a change of words, or word order, brings impact to your meaning and opens up entirely new perspectives

Step Five: Summarise the main points you have made

At the end of the essay or paper you should summarise the major points you have made and give a conclusion. Sometimes, this will be your own answer to the question posed.

Summarising your main points brings together your argument and makes a conclusion possible. Useful introductions to your summary might be: 'So, we can assert that...', 'Our conclusion must be...', 'It seems that...'. The summary might also contain any final thoughts: for example, if you found it hard to answer the question posed yourself or to come to a conclusion about the title set, you might want to indicate a few reasons why. Diagrams are sometimes useful in a summary.

Step Six: Plan your introduction

Planning introductions and conclusions is what most students find hardest. In the case of the conclusion, it is most frequently difficult because the student is not sure of their stance on a topic or problem. In the case of the introduction, it usually is because they cannot make up their minds about what they want to say. Accordingly, it is easier to plan the start of the essay or paper after you have planned the major sections and their summary. The reason is that you need to know what your explanation will consist of before you can draw the attention of your readers or audience to what you are going to explain and the way you are going to tackle it. If you don't know what your major sections will be, clearly you cannot do this.

The main functions of an introduction are to indicate the essential features of the essay or paper and generate interest in what is being explained. The introduction is also a good place for specifying basic assumptions and indicating any theoretical slants which you wish to take up later. All of this will be important to gain and hold the attention of your reader or audience. Clear structure generates interest, understanding and favourable attitudes to the topic.
In most cases, the introduction will also contain a short essay plan.

Step Seven: Write your completed essay plan

Select a single large sheet of paper. Leave enough space for any extra thoughts which may occur to you as you write out the plan. Ideally, with good planning there ought not to be any, but there are always some. Your essay plan should look something like this:

Introduction
Section One: major point, example, qualification, restatement
Section Two: major point, example, qualification, restatement
Section N: major point, example, qualification, restatement
Summary / conclusion

Step Eight: Write down your essay

When you write down your essay, remember the virtues of the paragraph. Each paragraph should contain a point; new points should go into new paragraphs, unless they are simple one-liners (in which case, should they be in that particular place? Should they be in the essay at all?).

Not all major sections need the whole gamut of examples, qualifications and restatements, but never forget that what is straightforward and obvious to you when you write the essay may not be obvious to your reader.

If you need to put in a quotation, of course you will need to check the exact version. Get into the habit now of making quotations traceable to yourself and your reader. It must **always** be possible to trace the sources of your quotations. Some students keep apt quotations on index cards for ready reference. In any event, the requirement of proper referencing is not limited to direct quotations. You should always acknowledge ideas and opinions which are not your own and which are not sufficiently generalised to be mere commonplaces. Proper referencing enables your readers to give credit where it is due and not dismiss your brilliant, original perspectives as simple plagiarism. It will also help you when it comes to revisions.

Offer a full bibliography (or list of references), with every reference consisting of name of the author, date, full title, place of publication, and publisher. Only when you quote from readings contained in your course syllabus, it may sometimes not be necessary to give full bibliographical references. In such cases, a referral to the syllabus may be sufficient.

Useful Sources

On writing a master's thesis:

Phyllis Creme and Mary R. Lea (2008) *Writing at University: a guide for students*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

General Reference Books

Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences - for technical words or words in common use which have specific disciplinary meanings.

Shorter Oxford English Dictionary - which despite its name is very long and gives detailed meanings, as well as similar and opposites like Roget.

(Adapted from Department of Anthropology and Sociology handout, SOAS, 1996)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SKILLS TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Study Skills:

There is a webpage dedicated to study skills on the University website here: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills

For guidance and resources for managing your time and workload, see: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/time.

Academic English and Foreign Language Courses:

The University of Oxford Language Centre provides a wide range of general and specialised courses in foreign languages* and Academic English. See (www.lang.ox.ac.uk).

***Please note, however, that while ODID does partially fund courses in Academic English for students, it is unfortunately unable to provide any funding towards foreign language courses.**

THE THESIS

Your thesis should be between 10,000 and 15,000 words including footnotes, but excluding bibliography, appendices, list of abbreviations, short abstract and table of contents. Students awarded a Distinction (or sometimes a high merit) on the thesis may be invited to submit it to the Bodleian Library. They may also be invited to edit their work for submission for publication in the RSC Working Paper series.

FIELDWORK

We do not encourage original, field-based research on the degree, given the time constraints to which students are subject. A thesis can often be just as – or more – effective when it is based on secondary sources. The most important element of a thesis is formulating a suitable question – and usually this question is far more effectively answered by drawing on existing research or theory. Primary research in the form of, for example, online or telephone-based or web-based interviews or other research, remains possible however. If you plan on undertaking (telephone) interviews, you should refer to the discussions in your Research Methods classes regarding ethical research and ensure that you have completed the necessary forms for the department **in good time** (e.g. CUREC and/or any Risk Assessment and Travel forms). Any planned primary research will have to go through the ethics procedures outlined 🕮 below **before it is undertaken**. Forms and guidance notes are available under 'International Development/Research Ethics Information' on CANVAS (💻**)**. Your supervisor will need to read and sign off your application, which should then be submitted to the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) at ODID for approval.

Contact the Course Coordinator for further information about fieldwork-related travel and safety, including in relation to risk assessment and travel insurance.

Approval can take up to 4 weeks to come through, so please make sure you send your application to your supervisor BY THE END OF WEEK 2 IN HILARY TERM at the latest for any projects planned for the Easter Vacation or Trinity Term.

NB. The deadline for supervisors to submit the complete reviewed CUREC application to Worktribe is Friday of week 3 (5 February 2027). Any forms received late will not be considered until next term.

ETHICAL REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR RESEARCH IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

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

Why is ethics scrutiny and approval important?

- It is part of the responsible conduct of research;
- It demonstrates that your research has been conducted according to the highest ethical standards;
- It is important to protect the dignity, rights and welfare of all those involved in the research (whether they are participants, researchers or third parties);
- It is a University requirement;
- It is now the expectation - and in some cases formal requirement - of funding bodies.

You need ethics approval if...

Your research requires human subjects to participate directly by, for example,

- answering questions about themselves or their opinions – whether as members of the public or in elite interviews;
- performing tasks, or being observed – such as completing an online survey, participating in an experiment in a computer lab, reading words aloud for linguistic analysis; *OR*
- your research involves data (collected by you or others) about identified or identifiable people.

What you need to do

Under the University's policy, ethical approval must be obtained ***before*** a research project begins.

1. Complete a CUREC 1A checklist (available via CANVAS💻). If this shows a CUREC 2 form is required, complete this too (but please note that this is not advised as it can take up to 2 months to process).

2. Sign the form yourself and then obtain your supervisor's signature.

3. Give your completed form to the **Course Coordinator**, for forwarding to the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC). **Please note that you should do this by the deadline in week 3 of Hilary.**

Details of the procedure and application forms can be found on the International Development CANVAS💻 course tile in the module 'Research Ethics (Worktribe)'. Please look here first before going to any central University webpages.

Please note you must not undertake any interviews until you have received CUREC approval. Any late forms received after will not be considered until next term

THESIS SUPPORT FUND

A thesis support fund is available to support students in the preparation of their theses and can be applied to for expenditure related to fieldwork (see 🕮 STUDENT GRANTS for further information.

THESIS ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT

TIMETABLE OF DEADLINES

MICHAELMAS

General	Start to discuss possible topics and approaches with supervisor, and undertake a preliminary literature review
Week 8	You should complete a draft *Thesis Topic Approval Form* (See CANVAS💻) and submit this to your supervisor for feedback by **12 noon on Friday (4 December 6).** The form will ask you to explain your choice and list some of the questions you will ask in your thesis, as well as to list five essential sources
Vacation	Continue work on formulating your thesis topic, approach and literature review

HILARY

Week 2	Deadline to submit **CUREC form to your supervisor** for any research due to be carried out in Easter vacation is **Friday (29 January 2027)**
Week 3	Final *Thesis Topic Approval Form* (signed off by your supervisor) must be submitted to the Course Coordinator, for approval by the Chair of Examiners by **12 noon on Tuesday (2 February 2027)** **CHANGES OF TOPIC** - After Week 3 in Hilary term, **ALL substantive changes of topic** (i.e. those which affect the analytical or descriptive terrain of your thesis, and not simply minor changes to the title) **MUST** be formally approved by the Chair of Examiners. Please discuss this with your thesis supervisor if in doubt as to the extent of any proposed changes. Your supervisor should, in any case, approve **ALL** topic changes. Should you wish to make a substantive change to your topic, you will need to complete a ***Thesis Topic Change Form*** (on CANVAS💻).
Weeks 1-8	Start more detailed work on literature review and framing your thesis; regular meetings with your supervisor
Vacation	Continue working on your thesis literature review and undertake any primary research, where relevant.

TRINITY

Week 3	**RECOMMENDED DEADLINE ONLY:** by **12 noon on Friday (14 May 2027)**: Draft of one full chapter of thesis to be submitted to supervisor for comment
Week 3/4	Thesis Workshops [**Exact *time and date TBC***]: These are an opportunity to present your work in progress to a small group of your peers and a member of RSC staff, who will provide feedback on the subject matter, structure and general comments on your work.
Week 5	**RECOMMENDED DEADLINE ONLY:** by **12 noon on Friday (28 May 2027)**: Full draft of thesis to be submitted to supervisor for comment. Only your supervisor should be asked to read a draft of your thesis. **You may consult other members of staff for a discussion on a specific aspect of your work, but only with your supervisor's approval.** This will ensure that the RSC is fair to all students and will prevent assessors from reading your work in advance.
Week 8	Final submission of thesis to Examination Schools by 12 noon BST on **Thursday (17 June 2027).**

SUPERVISION OF THE THESIS

Changes of supervisor

Your supervisor will have been allocated, as far as is possible, based on your research interests. In Michaelmas and Hilary terms your supervisor provides general support for settling in, managing expectations, marking and reviewing formative essays and essay feedback, as well as discussing thesis topics and ideas. Students may, in some cases, change supervisor at the start of Hilary Term based on the topic of their thesis. The final decision about any new supervisor will be taken by the Course Director in conjunction with relevant academic staff. You should not approach staff members yourself. Staff have limited availability for supervision, so please do not be disappointed if your preferred thesis supervisor is unavailable.

Supervision and reading drafts

ONLY your supervisor should be asked to read a draft of part or all of your thesis. You may consult other members of staff for a discussion on a specific aspect of your work, but make sure you discuss this with your supervisor in advance. This is to ensure we are fair to all students and will prevent the markers from reading your work in advance.

In order to ensure equity, the standard entitlement for every student is to have one chapter and one full draft read by your supervisor. Your supervisor may agree to re-read some sections, but their ability to offer this will be at their discretion and based on their availability.

Thesis Supervision formerly ends in week 8 of Trinity Term, but in the case of students who have been granted an extension, some additional supervision time may be possible on a case by case basis where supervision meetings have been missed during term time.

Supervision varies from supervisor to supervisor. It will also be affected by your own working pattern and the nature of your research topic. Sometimes relatively frequent, short discussions can work well. At other times, longer, structured discussion or written comments may be more effective. It is up to you and your supervisor to establish how you will best work together. We would strongly recommend that during your first meeting, you agree on a timetable of meetings and what work you will submit before each meeting. We would expect you to meet your supervisor regularly throughout the year (roughly once a fortnight in term; you should not expect your supervisor to be available in vacations).

PROOF READING/COPY EDITING

Students have authorial responsibility for the written work they produce. Proof-reading represents the final stage of producing a piece of academic writing. Students are strongly encouraged to proof-read their own work, as this is an essential skill in the academic writing process. However, for longer pieces of work it is considered acceptable for students to seek the help of a third party for proof-reading. Such third parties can be professional proof-readers, fellow students, friends or family members. This policy does not apply to the supervisory relationship, nor in the case where proof-reading assistance is approved as a reasonable adjustment for disability.

The default position is that the guidance outlined below applies to all assessed written work where the *word limit is 10,000 words or greater*. However, departments and faculties may opt to specify that, for certain assessments, students should not be allowed any proof-reading assistance, if the purpose of the assessment is to determine students' abilities in linguistic areas such as grammar or syntax. In this case, the rubric for the assessment should state clearly that no proof-reading assistance is permitted.

The use of third-party proof-readers is <u>not</u> permitted for work where the *word limit is fewer than 10,000 words*.

What a proof-reader may and may not do

Within the context of students' written work, to proof-read is to check for, identify and suggest corrections for errors in text. In no cases should a proof-reader make material changes to a student's writing (that is, check or amend ideas, arguments or structure), since to do so is to compromise the authorship of the work.

A proof-reader may

- ✓ Identify typographical, spelling and punctuation errors;
- ✓ Identify formatting and layout errors and inconsistencies (e.g. page numbers, font size, line spacing, headers and footers);
- ✓ Identify grammatical and syntactical errors and anomalies or ambiguities in phrasing;
- ✓ Identify minor formatting errors in referencing (for consistency and order);
- ✓ Identify errors in the labelling of diagrams, charts or figures;
- ✓ Identify lexical repetition or omissions.

A proof-reader may not

- Add to content in any way;
- Check or correct facts, data calculations, formulae or equations;
- Rewrite content where meaning is ambiguous;
- Alter argument or logic where faulty;
- Re-arrange or re-order paragraphs to enhance structure or argument;
- Implement or significantly alter a referencing system;
- Re-label diagrams, charts or figures;
- Reduce content so as to comply with a specified word limit;
- Translate any part of the work into English.

AUTHORIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Students have overall authorial responsibility for their work and should choose whether they wish to accept the proof-reader's advice. A third-party proof-reader should mark up the student's work with suggested changes which the student may then choose to accept or reject.

Failure to adhere to these guidelines could constitute a breach of academic integrity and contravene the *Proctors' Disciplinary Regulations for Candidates in Examination*.

It is therefore the student's responsibility to provide the proof-reader with a copy of this policy statement.

With reference to this, we would draw your attention to points 3-6:

3. No candidate shall cheat or act dishonestly, or attempt to do so, in any way, whether before, during or after an examination, so as to obtain or seek to obtain an unfair advantage in an examination.
4. Candidates shall submit their own work for examination. No candidate shall plagiarise by presenting work from another source as their own, or by incorporating work or ideas from another source into their own work without full acknowledgement. Examples of this practice include: verbatim quotation, cutting and pasting from the internet, and paraphrasing without clear acknowledgement; collusion; misleading citation; failure to acknowledge assistance; and unacknowledged use of material written by professional agencies or other persons, or material generated by artificial intelligence.

5. Unless specifically permitted by the Special Subject Regulations for the examination concerned, no candidate shall commit auto-plagiarism, ie. submit to the examiners any work which they have previously submitted partially or in full for examination at this University or elsewhere. Work published previously in a peer-reviewed journal or similar may be cited, provided the candidate references it clearly and ensures that any wording, ideas or other material copied, paraphrased or drawn from it is made clear in the work being examined. However, where that publication includes material already submitted for examination, use of that previously examined material will constitute auto-plagiarism.
6. No person shall dishonestly give help to a candidate before, during or after an examination so as to give, or attempt to give, that candidate an unfair advantage in an examination.

ETHICAL USE OF GENERATIVE AI TOOLS

Generative AI (GenAI) tools, such as ChatGPT Edu, are artificial intelligence systems that can produce text, images, code, and other content based on patterns learnt from large datasets. Used thoughtfully, these tools can enhance learning and research. However, they also present limitations and risks, particularly regarding academic integrity.

AI tools are changing how we work at Oxford, whether that is improving the quality of our written communications or speeding up research tasks. It is important we work together to ensure their use supports our pedagogical aims of promoting original, critical thinking while complying with plagiarism guidelines.

As a department we recognise the value of AI in gathering and processing data, refining your arguments, and polishing submitted work. Indeed, the University has recently ensured all students can access advanced AI technology. This should enable higher quality research outcomes and expand learning opportunities. As such, we do not wish to be overly restrictive, but to help those using these tools feel confident in the boundaries of what is acceptable in our degree programmes.

NB. Each degree, and in some cases, each paper has its own Use of GenAI policy, so it is essential that you check what that is and adhere to it, especially when preparing summative assessments. Please see the Exam Resources tile in our degree home tile on CANVAS💻 for more details.

Plagiarism

It would constitute a breach of academic integrity to present GenAI content as your own work. Such conduct is considered plagiarism and will be treated as a disciplinary offence, in line with the University of Oxford's regulations on Plagiarism, penalties for which include failing the assessment and, in appropriate cases, expulsion.

For further information see: www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism

1. Support and Guidance

Further information, including resources and training materials to help students develop digital literacy and responsible GenAI practices can be found here: www.ox.ac.uk/gen-ai. Students unsure about the appropriate use of GenAI can also seek advice from the relevant course convenor and/or their supervisor.

Please see 🕮 CITATION AND PLAGIARISM for details on good practice in citation and avoiding plagiarism.

CHANGES OF THESIS TOPIC

After Week 3 in Hilary Term, **ALL substantive changes of topic** (i.e. those which affect the content of your thesis, and not simply minor changes to the title) **MUST** be formally approved by the Chair of Examiners. Please discuss this with your supervisor if in doubt as to the extent of any proposed changes. Your supervisor must, in any case, approve any changes to your thesis topic. Should you wish to change your topic substantively, you will need to submit a *Thesis Topic Change Form* to the Chair for approval (on CANVAS💻).

HOW TO FIND PAST THESES IN THE SSL

To find copies of previous theses by students on the MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies, go to the Bodleian Library main catalogue (http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk). Under 'Advanced search', from the Material Type drop down menu select 'Dissertations/Theses'. If you enter a search term for the word 'Refugee' anywhere in the record, this will bring up a list of recent theses which received distinction and which are available to be consulted in the Social Sciences Library.

A range of distinction level theses will also be available to you on CANVAS💻.

THESIS WRITING GUIDELINES

Students are required to write a multidisciplinary thesis, which will contribute to 40% of their overall mark for the course. Your thesis should be an original piece of work, **but not necessarily a work of primary research**. It must be a minimum of 10,000 and shouldn't exceed 15,000 words, including the footnotes but not the bibliography. Examiners are not required to read beyond 15,000 words and over-length theses typically incur a penalty (for details, please consult the examination conventions). Students awarded a distinction for their thesis are usually encouraged to publish it following the degree, often as an *RSC Working Paper*. A best thesis prize is awarded by the Examiners' Committee to the value of £100.

Below is a guide to writing your thesis. Your supervisor will be your primary point of reference to discuss any questions you might have regarding your specific area of work. However, the general information below may prove helpful to you in preparing your work.

What the examiners are looking for

- A well-chosen topic with a clear question and aim, which is rooted in the relevant literature.
- Appropriateness of the structure (and methodology in exceptional cases, and only where relevant).
- A critical attitude to evidence, and, where relevant, an awareness of ethical research.
- Good knowledge of relevant theory and how it applies to your question. Critical engagement with literature, including an *assessment* of other texts rather than simple description of them.
- Clear and accurate referencing, spelling and grammar
- The most successful theses will contain ideas or insights which make an original contribution, rather than simply summarising established wisdom. This can be either a matter of saying original things about something quite familiar; or discussing unfamiliar material within the context of a familiar debate but offering new perspectives. The most successful theses also critically engage with existing literature, rather than simply reporting or summarising.

Resources: MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies marking scale and guidelines (see full exam conventions on CANVAS💻)

Choosing your topic

The thesis is an opportunity for you to harness your enthusiasm for a particular intellectual interest. You may know this topic before you arrive in Oxford; other students may find inspiration from classes taken or lectures heard in Michaelmas Term, from another student or a member of staff. Regardless of where the idea comes from, you should make sure that the decision is yours, that you are excited by the avenues the thesis could explore, confident that you can live with it for many months and that you can convince others of the value of research in the area. Choose a topic which will allow you to capitalise on your past experience and academic strengths. This passion will be evident in the thesis and the appropriateness of the topic will have a bearing on your final mark.

Discuss it with your supervisor

You should take the opportunity during your first meeting with your supervisor to discuss any thoughts for your thesis topic, even if they are embryonic. Your supervisor will be able to direct you to reading material which could assist you in your choice, as well as identify key researchers in the field working in the department. Take Michaelmas term to explore possibilities and ideas, as you may change your interest after exposure to the course syllabus.

Identify a question

Once you have decided an area of research, frame it as a question. This will help you to identify avenues of enquiry and to think about your hypothesis. It will direct your thinking towards analysis and away from description of the existing situation.

Further considerations

You should consider existing scholarship in the area. If little scholarship exists, it will be difficult to produce a thesis from secondary sources. Check that your sources are in a language that you can understand; where your sources are located and whether you will need to travel; and whether it will require quantitative analysis.

Conducting research

Identify a framework of literature and debates

The will help to situate your thesis in current research. It includes analysing existing research in the area (perhaps by producing a short literature review), identifying current debates, evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of major arguments and looking for gaps within the literature, where you might locate your own research. Your supervisor will be able to point you in the direction of current research in the area, but it will be up to you to appraise the arguments, scrutinise the gaps and examine ideas of direct relevance to your research. Identify the key concepts pertinent to your question and begin to scrutinise them in relation to your topic.

Evaluate your sources

Drawing on the subjects discussed in Research Methods, be prepared to question your sources. Don't take it for granted that previous researchers have drawn the appropriate conclusions, or that a theory applies to all situations. Draw on your analysis of current debates in the field to really consider the validity of your sources. Refer to the raw sources used by other writers in the field. Ensure that your sources are not too dated.

Refine your question

Once you have undertaken preliminary research, refine your question. Discuss the scope of the question with your supervisor; your thesis will be weak if the research area is too broad or so thin that there is a dearth of sources. A clear and well-articulated question is absolutely crucial to good research.

Finally, be flexible. The literature you read during the course of your research may change the direction of your thoughts or your opinions.

Planning the thesis

Make a timetable

Draw up a timetable in which to write your thesis, in consultation with your supervisor. Arrange a date with your supervisor for him/her to read over one draft, allowing enough time for you subsequently to take on board arising suggestions. You will find that life in Hilary Term becomes particularly busy: even if a last-minute blitz has worked in the past, you might be disappointed with the results of it on a project of the scale of the thesis. You will also need to leave time to account for any computer hassles near the end. Always save your thesis to a USB stick/external hard-drive/email account as well as the hard drive of your computer, to circumvent the panic of computer crashes. Ensure that you have the document ready for the printer in time to get it to Examination Schools by the deadline.

You will be conducting some research during the writing process, as they are not always nicely delineated processes, so ensure that you leave enough time for this during the writing process.

Write a plan

Write a one-page document 'What am I trying to say' which will help you to collate and order your main arguments. This will help you to form a plan/structure for the work itself. You will probably find that you refine the plan as your ideas evolve, but make sure you still use a plan, as this will ensure your structure remains logical. Divide up your time according to the plan, ensuring you spend an appropriate amount of

time proportionate to the length of text or importance of the point to the general argument. Diversions might be tantalisingly interesting, but you will find that 15,000 words is a limiting space in which to fit all your research.

Writing the thesis

Define your key concepts – and early on!

Don't leave the definition of an important word/area in your question until the thirtieth page. Give due consideration to the definition of all your key concepts and theoretical aspects, ensuring that you evaluate their strengths and their relevance to your topic and your argument. Be sure to lay out your central research question, and justify its importance, right at the very start.

Convince your reader

Set out your argument early on in the thesis and bear in mind that your object is to persuade your reader of your hypothesis. Explain clearly at the start of the thesis why this topic is important and notable; in short, why your reader should care. Don't leave the theory only to the introduction and conclusion but integrate it properly throughout

Structure

The paragraph is the basic unit making up the thesis. Ensure that each paragraph has a point which is set out at the beginning, justified with evidence and related to the broader argument. Evidence, in the form of data or case studies, should be short and directly relevant. Don't quote chunky passages of text, unless you're analysing the theoretical implications of the text at length. Make sure you explain the significance of the example included. Each paragraph should build on to the argument of the previous one as the logical progression of your argument. You will have more material than space which will require you to carefully select and prioritise your material. Ask yourself how each example/point advances the argument as a litmus test for its inclusion in the thesis and to ensure that your message is clear. Be careful if your thesis is peppered with 'however' or 'on the other hand' as clarification or analysis of ideas is helpful, you need to ensure that your message is not confused or contradictory.

At the end of each section you should restate your major points in different words, relating them to the broader argument. This will help you to conclude the section and the thesis as a whole, as well as ensuring that the reader is entirely clear of the point you are making.

Familiarise yourself with academic work

Read articles in academic journals to gain stylistic hints. How do academics in the field construct their arguments and situate them within the existing scholarly debate? What techniques do they use to convince readers of the power of their own ideas? How do they use evidence without incorporating lengthy slabs of narrative?

Grammar, punctuation and spelling

You may use whichever convention is easiest for you (e.g. American English or UK spelling) as long as you are consistent. You are responsible for all aspects of the thesis and should allow enough time to edit the work carefully, including correction of spelling errors.

Referencing

The purpose of a bibliography is to allow readers to find the original book, article or source. You should adopt a clear and consistent system and take care to ensure the accuracy of each citation. Make sure that you only include sources to which you have referred in the thesis. (See 🕮 CITATION AND PLAGIARISM)

SUBMITTED WORK FORMAT AND PRESENTATION

All students have full and ultimate responsibility for the work they submit, for ensuring it is their own work, and for verifying information and checking references. In a world of AI, there will be especially detailed scrutiny in assessment and mistakes of fact and poor attribution of ideas and sources will be penalised as poor academic practice.

THESIS AND ESSAYS

- Must be presented in size 12 font (preferably Ariel or Calibri)
- Must be 1.5 line spaced
- **Must be written in Word using a standard cover sheet template file so as to avoid any identifying meta data appearing on your work.** The cover sheet should show your essay title, candidate number and word count on the front (You will find the templates on CANVAS💻)
- Must be anonymous, with only your candidate number on the front cover sheet

  NB: Do not include anything in your work that might identify you: this includes acknowledgments for help given, or references to your own previous work, such as a thesis or paper, which is unlikely to have been read by the rest of the class.

- Must have a bibliography that consists only of references that are cited in the text; the section title should be 'References Cited'.
- All direct quotations must be fully referenced, with the page number(s) of the quotation included in the in-text citation or footnote.
- Must follow a recognized system of referencing that accurately and consistently applied throughout. Either author-date or footnote style is acceptable, but please consult with your supervisor and course director as some referencing styles are more or less appropriate for certain types of research. Most theses use an author-date system (see 🕮 REFERENCING for the House Style Guide for Referencing and Bibliographies).
- Shouldn't exceed the stipulated **word limit** and state the word count clearly on the front cover sheet.

  Exceeding the given word count for submitted work may incur an academic penalty (please refer to the degree's Exam Conventions for further details – they will be published on Canvas in Michaelmas Term).

  NB: The word count for all submissions includes your main text, tables, figures, in-text citations and any explanatory and discursive footnotes (which should be kept to a minimum). It excludes reference lists such as your bibliography, any appendices, your list of abbreviations, a short abstract of up to 300 words, and your table of contents.

  Parenthetical (in-text) reference systems are generally preferred for this degree, however, footnote referencing is permitted for submissions following certain disciplinary conventions (e.g., Law or History). In such cases, notes can be excluded from the word count insofar as they constitute referencing. However, please note that any commentary or explanatory text around these references MUST be included in the word count. We recommend following the system outlined in the Chicago Manual of Style (see 🕮 REFERENCING for the House Style Guide for Referencing and Bibliographies).

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

When and how to submit:

You will need to submit electronically **via Inspera:**

- your Research Design Essay (by 12 noon GMT on Thursday Week 9 Michaelmas, 10 December 2026)
- your Quantitative Research Methods Essay (by 12 noon GMT on Thursday Week 9 Hilary, 18 March 2027)
- any option course essays (by 12 noon BST on Friday Week 0 Hilary, 23 April 2027) **NB. Submission deadlines for option essays from outside of the degree may differ from this**
- your thesis (by 12 noon BST on Thursday Week 8 Trinity, 17 June 2027)

It is your responsibility to ensure you are familiar with the online submission process in advance of any deadline. Full information is provided on the Oxford students website:
(www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/submission).

Declaration of authorship

You will also be asked to complete an authorship declaration electronically via Inspera, and the word count will be checked. ***Penalties may be applied if you exceed the word limit.***

GenAI Declaration

If you use GenAI in an assessed piece of work, you need to declare it. Your declaration should appear at the end of your essay or dissertation, before your bibliography.
Any declaration made needs to address the following: which permitted use of GenAI are you acknowledging? Which GenAI tool did you use (name and version)? What prompt did you provide? What did you use the tool for? How have you used or changed the GenAI's output?

This should be done as follows:

> I acknowledge the use of [insert AI system(s) and link] to [specific use of generative artificial intelligence].
> The prompts used were [list of prompts].
> The output from these prompts was used to [explain use].
> The value that this AI tool offered to me during my assignment preparation included: [XXX].
> I modified the output by [XXX].

For example: where a student uses GenAI to improve the tone and style of writing, this may be done as follows:

> I acknowledge the use of ChatGPT Edu (https://chatgpt.com/) to proof-read my own work. On 4 May 2025 I pasted my entire essay (link to text here) into ChatGPT with the instruction to "Identify in this essay the typos and grammatical errors, sentences with passive voice, repeated words or sentences, and all unnecessary adverbs". The output (link here) was then modified further to better represent my own writing. The value that this AI tool offered to me during my assignment preparation included: [XXX].

Screening/retaining an electronic copy of your work (Guidance is available on CANVAS💻)

You will be required to use Inspera when you submit your work. Inspera will run it through *Turnitin*, a plagiarism detection service which screens students' work and compares it with the *Turnitin* database. You will be asked to complete an authorship declaration that the electronic material you have screened is your own work. Checks will be made of such declarations and dishonesty will be treated as an attempt to cheat in the examination. You will be responsible for retaining an electronic copy of your submitted work until the examination is concluded.

💻 COVER SHEET TEMPLATES AND GUIDANCE WILL BE AVAILABLE ON CANVAS

HOUSE STYLE FOR REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Clear referencing is important to enable the reader to trace any publication referred to in the text, including printed sources such as books, journal articles, conference proceedings, government publications or theses, and electronic or audio-visual sources such as URLs, podcasts, documentaries, e-journals, archived discussion list messages or references from a CD-ROM database.

We recommend the Chicago Manual of Style system for referencing. You can find a simple guidance on the style here https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

For more complicated questions about referencing unusual documents or unpublished sources, consult the full manual, which is held in the Bodleian (The Chicago Manual of Style, 17th Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

The link above offers a quick guide to both the footnote system and the author-date system, however we have a preference for the author-date system, which is the norm for social sciences, and which also has the advantage of being succinct. However, some summative option course essays and theses make extensive use of archival or unpublished documents, and in those cases the footnote system is preferable. The best approach is to consult your supervisor.

NB: We recommend the Chicago Manual of Style for referencing only. On questions of English spelling and usage, we would prefer students to follow English language and grammatical conventions.

6.
EXAMINATION AND ASSESSMENT

NOTES ON THE EXAMINED ELEMENTS

The final mark for the degree is made up of a mean of five marks weighted as follows:

i)	Examination Paper I (Legal and Normative Frameworks)	15%
ii)	Examination Paper II (Political and Anthropological Frameworks)	15%
iii)	Option Course Paper 1 (essay or exam)	10%
iv)	Option Course Paper 2 (essay or exam)	10%
v)	Submission (Research Design Essay for Qualitative Research Methods)	5%
vi)	Submission (Quantitative Research Methods Essay)	5%
vii)	Submission (Thesis)	40%

Papers I and II will be in-person, computer-based, examinations, each of which requires 3 essays of around 1500 words to be written in 3 hours, usually in week 1 or 2 of Trinity Term. Any option course exams will be 2 hour, computer-based, and in-person, also in week 1 or 2 of Trinity. The dates of these, however, will be confirmed approximately 5 weeks beforehand. Any option course essays will be 3,000 words and due in at 12 noon on Friday of Week 0 of Trinity Term. **Please note, mode, length and timing of assessments for options external to the degree may differ from this.**

The **Thesis** is 15,000 words, which accounts for 40% of your final mark, and must engage in the multi-disciplinary analysis of a single issue in forced migration. The word count should be no less than 10,000 words and should not exceed 15,000 words. See 🕮 FORMAT AND PRESENTATION for more details.

The topic of this essay must be submitted to your supervisor via the *Thesis Topic Approval Form (in* CANVAS💻) by the end of Michaelmas, and then the signed form must be submitted to the Course Coordinator by week 3 of Hilary for approval by the Chair of the Examiners. See 🕮 EXAM_DEADLINES for specific dates.

The **Qualitative Research Design Essay** for Research Methods involves a 2,500 word assessed piece of research design in response to a written brief, which will be released in **week 2 of Michaelmas Term**.

The **Quantitative Research Methods Essay** will involve students writing a 2,500 essay analysing one quantitative paper of their choice. The essay will contain a description of the research question, a critical discussion of the methodological approach adopted by the authors and a proposal for a research design that addresses some of the limitations identified. See Exam Resources in CANVAS💻 for more information.

SUMMARY OF THE EXAMINED ELEMENTS FOR THIS DEGREE

The successful completion of the MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies Degree requires the submission of the following assessment units:

Assessment Title	Weighting	Method of Assessment	Exam/Submission Date and Term	Courses Relating to this Assessment Unit	Comments
Individual Qualitative Research Design Essay	5%	Essay	12 noon BST Friday Week 9 Michaelmas	Research Methods I (Michaelmas)	One written Research Design Essay of a maximum of 2,500 words (including footnotes, but excluding bibliography, appendices, list of abbreviations, short abstract and table of contents)
Quantitative Research Methods Essay	5%	Essay	12 noon BST Friday Week 9 Hilary	Research Methods II (Hilary)	One written Essay of a maximum of 2,500 words (including footnotes, but excluding bibliography, appendices, list of abbreviations, short abstract and table of contents)
Paper I: International Legal and Ethical Frameworks	15%	In-person computer-based exam	Week 1 Trinity	International Human Rights and Refugee Law I (Michaelmas) and Movement and Morality (Hilary)	The exams are likely to take place in Week 1 of Trinity term but there is a possibility this may change.
Paper II: Political and Anthropological Frameworks	15%	In-person computer-based exam	Week 1 Trinity	The Anthropology of Forced Migration and The Politics of Forced Migration (Michaelmas)	
Option Paper I	10%	In-person computer-based exam OR Essay	*12 noon Friday BST Week 0 (for essays) and Week 1 for exams	Option Course I (Hilary)	3,000 word essay OR a 2 hour exam (depending on the mode of assessment chosen by the convenor). The exams are likely to take place in Week 1 or 2 of Trinity term but there is a possibility this may change. ***Submission deadlines and dates of exams for external options may differ from this timeframe**
Option Paper I	10%	In-person computer-based exam OR Essay	*12 noon Friday BST Week 0 (for essays) and Week 1 for exams	Option Course II (Hilary)	
Multidisciplinary Thesis	40%	Thesis	12 noon BST Thursday Week 8 Trinity	All courses	A thesis of 10,000 to 15,000 words (including footnotes, but excluding bibliography, appendices, list of abbreviations, short abstract and table of contents) on a subject approved by the supervisor.

EXAMINATION ORGANISATION

What follows is a summary of the most important facts that relate to the examinations process. Further information can be found in the *Examination Regulations* on the University website, and the Education Committee's notes of guidance on their website. **Please also ensure that you read the Examination Conventions on CANVAS (💻) for further details about the examination and marking process**.

Conduct

The proper conduct of all examinations in the University comes under the jurisdiction of the Proctors (see below for further information).

Proctors' Office https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/our-people/university-officers/proctors-office

The fair and proper conduct of all examinations in the university comes under the jurisdiction of the Proctors. There are two Proctors who are University officers, elected annually from the academic staff, who ensure generally that the statutes, customs and privileges of the University are observed. When a complaint is received, the Proctors have the power to summon any member of the University to help them in their enquiries. A student is entitled to appear before the Proctors to put his/her case and may be accompanied by a friend or an adviser.

Complaints and academic appeals (see also 🕮 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS)

https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/complaints

Entering for Examinations

You will receive and email invitation from Student Self Service to complete your examination entry by a given date. You **must** enter for your examinations by the end of **Week 6 of Michaelmas term.** You can find out more about this process here: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/examination-entry. For alternative arrangements or examination adjustments see: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/examination-adjustments.

Pass mark

A pass mark must be achieved in all the examined elements of the degree. A candidate who fails an element of the examinations may, at the discretion of the Examiners, be permitted to retake, usually by next year's set deadlines.

Submission of examined work

Where deadlines are imposed, it is essential that they are strictly complied with. Penalties can be imposed for non-observance. At their most severe, these can amount to students being deemed to have failed part of their course.

Extensions

In very exceptional circumstances (usually acute illness or unforeseen circumstances) it may be possible to request a short extension of time to hand in examined work. Contact your **College Tutor or Course Coordinator** who will advise you on how best to submit this request to Student Administration for consideration. **DO NOT APPLY DIRECTLY TO YOUR SUPERVISOR.** If your request is accepted, it will be forwarded to the Chair of Examiners for the MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies.

Please note that such extensions should be approved **in advance**, and must be requested through your College. Failure to hand in papers and deposit your work by the deadline and without prior approval may result in failure to complete the degree.

Sitting your in-person examinations

All written examinations on this degree are **in-person, computer-based examinations** held at Examination Schools on the High Street. Practical information and support for sitting in-person exams is provided on the Oxford students website (www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/guidance). NB: written examinations set for option courses external to the degree may follow a different format.

Academic dress

All members of the University are required to wear academic dress with *subfusc* clothing when attending any university examination. See https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/dress for more information.

Preparing for Examinations

To help you prepare for your exams in the first week of Trinity, we will hold an informal Exam Briefing/feedback session at the end of Hilary. The formative essays written during the year are designed to prepare you for your written exams. Further details of the workshop will be circulated during Hilary.

Mock Exams and Exam Orientation Sessions are an excellent way to familiarise yourself with the Examination Schools, exam regulations and to trial approved exam adjustments. Staff will be on hand to answer any questions you have in relation to your exams. See here for more information and how to book: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/wellbeing.

Importance of answering the correct question and the question as set

Students must also take care to type their examination answers in the correct question box in Inspera, otherwise they risk it being taken as the answer to a different question and given a fail mark.

You must answer questions in the exact form in which they have been set for all written work. This is particularly important in the in-person, computer-based examinations which make up part of your final mark. The question is not a prompt. If you rephrase it, you will be at a serious disadvantage, since we are only able to assess your work under one of the questions as formulated. This does not mean that you cannot critically evaluate the under-lying implications and assumptions of the question – indeed, this is exactly what we are looking for!

Arrangement in Cases of Illness and Disability

Candidates requiring special arrangements for the examinations for reasons of illness or disability must make prior application through their respective colleges to the Proctors.

The Proctors' rules concerning arrangements in cases of illness and disability are detailed in the University Student Handbook available online: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/student-handbook. Subject to the provisions given in these notes, a candidate who fails to appear at the time and place appointed for any part of his or her examination shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the examination.

Mitigating Circumstances

Information on what to do if you would like examiners to be aware of any mitigating circumstances 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/student-handbook).

Problems completing your assessments

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

EXAMINATION REGULATIONS

The *Examination Regulations* contain most of the University's formal regulations relating to examinations and to the programmes of study offered by the University. They are available online at: https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/

These contain most of the University's formal regulations relating to examinations and to the programmes of study offered by the University.

The following sections are of particular use:

Regulations specific to the MSc by Coursework in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies:
https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/Regulation?code=mosbciraforcmigrstud&srchYear=2024&srchTerm=1&year=2024&term=1.

Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations:
https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/Regulation?code=rftcofunivexam&srchYear=2024&srchTerm=1&year=2024&term=1

Regulations Concerning the Status of Graduate Taught Students:
https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/Regulation?code=rctsogradtaugstud&srchYear=2024&srchTerm=1&year=2024&term=1

***General Regulations for the Degree of Master of Science by Coursework*:**
https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/Regulation?code=grftdomosciebycour&srchYear=2024&srchTerm=1&year=2023&term=1

EXAMINATION CONVENTIONS (💻)

Examination conventions are the formal record of the specific assessment standards for the course to which they apply. They set out how your examined work will be marked and how the resulting marks will be used to arrive at a final result and classification of your award. They include information on: marking scales, marking and classification criteria, scaling of marks, progression, resits, penalties for late submission and under/over-length work.

The full examination conventions for the MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies will be published on CANVAS **(**💻) in Michaelmas term.

PAST EXAM PAPERS

Past exam papers are available in the Library or in the Exam Paper Archive online here:
https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/discovery/search?vid=44OXF_INST:SOLO&search_scope=EXAMP

PREVIOUS EXAMINERS' REPORTS

Anonymised copies of Examiners' reports from past years can be found on CANVAS **(**💻**).** The reports for the previous year will be published in Michaelmas Term.

GOOD PRACTICE IN CITATION AND AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

Presenting work or ideas from another source as your own, with or without consent of the original author, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition, as is the use of material generated wholly or in part through use of artificial intelligence (save when use of AI for assessment has received prior authorisation e.g. as a reasonable adjustment for a student's disability). Plagiarism can also include re-using your own work without citation. Under the regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offence.

The necessity to acknowledge others' work or ideas applies not only to text, but also to other media, such as computer code, illustrations, graphs etc. It applies equally to published text and data drawn from books and journals, and to unpublished text and data, whether from lectures, theses or other students' essays. You must also attribute text, data, or other resources downloaded from websites.

Online avoiding plagiarism course/Use of *Turnitin*

By the end of Week 0 Michaelmas term, you will be required to show that you have read and understood the University's guidelines on academic good practice, which are available at:
http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism

You will also have to take an online courses: Avoiding Plagiarism which is available at:
https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/courses/83663/pages/university-of-oxford-online-tutorial-and-quiz-on-avoiding-plagiarism

Avoiding Plagiarism involves an online test. Once you have completed the test successfully, the system will automatically send an e-mail confirming your results to your University e-mail address. Please check carefully that this has not been sent to your junk mail box.

Please print out this confirmation of successfully completing the test and submit it to the Course Coordinator **by 12 noon Friday Week 0 Michaelmas.**

University of Oxford Education Committee (EC) notes of guidance on avoiding plagiarism:

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the copying or paraphrasing of other people's work or ideas into your own work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition.

Collusion is another form of plagiarism involving the unauthorised collaboration of students (or others) in a piece of work.

Cases of suspected plagiarism in assessed work are investigated under the disciplinary regulations concerning conduct in examinations. Intentional or reckless plagiarism may incur severe penalties, including failure of your degree or expulsion from the university.

Why does plagiarism matter?

It would be wrong to describe plagiarism as only a minor form of cheating, or as merely a matter of academic etiquette. On the contrary, it is important to understand that plagiarism is a breach of academic integrity. It is a principle of intellectual honesty that all members of the academic community should acknowledge their debt to the originators of the ideas, words, and data which form the basis for their own work. Passing off another's work as your own is not only poor scholarship, but also means that you have failed to complete the learning process. Deliberate plagiarism is unethical and can have serious consequences for your future career; it also undermines the standards of your institution and of the degrees it issues.

What forms can plagiarism take?

- Verbatim quotation of other people's intellectual work without clear acknowledgement. Quotations must always be identified as such by the use of either quotation marks or indentation, with adequate citation. It must always be apparent to the reader which parts are your own independent work and where you have drawn on someone else's ideas and language.

- Paraphrasing the work of others by altering a few words and changing their order, or by closely following the structure of their argument, is plagiarism because you are deriving your words and ideas from their work without giving due acknowledgement. Even if you include a reference to the original author in your own text you are still creating a misleading impression that the paraphrased wording is entirely your own. It is better to write a brief summary of the author's overall argument in your own words than to paraphrase particular sections of his or her writing. This will ensure you have a genuine grasp of the argument and will avoid the difficulty of paraphrasing without plagiarising. You must also properly attribute all material you derive from lectures.

- Cutting and pasting from the Internet or from GenAI tools. (See the above section on 🕮 THE ETHICAL USE OF GENAI.

- Collusion. This can involve unauthorised collaboration between students, failure to attribute assistance received, or failure to follow precise regulations on group work projects. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are entirely clear about the extent of collaboration permitted, and which parts of the work must be your own.

- Inaccurate citation. It is important to cite correctly, according to the conventions of your discipline. Additionally, you should not include anything in a footnote or bibliography that you have not actually consulted. If you cannot gain access to a primary source, you must make it clear in your citation that your knowledge of the work has been derived from a secondary text (e.g. Bradshaw, D. *Title of Book*, discussed in Wilson, E., *Title of Book* (London, 2004), p. 189).

- Failure to acknowledge. You must clearly acknowledge all assistance which has contributed to the production of your work, such as advice from fellow students, laboratory technicians, and other external sources. This need not apply to the assistance provided by your tutor or supervisor, nor to ordinary proofreading, but it is necessary to acknowledge other guidance which leads to substantive changes of content or approach.

- Professional agencies. You should neither make use of professional agencies in the production of your work nor submit material which has been written for you. It is vital to your intellectual training and development that you should undertake the research process unaided.

- **Autoplagiarism. You must not submit work for assessment which you have already submitted (partially or in full) to fulfil the requirements of another degree course or examination.**

Not just printed text!

The necessity to reference applies not only to text, but also to other media, such as computer code, illustrations, graphs etc. It applies equally to published text drawn from books and journals, and to unpublished text, whether from lecture handouts, theses or other students' essays. You must also attribute text or other resources downloaded from web sites.

Please also refer to 🕮 REFERENCING for guidance on good referencing practice, and the house style for referencing and bibliographies.

AFTER THE EXAMINATIONS

Feedback on your thesis

Under the direction of the Chair of Examiners, written feedback is provided to all students on their theses. (See 🕮 FEEDBACK for more information).

Receiving your results

You will receive an automatic e-mail once your examination results are available via your Student Self Service Academic and Assessment Results page. You will need to log in to Student Self Service using your Oxford Single Sign-on at: http://www.ox.ac.uk/students. Your Academic and Assessment Results page will detail all of your assessment results and your final classification. Results are generally available by the first half of July.

NB: You will not receive results for any of the assessment units which make up your final degree until the final results and degree classification is published in early July after the final exam board meeting.

Best thesis prize and Gil Loescher Prize for Best Overall Performance

The Examiners may, at their discretion, award a prize for the best thesis submitted by a student, and for the best overall performance by a student, taking into account performance in each of the individual examined elements. A prize of £100 will be sent to the winners during the summer.

Deposit of Theses receiving distinction in the Bodleian

The Examiners will normally recommend that theses awarded a distinction (or sometimes a high merit) should be deposited in the Bodleian Library. The Course Coordinator will write to you if this is the case, asking you to complete an *Information for Thesis Cataloguing* form (GSO.26b) form.

Graduation from the MSc

Degrees are not automatically conferred at the end of the course, but at a degree ceremony (in person) or *in absentia*: http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/graduation/ceremonies/.

Degree ceremonies are arranged via your college, rather than by the Department. You should receive an invitation to a degree ceremony quite soon after arriving in Oxford (during Michaelmas term). Degree ceremonies will take place in late July and mid-September. You should check with your college to find out which ceremonies you are eligible for.

Publishing your work

Students who get a distinction for their MSc theses may be encouraged to edit their research for submission for simultaneous publication in the RSC Working Paper series, and a number of the Working Papers on these sites have originated in this way.

You are also very much encouraged to participate in public debates on forced migration and refugee-related issues, for instance by publishing in various forums, and we are proud to be associated with you. We suggest you identify yourself as follows: **XX is/was an MSc student in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies, Oxford, 2026-27**.

Progression from MSc to DPhil

On completion of the degree, you can apply to study for a DPhil at Oxford. This could be in International Development with ODID, or with another Department of the University (subject to their eligibility criteria). Admission to read for a DPhil at ODID is at the discretion of the Graduate Studies Committee, which will take into account:

1. the feasibility and coherence of your research proposal;
2. the availability of appropriate supervision; and
3. the marks you achieve in the MSc*.

If your application is successful, you will be admitted as a Probationary Research Student (PRS) leading to the DPhil programme. During the first academic year you will be required to do a number of tutorials on relevant topics with your supervisor(s); to undertake coursework for examination; and most importantly to submit a substantial piece of work outlining your proposed research. Your upgrading from PRS to the status of DPhil candidate is subject to an assessment of your written work.

You will receive more detailed guidelines about applying for admission to PRS and reading for a DPhil at Oxford during Michaelmas term.

*** ODID normally requires an overall grade of 67% with a distinction (70% or above) on your thesis, although achieving these marks will not guarantee you a place on the DPhil.**

COMPLAINTS AND ACADEMIC APPEALS

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

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

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

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

Complaints

If your concern or complaint relates to teaching or other provision made by the faculty/department, then you should raise it with the Chair of the Teaching Committee (Course Director) or with the Director of Graduate Studies as appropriate. Complaints about departmental facilities should be made to the Departmental administrator (Graham Bray). If you feel unable to approach one of those individuals, you may contact the Head of Department/Faculty (Professor Jocelyn Alexander). The officer concerned will attempt to resolve your concern/complaint informally.

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

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

Academic appeals

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

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

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

Please remember in connection with all the academic appeals that:

- The Proctors are not empowered to challenge the academic judgement of examiners or academic bodies.
- The Proctors can consider whether the procedures for reaching an academic decision were properly followed; i.e. whether there was a significant procedural administrative error; whether there is evidence of bias or inadequate assessment; whether the examiners failed to take into account special factors affecting a candidate's performance.
- On no account should you contact your examiners or assessors directly.

7.
DEGREE ADMINISTRATION

UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

The university has a wide range of policies and regulations that apply to students. These are easily accessible through the A-Z of University regulations, codes of conduct and polices available on the Oxford Student website: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/regulations?wssl=1.

While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this Handbook, it is for guidance only and does not constitute authoritative statements of University policy and practice in particular areas. For these, other documents should be consulted, including:

Oxford University Statutes and Regulations https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/OXINTRANET-strategy-governance-planning/SitePages/legislation.aspx?web=1 .

Residence requirements

MSc candidates are required to keep statutory residence and pursue their studies in Oxford for no less than three terms after admission. The *Examination Regulations* state that: '... student members who are reading any other degree of the University shall reside, for the period prescribed for that degree, within twenty-five miles from Carfax [centre of Oxford].'

This means that students are required to reside in Oxford for at least weeks 1-8 for Michaelmas, Hilary and Trinity terms. Anyone wishing to live further than this will need to apply in writing to the Proctors who may authorise this in special circumstances.

Overseas students: Tier 4 visa obligations (https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/during/legal?wssl=1)

If you are here on a Tier 4 student visa, you have the responsibility to ensure that you comply with the conditions of that visa. Not complying is a criminal offence and can lead to removal from the UK and refusal of future visas for a period of 1-10 years. Your responsibility includes making sure you do not stay beyond the expiry date as stated on your visa, unless you have made a renewal application. You must also adhere to the work conditions of your visa. Please make sure to co-operate with the University in fulfilling its Tier 4 duties so that it maintains its status as a Highly Trusted Sponsor enabling international students to study at Oxford.

Should you wish to stay in the UK to work when you have finished your studies you will need to apply for visa permission to do so. To find out more go to: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/after/work

Paid employment

The University recommends that full-time graduate students on a taught course (such as a Master's) do not undertake more than 8 hours' paid work each week whilst studying.

Students who wish to take up paid employment are required to seek advice from their supervisor in the first instance. Students must ensure that paid employment does not impair their studies. The MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies is a serious and intense academic programme, and paid employment is advisable for students only under exceptional circumstances. If permission is granted, your supervisor will monitor on a termly basis that a proper balance is maintained between paid employment and academic coursework. Please note that University guidelines stipulate that master's courses are expected to entail full-time commitment. Please refer to the university's guidelines at: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/during/work.

Internships/Pro Bono Work

Sometimes students on the course agree to undertake volunteer work with local refugee/migration organisations. While this is often helpful to the organisation and to the students concerned, it is important that such commitments are limited to a maximum of 2 hours a week to ensure that this participation does not interfere with their academic commitments.

University policies on conflict of interest / academic integrity in research

You will find details of these on CANVAS (💻) on the International Development tile under General Student Information and Policies.

STUDENT CONSULTATION AND FEEDBACK

You are encouraged to make suggestions for change and improvements at any time to your teachers and supervisor.

Suggestions from students for high quality additions to the collection of readings in the library are especially welcomed.

Class representatives

During Induction Week we ask you to elect two or three class representatives from among your number. The representatives act as a channel for the class to convey their collective views to the Course Director.

Training for student representatives - Oxford University Student Union (OUSU) run training courses for class representatives, which we strongly encourage you to attend. The OUSU will get in touch with you early in Michaelmas, and you can contact them direct for further information via this link: https://www.oxfordsu.org/.

Social Secretary

We will also ask you to choose one of your elected class representatives to act as social secretary for your cohort. They will be responsible for organising social events and gatherings to help you get to know each other and bond as a group. The names of these elected student representatives will be published on CANVAS (💻) by week 2.

Student Consultative Committee

One of the main forums for student feedback are the meetings of the Student Consultative Committee. These usually take place in Week 8 of each term. These meetings can be used to discuss students' reactions to the course, as well as other related issues. The meeting is chaired by the Course Director, and notes are taken by the Course Coordinator (for consideration by the MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies Teaching Committee). These meetings are usually attended by the student representatives, although any member of the class is welcome to attend. But, we ask that your representatives should solicit the views of the whole class before each meeting, and come prepared to speak to these during the meeting.

Departmental representation

Student representatives may be asked to attend a departmental meeting with the Head of Department, usually held twice a year. This is a forum for any department-specific feedback to be given, or for recent new developments to be announced by the HoD.

Division and University representation

Student representatives to sit on the Divisional Board are selected through a process organised by the Oxford University Student Union (OUSU). Details can be found on the OUSU website along with information about student representation at the university level.

University wide evaluation

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

Individual student course evaluation

At the end of Michaelmas and Hilary terms, all students are asked to evaluate the courses they have studied. All answers are confidential and anonymous. Detailed entries will be kept on file and a summary of the views expressed will be discussed at MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies Teaching Committee meetings.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Details of the wide range of sources of support available can be found on the Oxford Students website (www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare), including in relation to mental and physical health and disability.

WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT

If you have any queries regarding procedural or administrative matters, or to do with the administration of the exams, please contact the ***Course Coordinator***, Andrea Smith (andrea.smith@qeh.ox.ac.uk; tel: (2)81701).

Your first port of call for any academic matters should be your ***supervisor***: (see 🕮 SUPERVISION for further details about supervision.

However, the ***Course Director*** (Matthew Gibney) is also available to discuss any matters to do with the course with you: please e-mail him to arrange an appointment (matthew.gibney@qeh.ox.ac.uk).

If your issue is to do with teaching on the course, or with the course itself, and you need to speak to someone outside the course about this, you should contact the ODID Director of Graduate Studies (DGS): Professor Corneliu Bjola (corneliu.bjola@qeh.ox.ac.uk).

You can find more information and staff contact information via the ODID Departmental Website: http://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/

WITHIN YOUR COLLEGE

All students are assigned a College Adviser, who is usually a Fellow of the College.

Your College Adviser can:

- provide pastoral support, for example on health, personal or coping issues, and/or direct you to appropriate persons for assistance;
- monitor your progress, by discussing your University supervision reports and by being available for consultation, either in person or by email;
- discuss with you any problems or difficulties you may be experiencing in your Department or Faculty, and/or with your supervisor;
- consult the Tutor for Graduates/Senior Tutor if there are concerns about your academic progress and if you appear to be experiencing difficulties with your academic work;
- offer guidance on sources of support available within the College and University

In addition your College Adviser may be able to offer you advice on academic-related matters such as: applications for research funding, conferences and seminar attendance, publication and career plans.[5]

Your College Adviser is *not* expected to perform the role of your Department or Faculty Supervisor(s), and is not responsible for directing your academic work or for giving detailed academic guidance.

You will first meet your College Adviser during your first term, and you are encouraged to contact your College Adviser as and when you need advice or help. (You should also feel free to consult other College officers as necessary: see below.)

Your College Adviser may be changed during periods of sabbatical or other academic leave. Should there be reasons for you to seek a change of Adviser, you should contact your Tutor for Graduates/Senior Tutor.

Every college has their own systems of support for students, please refer to your college handbooks (which can be found on your college websites) for further information on who to contact and what support is available.

[5]College Advisers would not normally be expected to provide academic references, as others are better placed to do so. They might provide a reference for other purposes, such as Junior Deanship, or a character reference.

FURTHER INFORMATION

This guidance focuses specifically on the role of your College Adviser. Your College Adviser will be able to direct you to relevant sources of advice and support, which you should feel free to consult as necessary. These might include (but are not limited to):

- College Chaplain or Welfare Fellow
- MCR President or MCR Welfare Officers
- College Nurse or GP
- College Counsellor
- College Tutor for Graduates/Senior Tutor or Academic Administrator
- College/Tutorial Office or equivalent
- College Bursary or equivalent
- Financial Aid/Student Hardship Officer

WITHIN THE WIDER UNIVERSITY

Central University Student Handbook (https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/student-handbook**)**

As well as providing general information and guidance you may need to help you to make the most of the opportunities on offer at the University of Oxford, this handbook also gives you formal notification and explanation of the University's codes, regulations, policies and procedures.

For all student-related information visit the Oxford Students website at
https://www.ox.ac.uk/students

CANVAS https://canvas.ox.ac.uk
Source of all course-related information and regularly updated.

IT Services https://www.ox.ac.uk/staff/it/get-support
For all your IT needs.

The Bodleian Libraries
https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/
Links to the catalogues, individual libraries and library support services

Careers http://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/
Comprehensive guidance and support for life after the MSc.

Language Centre http://www.lang.ox.ac.uk/
If you need foreign languages for your study or help in improving your academic English.

Overseas students
Advice for overseas students on a wide range of matters is available from the International Student Advisory Service, including visa information: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/international

Equality and Diversity Unit https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/how-we-are-run/equality-diversity

See SPECIAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES below for further information on disability support.

Health, Welfare, Childcare and Financial Hardship
Further information regarding Equality, Health and Welfare, counselling, childcare and financial hardship, can be found here: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare

University *Gazette* http://www.ox.ac.uk/gazette/
The University *Gazette* is a useful source of information on changes to regulations, prizes available, lectures and seminars, jobs, accommodation etc.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I change my course?

In theory, this is possible; but in practice, changing course can be difficult. Please speak to your Course Director for advice.

Who do I speak to if I'm taken seriously ill or need to leave Oxford unexpectedly?

Please familiarise yourself with what to do in cases of illness or medical emergency: you will find a link on the University's Student Health site: http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/health.

In all cases, please let both your College Advisor and also, if possible, your Supervisor or the MSc RFMS Course Coordinator know what has happened.

What financial help is available should I have unexpected funding problems while on course?

Both your College and the Department may be able to help and advise you with financial problems. You should contact, in the first instance, your College Adviser (or the College Financial Aid/Student Hardship Officer, if your college has such a post). Within the Department, please contact the Graduate Studies Administrator, Dominique Attala (tel: (2)81806; dominique.attala@qeh.ox.ac.uk). Please note, however, that support may only be offered in cases of financial hardship and where your expected sources of funding have failed.

What do I do if I need to take a break from studying (suspend status)?

You may apply to the Graduate Studies Committee to suspend status for a specified period.
If your application is approved, you will not be required to pay fees during the period of suspension and will resume your former status at the end of the period.

Suspension of status may be for between one and three terms. In exceptional cases, additional terms may be requested, but these need the additional approval of the University Education Committee as dispensation from the Examination Regulations is required. It can only be granted while a student still has status available to return to.

Suspension of status is normally granted where you are not able actively to study. This could be for various reasons, but the most common circumstances include health-related/personal grounds, domestic crisis or unforeseeable financial difficulty.

When a student suspends, the clock stops, and the student returns from suspension at the point when they departed. Normally students do not have access to University/College facilities (including libraries) whilst suspended as it is assumed they are not studying (though e-mail access may be retained, to allow you to keep in touch with your supervisor(s) etc).

Applications for suspension of status must be made to the Graduate Studies Committee (through the Graduate Studies Administrator) via student self-service, and should be for a specified period of time; and *must* have the support of the supervisor(s) and the college. More information here.

How do I make a complaint or appeal?
For information about this, please see 🕮 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

SPECIAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

The Disability Advisory Service (DAS) can provide information, advice and guidance on the way in which a particular disability may impact on your student experience at the University and assist with organising disability-related study support.

The University's Disability Office website is at: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability.

Department contacts

If you have any concerns or need advice you can refer to your supervisor, or the department's Disability Lead and Disability Co-ordinator:

Disability Co-ordinator - Dominique Attala (Graduate Studies Manager)
Disability Lead – Peter Franklin Routh (Head of Administration and Finance)

RECORDING SEMINARS

Students who believe they have disability-related grounds for recording seminars should contact the Disability Advisory Service on disability@admin.ox.ac.uk.

COUNSELLING SERVICE

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

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

There are also over 40 titles of e-book available covering a variety of topics including academic life, identity, self-care, relationships, mental health, disability, overcoming traumatic events, how to deal with anxiety, time management, food disorders, bereavement, etc. Readers can access these even when the libraries are closed. A list containing all the titles available (including direct links to the ebooks) is available at: http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/using/disability/resources/self-help-books and they are also available on SOLO.

SEXUAL HARRASSMENT AND VIOLENCE SUPPORT

At Oxford, there are a number of free well-being and health services available to provide support to you. Please see the student module in the main degree tile on CANVAS (💻) for more information.

STUDENT PARENTS

If you are a parent, there are a wealth of services available to support you in Oxford - from the University and Oxford Student Union to the County Council. See here for more information: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/childcare.

INCLUSIVITY AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH

The University of Oxford is a place where every student should be safe, welcomed and be able to thrive, whatever their background. We are committed to ensuring our University community is one in which the rights and dignity of all our students and staff are respected.

Freedom of speech is the life-blood of our University and we uphold the right for everyone to openly express their views and opinions with respect and courtesy, within the limits of the law.

This is accompanied by our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. Discrimination of any kind – whether based on race, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or any other characteristic– has no place, and is not tolerated, at Oxford. For more information, go to: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/inclusive-student-life

Peaceful Protests

The University supports peaceful protest, in line with our commitment to freedom of speech. However, actions which disrupt staff or student life or shut down debate, are not acceptable. See more here: https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/policies-and-statements/guidance-on-demonstrations-or-protests

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The **Equality and Diversity Unit** promotes equality, values diversity and supports departments/faculties and colleges in maintaining a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all members of the University community are respected. It aims to ensure that no student will be treated less favourably on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and/or belief, and sexual orientation. For more information on the networks and activities the Unit supports, visit: https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/how-we-are-run/equality-diversity. These include:

- LGBT Staff Network (staff and graduate students)
- Race Equality Network (staff and students)
- Oxford Women's Network (staff and students)
- LGBT History Month
- Black History Month

The Equality and Diversity Unit supports a network of over 300 harassment advisors in departments/faculties and colleges and a central Harassment Advisory Service. For more information on the University's Harassment and Bullying policy and the support available for students visit: https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/how-we-are-run/policies-and-statements/harassment-and-sexual-misconduct.

PRAYER SPACE FOR STUDENTS

In ODID, there are facilities available that can be used for the purposes of prayer by staff and students.

Students have the option of using room FSW3 for the purposes of prayer (Room 3 in the Frances Stewart Wing). As multiple people use these rooms for prayers, we would kindly ask you to please coordinate for availability and access with Salma Sayyaj (reception@qeh.ox.ac.uk) at the reception desk beforehand. If there are any additional questions, please feel free to get in touch with ODID's EDI Officer, Matt Gooch (matthew.gooch@politics.ox.ac.uk).