



Part-time DPhil in Sociology
Student Handbook: 2021-22

A NOTE ABOUT HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook provides all the information you need to know for studying on the part-time DPhil in Sociology.

Your degree is formally governed by [the Examination Decrees and Regulations](#) (the Exam Regs), which is published in September each year. The part-time DPhil in Sociology handbook contains informal descriptions and interpretations of some of the most relevant rules but any formal question has to be settled primarily by reference to the Examination Decrees and Regulations. If you have any concerns please contact the Graduate Studies Administrator at graduate-studies@sociology.ox.ac.uk.

The information in this handbook is accurate as of 29 September 2021. However, it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, [as explained online](#). If such changes are made the department will publish a new version of this handbook together with a list of the changes and students will be informed.

This handbook applies to students starting the doctoral programme in Sociology in Michaelmas Term 2021. The information in this handbook may be different for students starting in other years.

Other key sources of information for students on the Part-time DPhil in Sociology include:

- the 2021-22 Sociology Student Canvas site – available to log in to [here](#). (Canvas is Oxford's Virtual Learning Environment, where the Department and many courses have pages with further information, course assignments, etc.);
- the [University's website for students](#);
- the handbooks provided by Oxford colleges, normally available on their websites.

Finally...

We continuously strive to improve our services and welcome any feedback, concerns or suggestions received in connection to the handbook content. These should be sent to the Graduate Studies Administrator, at graduate-studies@sociology.ox.ac.uk

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Welcome from the Department

Dear incoming Oxford Part-time Sociology DPhil students,

Welcome to the University of Oxford and to the Department of Sociology! We are delighted you have chosen to study and research with us. We hope that you will have an enjoyable and productive time here.

This handbook provides a guide to your degree course and to life as a graduate student in the Department of Sociology. Please read it carefully. If you have a question or need to refresh your memory, please turn back to this document as your first port of call.

If you cannot find the answer to your question then please email our Graduate Studies Administrator, Hannah Brawn, (graduate-studies@sociology.ox.ac.uk). You can also request a meeting if you would like to discuss anything in person.

The Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) is responsible for all the department's degree programmes. It is chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), Dr Michael Biggs. The DGS focuses on the doctoral programme, while the Taught Course Director (TCD), Professor Man Yee Kan, is primarily responsible for overseeing the MSc and MPhil programmes. Hannah Brawn does the lion's share of the work on everything to do with graduate studies in the department.

The Graduate Joint Consultative Committee (GJCC) provides a forum for students to raise any issues. Meeting each term, the committee is run by students and attended by the DGS and TCD. Please see page 37 for further details, and do let your course representative know if there is anything you wish to discuss.

If there is some question or issue that you want to raise at a senior level in person, please email the DGS (michael.biggs@sociology.ox.ac.uk) or the TCD (man-yee.kan@sociology.ox.ac.uk).

There are, of course, other aspects of student life in Oxford that this handbook does not cover, including information about the [Social Sciences Division](#), the [Social Science Library](#), the [wider University](#), your College, student organisations, etc. Oxford provides abundant opportunities to enjoy while engaging in study and research for your degree.

We look forward to meeting you all in person.

Michael Biggs
Director of Graduate Studies

Man Yee Kan
Taught Course Director

DPhil at a glance

Overview

The part-time DPhil in Sociology is a research-based degree. It is a six-year programme of doctoral study which is intended for students who would like to undertake original and independent research in preparation for an academic career and other research-intensive jobs. The DPhil is examined by a thesis, prepared under guidance of one or two academic supervisors.

Degree Structure

The part-time DPhil programme offers training to prepare a student for academic life and the job market, whilst enabling students to balance pre-existing work and caring responsibilities. They will develop skills by undertaking research under the guidance of their academic supervisor(s) and by participating in the Department's workshops and seminars. In addition, there are a wide variety of courses, lectures and seminars taking place all over Oxford, that are relevant for research and allow the student to become a well-rounded social scientist.

Research students have the opportunity to be fully involved in the department's research environment, which is characterized by a rich tradition of methodologically rigorous empirical sociology. They are exposed to innovative research undertaken by the scholars in the department and the many visitors that Oxford welcomes each year.

A student who successfully completes the course will have the skills necessary to apply for academic and research positions at universities in the UK and across the world, as well as to research-intensive jobs in government and international organizations, NGOs, and the private sector.

Degree Progression

The main aim of the DPhil programme is to produce a thesis. In order to be able to award

the DPhil, examiners must, in their report, be able to certify that:

- The candidate possesses a **good general knowledge of the field** of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls;
- The thesis is presented in a lucid and scholarly manner;
- The candidate has made a **significant and substantial contribution** in the particular field of learning within which thesis falls.
- Examiners shall bear in mind that their judgement of the substantial significance of the work or the extent of the candidate's contribution to knowledge or understanding of the relevant field of learning shall take into account **what may be reasonably expected of a capable and diligent student after three years of full-time study**.

A number of checks have been set up along the way to ensure that students are making proper progress towards completing this goal. The expected normal timetable is as follows:

1. Admission as Probationer Research Student (PRS).

Automatic at the beginning of your studies at Oxford.

2. Application for Transfer of Status from PRS to DPhil status

To be submitted by Friday of 1st Week in Trinity Term of the second year; that is at the beginning of the sixth term after starting;

3. Application for Confirmation of DPhil status

Those conducting substantial fieldwork in their third or fourth year will not be expected to submit for Confirmation until their seventh term. Otherwise students

should submit by Friday of 6th Week of the sixth term from admission as a PRS student, and no later than the ninth term.

4. Submission of DPhil Thesis

To be submitted by the end of the sixth year.

This is the timetable the Graduate Studies Committee, in normal cases, encourages part-time research students to follow.

Circumstances may make this inappropriate in individual cases, and the [Examination Regulations](#) do not impose this timetable. The University, however, aims to ensure DPhil submissions by the end of the fourth year. If more than 12 terms are needed to complete

and submit the DPhil thesis, students must apply to the Graduate Studies Committee for an extension of time. The University also imposes stringent conditions on granting intermissions in student status (e.g. medical notes).

Students who enter the doctoral programme directly after taking an MPhil degree at the University of Oxford are usually admitted as PRS. If the topic of their DPhil thesis continues their MPhil thesis, however, they may apply to be admitted directly to DPhil Status, thus waiving Transfer of Status. The application must be made to the Graduate Studies Committee in their first term. The student must still attend the PRS workshop in their first year.

Course Schedule

Year One – PRS Status

Compulsory	Recommended
PRS Workshop Series	Nuffield College Seminars
Departmental Seminars	Advanced Quantitative Methods
Skills Training Courses	DPhil Conference (observers)
Training Needs Analysis (TNA) with supervisor	

Year Two – PRS Status

Compulsory	Recommended
Professional Development Workshop Series	Skills Training Courses
Presentation at DPhil Conference	Advanced methods short courses
Transfer of Status	Departmental Seminars
Attend DPhil Conference	Nuffield College Seminars
	PRS Workshop Series
	Confirmation of Status

Year Three

Compulsory	Recommended
Doctoral Professional Workshop	Departmental Seminars
	Nuffield College Seminars
	DPhil Conference (Observers)

Year Four

Compulsory	Recommended
Present at DPhil Conference	Departmental Seminars
	Nuffield College Seminars

Year Five

Compulsory	Recommended
	Confirmation of Status
	Departmental Seminars
	Nuffield College Seminars

Year Six

Compulsory	Recommended
Confirmation of Status	Departmental Seminars
	Nuffield College Seminars
	Visit the Careers Centre
	Thesis Submission

We expect that part-time DPhil students will commit around 20 hours per week to their studies. While most of this time will be spent doing personal study/research, students are required to attend such courses as are necessary for their training and development (see above). PT DPhil students are strongly encouraged to attend as many seminars and other events in the School as possible (within the constraints of the technology available at

the School, we will also make our best efforts to offer on-line streaming of key seminars and workshops).

We will expect students to undertake at least 30 days of work physically at Oxford (or in direct collaboration with their supervisors, e.g. during fieldwork) each year. A typical allocation of this workload across the main types of activities is presented below.

Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Core DPhil seminars/workshops/ DPhil conference	11	6	10	1		
Supervision meetings ¹	10	10	10	10	10	10
Other seminars and study days ²	9	14	10	19	20	20
Total	30	30	30	30	30	30

1. Subject to negotiation with supervisors, and it is likely supervision meetings would not be restricted to term times. Other supervision meetings could take place when the student is in Oxford for other reasons.

2. Study days are not restricted to term time.

Term Dates

Oxford term dates for the 2021-22 academic year:

Michaelmas term 2021: Sunday 10th October to Saturday 4th December

Hilary term 2022: Sunday 16th January to Saturday 12th March

Trinity term 2022: Sunday 24th April to Saturday 18th June

Course Work

Probationer Research Student (PRS) Workshop

Convenor: [Dr Michael Biggs](#)

Aim of the course

The aim of the workshop is to guide first-year doctoral students through the start of their DPhil project. Students will have the opportunity to present and actively discuss their project proposals, the Transfer of Status process, first paper or chapter, and professional aspects of being an academic (e.g., publishing and reviewing). Students will learn about how to receive and give constructive comments, to respond to them, and to use them in a productive way, in revising and improving their work.

Preparation and assignments for class

The seminars will take place during the first two terms. All first year PRS students are required to participate, including part-time DPhil students. The detailed schedule will be provided at the beginning of the academic year together with specifications of assignments. The first major assignment early in the first term will be to present an outline of the proposed doctoral research project. Later in Michaelmas term a literature review is required. Discussion of methodology and final presentations, including detailed project specifications and perhaps initial results will be in Hilary term.

Class Proceedings

The classes will be organized as a combination of both larger group sessions, with all students, as well as some sessions where students will be divided into smaller groups. Some sessions will be faculty led while others will focus on student presentations.

Attendance and participation

This course is a requirement to obtain a DPhil at the Department of Sociology, but also a key

resource to guide students in preparing and revising their Transfer of Status documents. More importantly, it is resource for understanding professional academic life and expectations. Attendance and active participation are essential for this course. Students are expected to have read the material and if required, prepare written comments in advance where they are discussants. Students who are unable to attend a particular session must contact the convenor in advance.

Research Skills Training

Supervisors will discuss initial training requirements with their new students. **PRS students with no prior training in Statistical Methods and/or Qualitative Methods may be required to attend relevant lectures and classes.** Additionally, they may, depending on the general requirements for a DPhil in Sociology, or the specific character of their thesis, be required to audit and complete assignments for (but not submit for examination in) any of the core taught course papers.

During their first term students should review their needs for additional training together with their supervisor. A variety of (short) courses are offered around in Oxford and elsewhere. Please consult [Social Science Division website](#) and the [National Centre for Research Methods website](#) for an overview of the training opportunities. Students are asked to report on their training needs and plan in the Michaelmas Term Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) report and to review their skills training annually.

Advanced Quantitative Methods

If they have not had similar training previously, PRS students are recommended to attend the course in Advanced Quantitative Methods (AQM) in Hilary Term and submit all coursework. They should consult with their Supervisor and the AQM course providers

about participating. Details of the AQM course can be found in the MSc Handbook, which is available via Canvas.

Professional Development Workshop Series

The department provides a set of workshops, typically in Hilary Term, for Part-time DPhil Students in their Third Year (equivalent to the Second Year of full-time DPhil). **Attendance is compulsory** (students doing fieldwork in this

term will be required to attend in their Third Year). More advanced doctoral students are welcome to attend if they wish. Examples of workshop topics are: Managing an academic career; Surviving the job market; Publishing the thesis as a book; Publishing journal articles; Reviewing for journals; Giving a job talk and interviews; Careers in public service; Careers in the private sector. Topics vary from year to year.

A schedule of the workshops will be circulated at the start of Hilary Term. The workshops are coordinated by the DGS.

Departmental Seminars

Departmental Seminars are held during term throughout the year at 12.45 on Mondays. Michaelmas term seminars will be held via a combination of Microsoft Teams and in-person attendance, with details for Hilary and Trinity terms to follow. See the departmental website for further [details](#).

Attendance is mandatory for first-year research students; for part-time DPhil

students, attendance is mandatory for your first year, although you are very much encouraged to attend throughout the course of your DPhil.

All students are also highly encouraged to attend the Nuffield College Sociology Seminars, which usually take place on Wednesdays. Details are available on the [Nuffield College website](#).

DPhil Conferences

At the DPhil Conferences students with DPhil status present their work, comment on each other's papers and receive feedback from a faculty member and PRS students.

All doctoral students participate at least twice. In Michaelmas of their second year, DPhil students attend the conference and provide feedback on the presentations of their fellow students. In Michaelmas of their fourth year, students make a presentation of one of the papers/chapters prepared for Confirmation of

Status. Each paper is refereed by a faculty member and a fellow student.

Participation is mandatory as part of the DPhil programme. All other DPhil students are very much encouraged to participate. The conferences are always interesting and informative.

The DPhil Conference for 2021-22 will be held in week 3 of Michaelmas Term. Detailed instructions and the final programme will be circulated in due course.

Further Research and Skills Training

Your Development as a Researcher

As a doctoral student at Oxford you will need to combine detailed subject knowledge with training in relevant quantitative and qualitative research methods and techniques, as well as general research management skills, professional knowledge and career development. This combination of skills, knowledge and training is intended to help your research and also to enhance your personal and professional development and employability.

You will have access to a wide range of training whilst undertaking your research at the University, including:

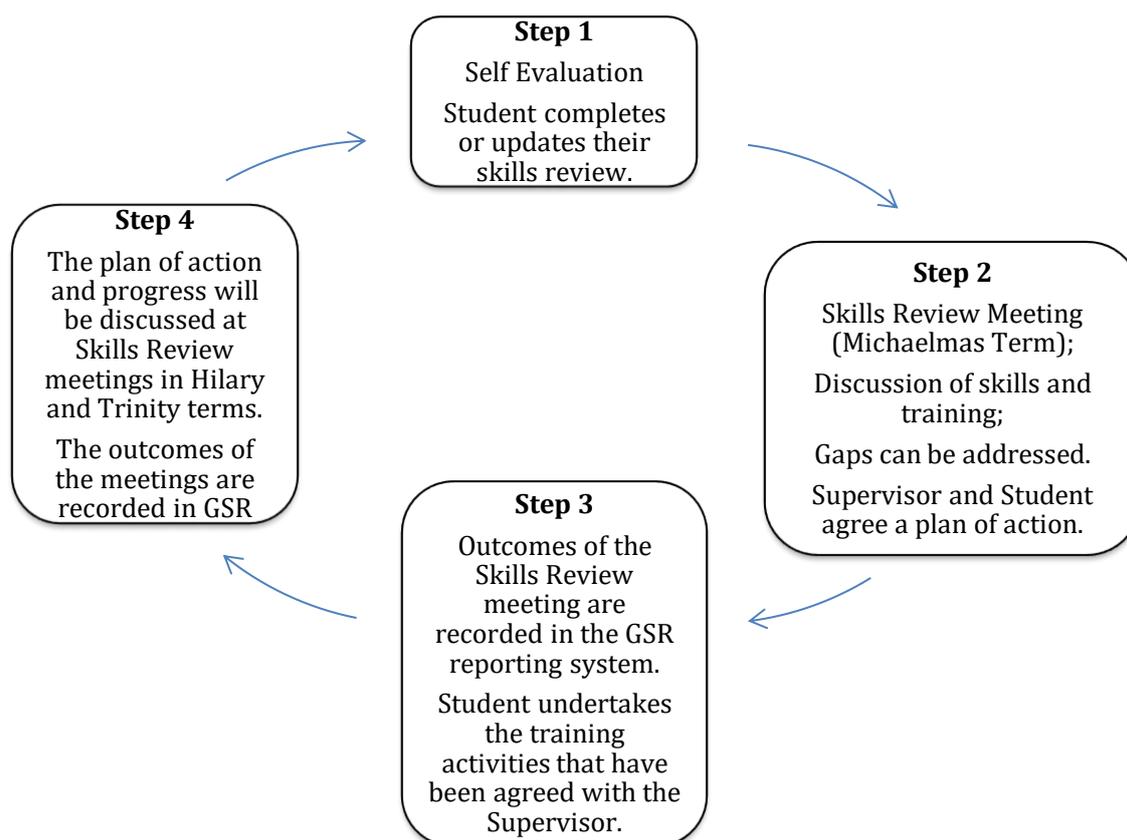
- Research methods training within our department, and other departments as appropriate

- [Research and skills training](#) coordinated by the Social Sciences Division open to all doctoral students
- Training provided by University providers such as the [Careers Service](#), [IT Services](#) and the [Bodleian Libraries](#)

Skills Review

As a doctoral student, you will have the opportunity to engage with a variety of research and skills training as appropriate to different stages of your graduate career. During your time as a research student, you are encouraged to think strategically about your ongoing development as a researcher and professional, and to take advantage of the variety of training on offer.

As the diagram shows, skills review is an ongoing and iterative process:



Working together, you and your supervisor will develop a bespoke training and development plan each year.

You should upload your review(s) to the Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) on a regular basis, and at a minimum, once a year. **You should also enter comments about your training directly into the relevant free text boxes supplied within GSR. This will allow both you and your supervisor to have a record of your changing training needs and your development over time. It is also important for University-level monitoring.**

Research and Skills Training in the Social Sciences

Research and Skills in the Social Sciences is the Social Science Division's programme of research training and skills development for all social science doctoral students. This includes:

Research Methods Training

In addition to the methods training offered by the department you can access specialist and advanced research methods training in other Departments [through the Division](#) and across the University. Further information is available online where you can also browse and search for courses.

Skills Development Training

To support your broader development as a researcher, the Social Sciences Division organises a skills training programme covering a range of generic and transferable skills. For more information, and to sign up to courses, see the [Research and Skills Training](#) website.

Research Integrity and Ethics Training (mandatory)

The University and the Department of Sociology are committed to ensuring that its research involving human participants is conducted in an approved manner.

All Sociology graduate students are **required** to complete and provide evidence to the departmental Research Facilitator of completion of the [Research Integrity Online Training: Social and Behavioural Sciences](#). One of the following live training sessions organised by the Research Ethics Committee for the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH IDREC) are also a compulsory part of all graduate students induction training:

1. Introduction to Research Ethics at Oxford (dates of available session can be found on the [Social Sciences Research & Skills Training website](#)); or

2. Research Ethics workshop, designed specifically for Sociology graduate students organised in collaboration with SSH IDREC (training dates to be communicated to all students at the beginning of each Michaelmas term).

These mandatory training courses must be completed within **two months of the start of the DPhil programme**.

Other University Services

Oxford offers a wide range of training opportunities and resources for social science doctoral students. In addition to research methods training and the skills development programme, there are also University-wide resources and career development opportunities.

The [Bodleian Library](#) provides training in information skills and information literacy. Some workshops are offered by the Division; others are offered directly by the Library. The [Careers Service](#) has a range of events and resources for doctoral students. Through its [IT Learning Programme](#), [IT Services](#) offers a range of computing courses. Several online courses are available, including the [Research Skills Toolkit](#) and a [Research Integrity](#) course for social science researchers.

The Language centre offers specialist and difficult languages training.

Developing Teaching and Learning

As a second or third year doctoral student, you may wish to undertake a [Preparation for Teaching and Learning at Oxford \(PLTO\) seminar](#), which provides an introduction to teaching in higher education. If you have completed a PLTO seminar and are undertaking some teaching, then you may register for the Oxford [Developing Learning and Teaching \(DLT\) programme](#). This one-term seminar series, available under the auspices of the skills development programme, encourages you to reflect upon and make the most of your first teaching experiences in higher education. If completed in full it leads to an award that is recognised at universities across the UK: Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA). The [Teaching Development](#) website provides further information on teaching and teaching development within the Social Sciences Division.

Finding and Signing-up for Training

The [Research and Skills Training](#) website lists all of the skills training sessions that are coordinated by the social sciences division. You can also find out about other training related news and events via the announcements section on this site.

The [Researcher Training Tool](#) in WebLearn provides a means of browsing and signing up for training within social sciences departments, the divisional skills training programme and other training providers across the University.

Other Resources

[Researcher Development Framework](#)

[Bodleian Library](#)

[Careers Service](#)

[IT Services](#)

[IT Learning Programme](#)

[Research Skills Toolkit](#)

[Research Supervision](#)

[Language Centre](#)

[NCRM Training Database](#)

[University Guidance on Data Protection](#)

[Research Data Oxford – Ethics and Data Protection](#)

DPhil Thesis

Completing the thesis is the final requirement for the DPhil. In the Department of Sociology, the thesis can take one of two forms:

- The **Book format** follows the traditional thesis style, with a single study or set of studies presented as a single narrative in a monograph. The ultimate goal of this format is to eventually submit the thesis to a press as a book manuscript.
- The **Articles/Integrated format** can take two basic forms:
 - The Articles format includes a minimum of three related but separate articles that can stand alone but are presented together with a single introduction, literature review and conclusion.
 - The Integrated format includes a one or more articles and one or more conventional chapters, and also includes a single introduction, literature review and conclusion.

The ultimate goal of this format is to eventually submit each of the thesis articles, individually, to journals. Normally each article would adhere to a 7,500 to 10,000 word count as typically found in sociology journals. Candidates should be aware that the inclusion of one or more articles which have already been accepted for publication or have been published, does not of itself constitute proof that the work is of sufficient quality or significance to merit the award of the degree concerned. This remains a judgement of the Graduate Studies Committee on the recommendation of its examiners.

Students wishing to submit a thesis using the **Articles/Integrated format** will be required to state at Transfer of Status and confirm at Confirmation of Status that this is the route

they plan to take. The Assessors will need to agree the route and recommend approval via the respective interview reports to the GSC, whose decision will be final.

The statement and justification should form part of the research proposal submitted by the student as part of the written work submitted as part of both the Transfer of Status and the Confirmation of Status. If applicable, the decision and justification to return to the Book format at the time of Confirmation should also form part of the research proposal. The research proposal should also note future plans to undertake co-authored work, including remarks about the planned contribution of the student and the proportion of the contributions of the co-author/s.

Regardless of format, the thesis is expected to follow three basic principles:

First, the thesis should represent a *programme of research*. A Book format thesis will have a unifying narrative, and the articles in the Articles/Integrated format thesis must be linked around a theme that can be expressed in the introduction to the thesis and summarized in the conclusion. To ensure the format of the thesis constitutes a thematically coherent whole, an Articles/Integrated thesis must include an introduction, a literature survey, and a conclusion. There should also be clarity about how the chapters are integrated as a complete text.

Any submitted/published papers should relate directly to the candidate's approved field of study, and should have been written whilst holding the status of PRS or a student for the MSc (by Research), MLitt, or DPhil. No material from a Masters from another institution can be incorporated into an Oxford DPhil thesis. However, a DPhil thesis may

build directly on work completed during a Master's programme at Oxford.

Second, the thesis should be solely or largely *independent scholarship*. Co-authored empirical chapters are permitted, although it is expected that the DPhil candidate would take the lead role on any co-authored chapters and therefore be the first author. Papers written in collaboration with others should not be included unless the greater part is the candidate's work. It is important that the extent of the student's contribution to collaborative work is clear and all co-authors should certify in writing as a part of the Transfer/Confirmation of Status what part of the work represents that of the candidate. In addition, students should submit a statement with their Application for Appointment of Examiners demonstrating that their work represents the majority contribution to any co-authored papers.

Co-authorship of thesis chapters with other Oxford students requires exceptional justification to be provided in order to be approved. Given the expectation that students take the lead role on a co-authored thesis chapter, only one student would be able to submit any particular DPhil chapter co-authored with another student. Approval decisions are part of the Transfer/Confirmation review process.

Transfer of Status

The Purpose of Transfer of Status

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

The Transfer of Status assessment is to ensure that the student is making satisfactory progress in the development

For any co-authorship, statements outlining the student's contribution to the relevant chapter(s) need to be submitted together with applications for Transfer and Confirmation of Status. Please note that a GSO.2 (Transfer of Status) or GSO.14 (Confirmation of Status) will not be considered for approval until co-authorship statements, if needed, have been submitted. The Transfer/Confirmation of Status assessors will, as part of their assessments, review the co-authorship statements and consider and report on whether the greater part of the work included in the (planned) thesis is the student's own.

In addition, as students approach completion and final examination of their thesis, they are asked to provide a statement with the Appointment of Examiners form (GSO.3) detailing their contribution to the chapter(s) and thesis. The Examiners will therefore assess how much of the thesis is the student's own original work, and will take this information into consideration when deciding whether sufficient original work of high enough quality has been produced in order for the DPhil to be awarded.

Third, the thesis should represent new and original work.

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

The assessment procedures are intended to remove the risk of failure and to reduce the

risk of referral as far as possible, and must therefore be as rigorous as is necessary to achieve this.

The formal Regulations for Transfer of Status are set out in the general regulations of the *Examination Regulations*, and in the special regulations for individual subjects, grouped within their particular Division.

The Timing of Transfer of Status

The *Examination Regulations* state that PRS status can be held for a maximum of four terms, equating to eight terms for part-time Students. This Department requires submitting for transfer of status by **Friday, Week 1 of Trinity Term of the second year**; that is, at the beginning of the sixth term after admission for part-time students.

How to Apply for Transfer of Status

Applications for transfer of status should be made using the GSO.2 and SOC.1 forms available [here](#).

Students are required to complete the form and to provide supplementary information on development of both research specific and personal and professional skills during their time as a Probationer Research Student. Students are also required to indicate whether their work requires research ethics approval (for those unsure, the Sociology DREC Checklist is available on Canvas). Both the student's supervisor and College should then sign the form.

The supervisors, in consultation with the student, suggest names of two appropriate assessors.

Students are strongly encouraged to start the process of applying for ethical approval as soon as possible, especially if there is any reason to believe that complex ethical issues might need to be addressed. Please read more about the process of ethics approval later in this handbook or on the [research support website](#), or address any questions about

ethics approval to Agnieszka Swiejkowska, the Research Facilitator, (drec@sociology.ox.ac.uk).

In addition to the above mentioned forms, students will be required to **submit/complete the following**:

- Thesis Title & Thesis Outline
- Research Proposal of 5,000 to 7,000 words maximum, consisting of the following: a short description of the project, including the research question; a brief account of the relevant literature, and an account of how the research question and data analysis fit into it; and a description of the research design and associated methods. The proposal should also justify the choice of format for the thesis (traditional monograph, set of papers, or a mixture "integrated").
- Written Work between 5,000 and 7,000 words maximum: draft of a first chapter/paper including putting the project in the context of the wider literature; written work may include empirical analysis
- Bibliography (this is usually included in the research proposal and written work)
- Timetable for Completion
- Evidence of participation in the PRS seminar and departmental seminars (the GSA will contact any students whose attendance is not in compliance)
- If the data you are planning on using are not pre-existing and anonymised: [Research Ethics Forms](#). Include either the letter confirming that ethics approval has been granted, or a copy of the completed form (if the application is still in process). See later section in this handbook for further details.
- If you are planning fieldwork: Risk Assessment Forms ([here under "Forms and Information"](#)). Please ensure that all risk assessment forms are submitted at least one month in advance of travel. See later section in this handbook for further details.
- If applicable: statement(s) on the contribution of each co-author ([here under "Forms and Information"](#)), signed by all co-authors.

The combined length of the research proposal and written work should be at least 10,000

words, and no longer than 14,000 words. The complete application for Transfer of Status should be submitted to the Graduate Studies Administrator. Please compile all the work listed above into one pdf file, plus one digital version of the GSO.2 and SOC.1 forms

Note that the GSO.2 form requires you to confirm that you have the necessary permissions for your data and that you will store it according to University guidelines, and in compliance with provider requirements. For further information on the University's policy on data protection please see [here](#).

The Transfer Assessment

Students, in consultation with their academic supervisor(s), will nominate two assessors to read the transfer application and to interview the candidate. The assessors will be academic staff working in the University of Oxford. It is common for one or both of the assessors to be reviewers for both Transfer and Confirmation of status, and one of these assessors may also act as the internal examiner for the DPhil viva voce examination.

Students should *normally* expect to be interviewed within six weeks of submitting their transfer application, *though this may be longer during the vacation periods due to availability of the assessors*. The interview is not an official examination or viva, and *sub fusc* is not worn.

Students should aim to be in Oxford for their Transfer of Status interview. While it is possible to apply to the Proctors for permission to conduct this interview via video, such applications are only considered in exceptional circumstances (such as during the pandemic), and furthermore approval of the request is not guaranteed.

The assessors will write a report and submit recommendations to the Graduate Studies Committee. Following their interview, students should *normally* expect to hear the outcome of their assessment within three weeks, *though this may be longer during the vacation periods*.

Criteria for Success

For transfer of status to be approved, the student will need to be able to show that their proposed thesis and treatment represents a viable topic and that their written work and interview show that they have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Students must show that they are competent to complete and present their thesis in English. In addition, the assessors will judge the application against the following criteria:

- Attendance of all required subject specific training courses
- Competence in both written and spoken English
- **The aims of the research are realistic and focused**
- **Evidence of wide reading and critical analysis**
- **Appropriate methodology and research techniques are proposed**
- Limitations to the research are addressed
- It is clear how the research will develop for a D.Phil.
- There is a suitable timetable for the research
- The candidate demonstrates the progression of an argument
- The candidate shows a scholarly and rigorous approach to research issues
- The research topic and treatment meet the Division's ethical standards
- The written work and interview show that the candidate has a good overall knowledge and understanding of the subject
- The University has adequate facilities (including supervision) to enable the research to progress
- **The student is capable of carrying out advanced research**
- **The proposed schedule of work can be completed within three or at most four years for the DPhil.**

The specific criteria that the Assessors are asked to confirm include the following:

- That they have considered the candidate's thesis proposal, research schedule, and draft thesis chapter.
- That they have examined the candidate orally.

- That the student is competent to complete and present a thesis in English;
- That the proposed thesis topic and treatment represent a viable DPhil project.
- That the draft thesis chapter and oral examination show that the candidate has a good knowledge and understanding of the subject.
- That the research schedule is viable and that the applicant should, in principle, be able to complete the proposed schedule of work for the DPhil within three, or, at most, four years from initial registration as PRS.

transfer to DPhil status, nonetheless, the assessors felt it was strong enough for the lower award which is a less demanding and shorter time-scale research degree.

- (iv) **Reject the application** – The assessors cannot recommend transfer to either DPhil status or the lower award.

At the first attempt at transfer only options (i)-(iii) should normally be chosen. At the second attempt, options (i), (iii) or (iv) should be considered. (Only in exceptional circumstances may a third attempt at transfer be made, and this would require the support of the Graduate Studies Committee and approval by the University's Education Committee).

Outcomes of Transfer of Status

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

- (i) **Successful transfer** – Accompanied by suggestions and advice for future progress.
- (ii) **Referral for a second attempt at transfer** – This should normally involve the same assessors and take place within one term of the first attempt. If the first attempt is made in the fourth term or later of PRS status, a one-term extension of PRS status is automatically granted to allow the second attempt. This extension of PRS status does not affect the total amount of time permitted for registration on the DPhil. The assessors should provide clear guidance on what needs to be done to improve the application prior to the second attempt at transfer being submitted. This may require additional written work or other evidence, and possibly the appointment of an additional assessor.

Referral may simply represent attempts to ensure that the student's work is enhanced so that it is set on the best possible course, and should not necessarily be seen as a failure.

- (iii) **Transfer to the MLitt** – Although the work presented was not suitable for

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

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

Deferral of Transfer of Status

Any part-time student who has not applied to transfer status by the end of their eight term will be required to attend a formal academic review meeting involving their supervisor(s) and Director of Graduate Studies (or at least one other member of academic staff, who may or may not be a future assessor for Transfer of Status). The purpose of this meeting will be to review progress to date, and to draw up a clear timetable to ensure that Transfer of Status is successfully achieved within twelve terms as required by the *Examination Regulations*. The student will also be required to apply for a formal deferral of Transfer of Status for one or two further terms using the form GSO.2b available [here](#). Students are required to complete the form, which should then be signed by the student's supervisor and College and be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies/Graduate Studies Committee.

In exceptional cases only, an extension of PRS status may be granted beyond twelve terms. Applications for such extensions should be again made using the form GSO.2b and would require the same approvals as above and, in addition, approval of the University's Education Committee as it requires formal dispensation from the *Examination Regulations*. Any extensions to PRS status do not affect the overall time permitted for registration on the DPhil.

Confirmation of Status

The Purpose of Confirmation of Status

The Confirmation of Status process allows the student to have an assessment of their work by two assessors, other than the supervisor(s), **to give a clear indication of whether it would be reasonable to consider submission within the course of a further three terms**, if work on the thesis continues to develop satisfactorily. However, successful confirmation of status should not be seen as being explicitly linked to the final outcome of the examination of the thesis.

The assessors will be focusing on how the research is progressing, the quality of the draft chapters, and on the plan for completion. The assessors will therefore be looking to ensure that the student is making the appropriate amount of progress in the development of the thesis, so that submission will be achieved within six or at most eight years. In doing so, they are also required to

ensure that the student is not attempting to deal with an impossibly or unnecessarily large amount of material. The student should benefit from independent assessment of their work and should receive authoritative comments and suggestions on problems and how to address them. The assessors may be able provide guidance on how to better present the material, or on the use of concepts or methods. Even if the thesis is in good shape, the assessors may often stimulate valuable improvements to it. However, the assessors may also identify any weaknesses in theory, research design, data collection and analysis, which may compromise the final thesis. It should also be remembered that the confirmation assessment is a test (which it is possible to fail), and receiving critical comments can be difficult, and it may take a few weeks to come to terms with them. Finally, the interview is a good opportunity to prepare for the *viva voce* examination of the thesis.

The formal Regulations for Confirmation of Status are set out in the general regulations of the *Examination Regulations*, and in the special regulations for individual subjects, grouped within their particular Division. The most important elements are covered below, but if questions arise please check the *Examination Regulations*.

The Timing of Confirmation of Status

The general regulations of the *Examination Regulations* state that all students should apply for Confirmation of Status within nine terms of their admission as a graduate student. However, in this Department **students are highly recommended under the subject specific regulations to apply for Confirmation of Status Week 6 of the twelfth term (fourth year) for those not undertaking substantial fieldwork, or by Week 6 of the thirteenth term (fifth year) for those doing fieldwork in their second year.**

How to apply for Confirmation of Status

Applications for Confirmation of Status should be made using the GSO.14 form available [here](#). Students are required to complete the form, which should then be signed by the student's supervisor and College. Students should include details of any research specific and/or personal and professional skills acquired, or further training needed in, and also information on any other related activities undertaken, e.g. presentation of posters, attendance at conferences etc. Students are also required to state whether their work required research ethics approval (and if appropriate, was granted). Students in this Department will also be asked to complete the [supplementary form SOC.2](#). Supervisors are asked (in consultation with their student) to suggest names of appropriate assessors.

In addition to the two forms, students will also be required to submit/complete the following:

- Thesis title and abstract

- Thesis outline (2-3 paragraphs on each chapter). The outline should also justify the choice of format for the thesis (traditional monograph, set of papers, or a mixture "integrated").
- Two substantive chapters, conveying original findings, out of a thesis expected to be based on three or four substantive chapters. If the thesis plan involves a larger number of smaller chapters then more may be submitted, up to the equivalent of two-thirds of the substantive component of the thesis. An introductory chapter which merely reviews the literature or describes the methods should not be submitted; the chapters need to include a bibliography.
- Timetable for completion
- Risk Assessment Forms (a risk assessment must be submitted for any travel taken on University business; this includes fieldwork and conference attendance); please ensure that all risk assessment forms are submitted at least one month in advance of travel. Available [here under "Forms and Information"](#).
- If applicable: statement(s) on the contribution of each co-author, signed by all co-authors ([here](#) under "Forms and Information").

If applicable: updated [Research Ethics Forms](#). Either the confirmation letter or completed form (if the application is still in process). The combined length of the above materials should not exceed 30,000 words. The complete application for Confirmation of Status should be submitted to the Graduate Studies Administrator. Please submit a digital copy of the forms and one pdf file combining all other documents.

The Confirmation Assessment

The Graduate Studies Committee/Director of Graduate Studies will appoint two assessors neither of whom is the student's supervisor to read the confirmation assessment and interview the candidate. The assessors will normally be academic members of staff working in the University of Oxford. (It is common for the same assessors to be used for both Transfer and Confirmation of Status, and one of these people may also act as the

internal examiner for the *DPhil* viva voce examination).

Students should *normally* expect to be interviewed within six weeks of submitting their confirmation application, *though this may be longer during the vacation periods due to availability of the assessors*. The interview is not an official examination or viva, and subfusc is not worn.

While it is possible to apply to the Proctors for permission to conduct this interview via Skype, such applications are only considered in exceptional circumstances, and furthermore approval of the request is not guaranteed. In general, students should aim to be in Oxford for their Confirmation of Status interview.

The assessors will write a report and submit recommendations to the Graduate Studies Committee. Following their interview, students should *normally* expect to hear the outcome of their assessment from the GSC within three weeks, *though this may be longer during the vacation periods*.

Criteria for Success

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

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

- Evidence of wide reading and critical review of the literature
- A clear indication of how the research is being developed into a thesis
- Potential original contribution to the field of study

- Evidence of a progression of argument and logic throughout the thesis
- Evidence of a scholarly and lucid approach to the research issues
- **A clear timetable for the completion of the research within three, or at most four years from admission**
- The ability to write in clear and coherent manner, with due attention to presentation
- Competence in both written and spoken English
- The ability to articulate and defend the argument in the interview
- Presentation of the thesis at the *DPhil* Conference
- **The draft chapters are of the quality expected for a final *DPhil* thesis**

The specific criteria that the Assessors are asked to confirm include the following:

- That they have considered the candidate's thesis outline, research schedule, and two draft chapters.
- That they have examined the candidate orally.
- That the draft thesis chapters are of the standard that would be expected at this stage.
- That the research schedule is viable and that the applicant should, in principle, be able to complete the proposed schedule of work for the *DPhil* within three or at most four years from initial registration as PRS.
- That they have seen a co-authorship statement for each co-authored piece of work, and that each statement describes the contribution of the student clearly.

Outcomes of Confirmation of Status

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

- (i) **Successful Confirmation** – Accompanied by suggestions and advice for future progress.
- (ii) **Referral for a second attempt at Confirmation** – This should normally involve the same assessors and take place within one term of the first attempt. If the first attempt is made in the final term permitted, a one-term extension is automatically granted to allow the second attempt. This extension does not affect the total amount of time permitted for registration on the DPhil, however if the student has already been registered on the DPhil for twelve terms, the extension is counted as one of the potential six terms of extension of time permitted under the general regulations. The assessors should provide clear guidance on what needs to be done to improve the application before the second attempt at confirmation is submitted. This may require additional written work or other evidence, and possibly the appointment of an additional assessor.

Referral may simply represent attempts to ensure that the student's work is enhanced and set on the best possible course, and should not necessarily be seen as a failure. However, a referral may be disappointing to a student and may take some time to come to terms with, especially if the assessors' comments are highly critical. Most students who do then go on to successfully complete the DPhil, see the comments in retrospect as helpful, having given them the opportunity and incentive to make substantial improvements to the thesis and to avoid the risk of a far more costly and time-consuming referral of the final thesis.

- (iii) **Transfer to MLitt** – Although the work presented was not suitable for Confirmation of DPhil status, nonetheless, the assessor(s) felt it was still strong enough for the lower award which is a less demanding and shorter-timescale research degree. In cases where transfer to a lower award is

approved, if the student is already in their ninth term or beyond, a formal extension of time will also be needed to allow the student to stay on the graduate register for the, otherwise their status will lapse, and they will have to subsequently apply for reinstatement to the graduate register.

- (iv) **Reject the application** – The assessors cannot recommend confirmation of status, or transfer to the lower award. This exceptional outcome should only be used if the quality of the student's work has regressed to below the standard previously achieved for transfer of status.

At the first attempt at confirmation only options (i)-(iii) should normally be chosen. At the second attempt, options (i), (iii) or exceptionally (iv) should be considered. The Graduate Studies Committee may also request additional work or other evidence, or appoint an additional assessor to help in making a final decision. (Only in exceptional circumstances may a third attempt at Confirmation be made, and this would require the support of the Graduate Studies Committee and approval by the University's Education Committee).

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

Deferral of Confirmation of Status

If a student is unable to apply for confirmation of status within nine terms of admission as a graduate student (or by the deadline defined in the subject specific regulations if later), they must apply for a deferral of confirmation of status, otherwise their student status will lapse and their name will be removed from

graduate register. For part-time students, it is possible to apply for a deferral of confirmation of status for up to six terms, as long as the total number of terms from admission as a graduate student does not exceed twenty-four (eight years).

Any student who is considering applying for a deferral of confirmation of status will be required to attend a formal academic review meeting involving their supervisor(s) and Director of Graduate Studies (or at least one other member of academic staff who may or may not be a future assessor for confirmation of status). The purpose of this meeting will be to review progress to date, and to draw up a clear timetable to ensure that confirmation of status is successfully achieved within the proposed period of deferral.

To apply for a deferral of confirmation of status, a student will need to submit the

GSO.14B form available [here](#). Students are required to complete the form, which should then be signed by the student's supervisor and College. The Director of Graduate Studies/Graduate Studies Committee will then assess the application for deferral, taking into account any recommendations from the academic review meeting.

If confirmation of status is not achieved within nine terms of admission as a graduate student, or approval given for a deferral of confirmation of status, his/her status will lapse. In exceptional cases only, deferral may be granted beyond twelve terms; however, this requires approval by both the Director of Graduate Studies/Graduate Studies Committee and the University's Education Committee as it requires formal dispensation from the *Examination Regulations*.

DPhil Examination

Appointment of Examiners

Applications for the appointment of examiners should be submitted to the Graduate Studies Administrator for approval by the GSC/DGS. The Supervisor shall consult with the candidate concerning possible examiners, and forward the names of suggested examiners. One internal examiner and one external examiner are required, and candidates should suggest reserves in case the preferred examiners are unable to act. Anyone who has given significant help or advice to the student in the preparation of the thesis cannot act as an examiner. Nor can anyone with a potential conflict of interest.

It is normal for one of the assessors who acted at the time of transfer or confirmation of status to be the internal examiner.

Examination Arrangements

The Oral Examination shall be held at Oxford in a suitable University or College building, unless the Proctors give special permission for it to be held at some other place. It shall, except in special circumstances, begin not earlier than 9am or later than 5pm and may be held in term or vacation. The place and time of the examination shall be fixed by the examiners, who shall be responsible for informing the candidate of the arrangements made. The day shall be fixed by the examiners to suit their convenience.

The examination may be attended by any member of the University in academic dress. No person who is not a member of the University may attend it except with the consent of both examiners.

Candidates are strongly recommended to take a copy of their thesis to the examination.

Early Viva

Candidates may apply to the Graduate Studies Committee for the oral examination to be held not later than a certain date, provided that this date shall not be earlier than one calendar month after the date on which the thesis has been received at the University Offices or after the date on which the examiners have agreed to act, whichever is the later. If the GSC is satisfied that there are special circumstances justifying this application, it will ask the examiners to make arrangements to enable the Oral Examination to be held within the period specified.

In such cases the examiners, when invited to act, will be informed that the candidate has asked that the Oral Examination should be held not later than a certain date, and acceptance of the invitation to examine will be on the understanding that they would seek to meet this request.

Candidates should note that it may be impossible for the GSC to arrange an early

viva, in which case they will be subject to the regular procedure.

Examination Requirements

In order to be able to award the DPhil, examiners must, in their report, be able to certify that:

- The candidate possesses a good general knowledge of the field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls;
- The thesis is presented in a lucid and scholarly manner;
- The candidate has made a significant and substantial contribution in the particular field of learning within which thesis falls.
- Examiners shall bear in mind that their judgement of the substantial significance of the work or the extent of the candidate's contribution to knowledge or understanding of the relevant field of learning shall take into account what may be reasonably expected of a capable and diligent student after three years of full-time study.

Thesis Submission

Formatting

All DPhil theses must:

- Use 12 point font, and preferably a serif font such as Times New Roman;
- Give the length of the text in number of words;
- Present the main text in double spacing with quotations and footnotes in single spacing. Place footnotes, where present, at the bottom of each page;
- Have numbered pages;
- Use referencing that corresponds to one of the established bibliographic conventions: preferably APA style and not Vancouver;
- Be submitted in English; unless for exceptional reasons otherwise determined by a relevant Board, in the term in which the candidate is first admitted;

- Have a margin of 1.25 to 1.5 inches (3.2 to 3.8 cm) on the left-hand side of each page.

The thesis should be of **no more than the 100,000 words**, with **footnotes and tables included** in this figure; **references and appendices are not included**. (As a guideline, Appendices should make up no more than 30% of the thesis.)

Students should note that successful DPhil theses are often considerably shorter than this maximum length. Increases to the maximum DPhil limit are rarely permitted, and must have a strong justification related to the substance of the thesis. The Graduate Studies Committee should be consulted about any request for such an exception well in advance of submission of the thesis.

The thesis must include an **abstract of no more than 300 words** which should

concisely summarise its scope and principal arguments. The abstract should be headed with the title of the thesis, the name and college of the candidate, the degree for which it is submitted, and the term and year of submission.

Submission

Students are required to submit the official copy of their thesis for examination digitally via RTDS.

Examiners may request a hard copy of the thesis from the Examination Schools and this will be arranged and paid for centrally by the Submissions and Research Degrees Team. The minimum time between both examiners receiving the official copy of the thesis via RTDS and a viva date remains at 4 weeks.

Joint Work Submitted as Part of a Thesis

At the time of submission the student is asked to provide a statement with the Appointment of Examiners form, detailing which (if any) parts of the thesis are not the student's own work. The Examiners will therefore assess how much of the thesis is the student's own original work, **and will take this into consideration when deciding whether sufficient original work of high enough quality has been produced in order for the DPhil to be awarded.** Please ask the Graduate Studies Administrator for the latest guidelines for the authorship statement.

Work *must* be clearly referenced, and if tables/figures etc. from co-authored material are reproduced, then it should be made clear if this is the student's own work. Written permission should also be sought from co-authors to re-use any material from co-authored papers in the thesis. Co-authorship must also be referenced within the acknowledgements, and also in footnotes/references in the relevant sections.

ORA (Oxford Research Archive) and Digital Publication of Theses

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

All students following the DPhil are required to deposit *both* a hardbound and a digital copy of their thesis with the Bodleian Libraries. The digital copy should be deposited in the ORA at <http://ora.ox.ac.uk> after Leave to Supplicate (LTS) has been granted.

ORA provides maximum visibility and digital preservation for Oxford digital theses. Students should read information about the deposit of, and access to, digital theses which is available [here](#) and includes:

- Legal requirements and author responsibilities
- When to deposit the digital copy of your thesis
- How to deposit the digital copy of your thesis
- Options for open access and embargo access (for reasons such as sensitive content, material that would affect commercial interests, pre-publication or legal reasons) to all of part(s) of your thesis
- Information about file formats, fonts and file sizes

Copyright of the thesis usually rests with the author: this does not change when depositing your thesis in ORA. The author does not give away any rights to the Oxford University Research Archive or the Bodleian Libraries. However, students should read the [information on third party copyright](#).

Students are strongly encouraged to ascertain and arrange permissions for inclusion and distribution of material via the Internet where copyright is held by a third party at the point that the items are gathered. This is similar to

the process when writing a journal article or monograph. A '[Record of permissions' template](#) has been created to assist with this process.

Further information or queries about depositing digital theses should be addressed to ORA@bodleian.ox.ac.uk.

The Social Sciences Division – Restricted access arrangements

Whilst the Social Sciences Division strongly supports open access to, and wide dissemination of, theses produced by its students, the Division has agreed that during the initial period (whilst both authors and publishers adapt to open access), access by others to the full text of digital theses will be restricted for three years by default. When completing the ORA online deposit form authors should therefore enter an embargo end date of three years from the date of deposit. There is no need to complete a separate GSO3.C Dispensation from Consultation form at the time of deposit.

During the period of the embargo, only the following information from your thesis will be available in ORA:

- Item record (details including your name, thesis title, subject area)
- Abstract
- Full text search for single words or short passages of text.

At the time of deposit an author may request permanent closure in ORA under the following circumstances:

- For digital material where copyright is held by a third party and permission to disseminate it via the Internet in ORA has not been granted by the copyright holder, the Department will grant permission for the copyright material to be deposited as a separate file from the thesis, on the understanding that the thesis will be available for consultation or reproduction but access to the copyright material will be restricted.
- Where confidential material forms only a small part of a thesis and the force of the thesis will not be seriously impaired by the removal of such material, the

Department may grant permission for the access to the confidential material to be closed on the understanding that the thesis will be available for consultation or reproduction but access to the confidential material will be restricted.

Authors can also choose to override the default embargo and make their thesis open access, either at the time of deposit or at any time during the three-year embargo. Authors who wish to make their thesis freely available on deposit should indicate this on the Deposit and Consultation of Thesis form (GSO3A) and on the online ORA deposit form. Once the embargo is in place, students wishing to end it early should e-mail ORA@bodleian.ox.ac.uk with instructions. Those planning to publish their research as a book or article are not recommended to place their thesis on open access in ORA without first discussing this matter with their supervisor and consulting potential publishers to ascertain their policy. The embargo will be automatically lifted after the three-year period, and it is the responsibility of the author to apply for an extension if required. No reminder will be sent and it will be assumed that the full text can be released if a Dispensation from Consultation form (GSO.3C) is not submitted (see below).

Dispensation from consultation of your thesis – Library and ORA

- Authors may apply for dispensation from consultation beyond the end of the default three-year embargo period of the copy of the thesis deposited in the Bodleian or other University Library and of the electronic copy of the thesis deposited in ORA if there is good reason for such a request. Reasons for requesting dispensation might include that consultation or reproduction would put at risk confidential material or invalidate an application for a patent on a product or process described in a thesis. Students are advised to be particularly mindful of the terms of any agreements with an outside body or sponsor governing supply of confidential material or the disclosure of research results described in the thesis.
- Dispensation will always be granted:

- In cases where confidentiality has been made a condition of access to materials that are subsequently incorporated in a thesis, and
- For material where copyright is held by a third party and permission to disseminate it via the Internet has not been granted by the copyright holder. Students should apply for dispensation by completing form GSO.3C.

Journal Articles Included Within the Thesis

Authors sometimes include published journal articles within their theses. Authors needing to include such articles as part of the e-thesis can make the article freely available only in compliance with copyright and any sponsor permissions. See www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo.php for guidance or ask ORA staff (ORA@bodleian.ox.ac.uk).

The Copyright in the Thesis

The copyright in the thesis usually remains with the author. In a tiny minority of cases, copyright might rest with a sponsor or other body. Students should speak to their supervisor or Research Services if they are unsure.

Third Party Copyright

If material has been incorporated within the thesis where copyright is held by an individual or group that is not the author (third party copyright) permission will be needed to make such material freely available on the Internet. It is best to obtain such permission when sourcing the material. Proof of permission will need to be provided when depositing the thesis in ORA (e.g. e-mail or letter). Authors should contact ORA staff (ORA@bodleian.ox.ac.uk) if they are unsure. A useful template to keep track of permissions for use of third party copyright materials is [available for download](#).

Intellectual Property Rights

Authors should apply for dispensation from consultation if consultation or reproduction of all or part of the thesis would put at risk confidential material or invalidate an application for a patent on a product or process described in the thesis, or restricting access to the thesis is a requirement of any agreements with an outside body or sponsor governing supply of confidential material or the disclosure of research results described in the thesis. Authors should speak to their supervisor or Research Services if they are unsure.

Plagiarism

Making the thesis open access increases its visibility, gains recognition for the author and certifies them as author of the work. It can also give rise to concerns about increased risk of plagiarism. However, when work is available open access, plagiarism is easier to detect (by using a web search engine).

General Queries

Any further information or queries regarding the deposit of your digital thesis, should be referred to ORA@bodleian.ox.ac.uk.

Disclosure of Data Sources

At some point in the thesis the source of the empirical material has to be described in detail. For secondary data it has to be made clear where the data used in the study can be obtained for purposes of replication. For primary data, the method section and/or appendices have to describe the data collection process and provide relevant materials to allow the readers to assess the quality of the data and, if applicable, to replicate the data collection.

DPhil Theses – Library Copy & Leave to SupPLICATE

In order to have your degree conferred at a graduation ceremony you must submit one hard-bound copy of the final version of your

thesis (including any approved minor corrections) for deposit in the Bodleian Library. You must submit [forms GSO.3a and GSO.26](#) to the Research Degrees team at the Examination Schools with your Bodleian copy. The library copy of the thesis must be in a permanently fixed binding, drilled and sewn, in a stiff board case in library buckram, in dark colours, and lettered on the spine with the candidate's name and initials, the degree, and the year of submission. Candidates should note that Leave to Supplicate is *conditional* upon receipt by the Graduate Studies Office of the library copy of their thesis; and that candidates may *not* proceed to take their degree until they have fulfilled the requirement to submit a library copy of the thesis.

Late Submission

Supervision

All doctoral students have one University supervisor, or occasionally two joint supervisors. The supervisor guides the student through his or her course of study.

The supervisor reports on the student's progress to the Graduate Studies Committee (DPhil students) and the Teaching Meeting (MPhil & MSc students) at the end of each term and will also provide feedback to the student. The advice of the supervisor will always be sought by the GSC before recommending any change in status, transfer between courses, and so on. It is of great importance for the student to keep in regular contact with his or her supervisor and to keep the supervisor fully informed as to the progress of his or her studies.

Part-time students are only assigned permanent members of staff as their supervisors to minimise the risk of staff turnover influencing supervision. In addition, all part-time students are allocated a Departmental advisor, as well as a supervisor, in order to ensure that there is continuity in

Candidates may submit the examiners' copies of their thesis, prepared as described above, at the same time as they apply for the Appointment of Examiners. If they intend, however, to submit the examiners' copies at a later date, they will be required to state, at the time of their application for Appointment of Examiners, the date by which they will submit. This should be as soon as possible after the date of application and may in no case be later than the last day of the vacation immediately following the term in which application for appointment of examiners has been made. If a candidate fails to meet this deadline, his or her application for Appointment of Examiners will be automatically cancelled; if s/he has also reached the end of the time when his or her status will lapse then he or she will be unable to apply again, unless s/he is reinstated, which would normally be for one term only in order to submit the thesis for examination.

academic contact, even if there are staffing changes in the Department. Like full-time DPhil students, part-time students may be supervised jointly. At least one supervisor will be from the Department of Sociology. The other may be from outside the Department or Oxford University, if justified by the nature of a particular DPhil project.

As a benchmark, we expect part-time students to meet with their supervisors in person (wherever practicable) at least twice a term for the duration of the course to discuss progress and to receive feedback.

Students and Supervisors are required to electronically submit a termly progress report to the Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR).

Graduate Supervision Reporting

Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) is used by Supervisors each term to review, monitor

and comment on their student's academic progress and performance and to assess skills and training needs. Students are given the opportunity to contribute to their termly supervision reports by reviewing and commenting on their own academic progress.

All students are required to submit a GSR report each term.

Students will receive a report of their termly supervision from their Supervisor. Divisions, Departments and Colleges use the completion of supervision reports as an essential means of monitoring student progress.

The supervision reporting process is controlled by a structured timetable with automatic notifications and reminders. Once reports are submitted they are immediately available to the student, Supervisor and DGS for review. Additionally, Subject Administrators, College Advisors, College Administrators and Scholarship and Funding Administrators are able to view reports.

PRS and DPhil student should comment on the progress of their project but are also asked to list any training needs discussed with their supervisor and training that they undertook (this can range from giving a presentation to workshop, summer schools to professional courses).

Graduate students will also all have a College Adviser. The role of the College Adviser is to provide pastoral and general academic advice. They can be particularly helpful if the student has any academic or other difficulties that he or she does not feel able to discuss with the University Supervisor.

Change of Supervisor

It may be appropriate in some cases to change Supervisor if, for example, the direction of the student's work changes. The Graduate Studies Committee and all university Supervisors also recognise that occasionally there can arise incompatibilities of temperament or approach between Supervisor and student. Because of the central importance Oxford attaches to the relationship between Supervisor and student, students are urged to discuss any problems of this kind freely and in full confidence with the DGS. An alternative method of approach in such cases is through the student's College Advisor or College Tutor for Graduates. A change of Supervisor requires the approval of the Graduate Studies Committee.

Code of Practice for Supervisors of Research Students

Supervisors responsible for Probationary Research or Doctoral students are expected to:

- Meet with students (in general three times per term)
- Agree initial requirements for training through taught courses
- Discuss progress, providing feedback to the Director of Graduate Studies
- Write termly supervision reports on GSR

Formal responsibility ceases once students have passed the eight-year submission deadline. Supervisors are nevertheless encouraged to read and comment on such students' final thesis drafts. .

Regulations Governing Graduate Degree Courses

Below is a summary of the most relevant rules. In exceptional circumstances it may be possible to seek dispensation from these rules. Students should consult the

[Examination Regulations](#) for the full text and seek further advice from their Supervisor.

Plagiarism

What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent, 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.

Plagiarism may be intentional or reckless, or unintentional. Under the regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offence.

All students should carefully read the [Oxford Students website guidance](#).

You may be found guilty of plagiarism if:

- You are presenting or passing off another person's work as your own
- You import into your own work 'more than a single phrase from another person's work without the use of quotation marks and identification of the source'
- You make 'extensive use of another person's work, either by summarising or paraphrasing it merely by changing a few words or altering the order of the presentation, without acknowledgement'
- You use 'the ideas of another person without acknowledgement of the source' or submit or present work as your own' which is substantially the ideas or intellectual data of another'
- You make 'a deliberate attempt at passing off the ideas or writings of another person as your own'
- You take 'the words, ideas and labour of other people and give the impression that they are your own.'

[From *Beat the Witch-hunt! Peter Levin's Guide to Avoiding and Rebutting Accusations of Plagiarism for Conscientious Students*]

Plagiarism and University Policy

Cases of apparently deliberate plagiarism, while happily infrequent in the University, are taken extremely seriously, and where

examiners suspect that this has occurred, they bring the matter to the attention of the Proctors.

Your attention is drawn to the Proctors' and Assessor's Memorandum, Section 9.5, 'Conduct in Examinations' and in particular to Sections 4 and 5 and the concluding paragraph of the section:

4. *No candidate shall present for an examination as his or her own work any part or the substance of any part of another person's work.*
5. *In any written work (whether thesis, dissertation, essay, coursework, or written examinations) passages quoted or closely paraphrased from another person's work must be identified as quotations or paraphrases, and the source of the quoted or paraphrased material must be clearly acknowledged.*

"The University employs a series of sophisticated software applications to detect plagiarism in submitted examination work, both in terms of copying and collusion. It regularly monitors on-line essay banks, essay-writing services, and other potential sources of material. It reserves the right to check samples of submitted essays for plagiarism.

Although the University strongly encourages the use of electronic resources by students in their academic work, any attempt to draw on third-party material without proper attribution may well attract severe disciplinary sanctions."

Online Plagiarism Quiz and Self-Tests

By the end of Week 2, all students are required to take the [Avoiding Plagiarism Tutorial](#), and to email a copy of the certificate of completion to the GSA.

The [Oxford Students skills webpage](#) has guidance on [plagiarism](#), [time management](#), [referencing](#), [research skills](#), and more.

In addition, the resources below (available in various libraries across Oxford) will help you identify and avoid plagiarism in your work:

Neville, Colin (2007) *The complete guide to referencing and avoiding plagiarism* Maidenhead; New York: Open University Press [[SOLO link](#)]

Pears, Richard and Graham Shields (2016) *Cite them right: the essential referencing guide [electronic resource]* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan [[SOLO link](#)]

Third Party Proof-readers

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 not 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.

Fees

Fees are paid termly.

The maximum number of terms for which DPhil students must pay fees are:

- Eighteen Terms
- Twelve, if they have an Oxford MPhil

Fees are charged whether or not the student is working in Oxford. Fees are not charged if the student status is formally suspended by the Graduate Studies Committee.

Residence Requirements

The University of Oxford has residency requirements for full-time DPhil students, stipulating that students must be resident in Oxford for a certain period of time and a certain distance away from Carfax Tower. Such residency requirements do not apply to part-time DPhil students (or any student on a part-time course). However, please do bear in mind that during term time, especially within the first few years of your DPhil course, you will be required to attend weekly seminars and training courses, which will require you to be physically present in Oxford at least once a week, so you should live within a commutable distance.

Nonetheless, it is vital that every overseas student familiarises him/herself with UK Visa Rules and Regulations. Please refer to the UK Border Agency Website and the relevant section of the University Website. It is your responsibility to inform your Department and College of any change in circumstances, including address.

Suspension of Status as a Graduate Student

With the support of his or her Supervisor and college, students may apply to the Graduate Studies Committee for suspension of status for a specified period. If the application is approved, the candidate will not be liable to pay fees during the period of

suspension and will automatically resume his or her former status at the end of the period.

The Graduate Studies Committee may consider applications for suspension on the following grounds:

- Where the student is prevented from pursuing his or her course of study in circumstances which are outside his or her control though there are good grounds for believing that he or she will be able to resume work within a reasonable period (e.g., physical or mental incapacity, maternity leave and unexpected domestic crises).
- To take up temporary work which is likely to be relevant to his or her subsequent career and the opportunity for which is unlikely to recur.
- Any such application should have the support of the student's Supervisor and College and should normally be for a specified period.

Candidates are expected to endeavour to complete their studies within the normal time limits for the course in question and the Graduate Studies Committee is not prepared to consider applications for suspension merely on the ground that a candidate wishes to engage, for personal reasons, in some other activity and then return to his or her graduate work at some later date. Retrospective suspensions will be considered in only the most exceptional circumstances.

Illness

The University records should show correctly for how many terms a student has been actively working on a thesis. Students whose work is unavoidably interrupted by illness are encouraged to apply for suspension of status immediately. ESRC-funded students must additionally comply with all of the ESRC's regulations for suspension of the course. Failure to comply with these regulations may have serious consequences for the Department's ability to award ESRC studentships in the future.

If a research student falls ill and it is thought that this might result in a subsequent

application for extension of time, it would be desirable to obtain a medical certificate at the time. The student should always let his or her Supervisor know when illness has prevented work on the thesis.

Teaching Opportunities and Paid Work

There are several opportunities to teach in the department and the university in general. A limited number of Teaching Assistants is recruited for Lab Sessions and Tutorials in the Department. Please contact the Course Provider of the course you would like to teach. The Department of Politics and International Relations (DPIR) has a register of Tutors for Undergraduate teaching. DPhil students (those who have successfully Transferred Status) interested in Tutorial work should contact DPIR directly. Opportunities for teaching on undergraduate courses and for the Masters-level programmes, though very limited, will also be open to part-time students, subject to completion of appropriate training.

Your first commitment must be to your Oxford degree work, which is demanding and intensive. If you need, or wish, to undertake paid employment of any kind (whether inside or outside the University), you must first obtain the approval of your college and your supervisor. Both the College and the Department are likely to have a number of small jobs available, some of which can be combined with study. The norm for the number of hours of paid employment that graduate students may undertake for the Department are as follows: a maximum of six hours per week for taught course students and no more than ten hours per week for doctoral research students. Students may be permitted to work beyond these norms during vacations, subject to the explicit approval of their supervisor. Departmental teaching assistantships and research assistantships are advertised as and when they become available.

Please be aware that if you are a Tier 4 student visa holder you will have restrictions, which are set by the Home Office, on the number of hours you are permitted to work

each week during term time. Paid and unpaid work within the University, for colleges, and for external organisations counts towards your permitted weekly hours. You will be asked to complete a declaration to ensure that you are not working in breach of these conditions

Please also consult the Education Committee's [paid work guidelines](#).

Students with external funding will need approval from their funding body before accepting employment as college lecturers, Junior Research Fellows or in other similar posts. In all such cases both student and supervisor must act in accordance with the rules of the funding body. Any ESRC-funded students must consult in the first instance Kate Gear, the ESRC Studentship Officer at the Social Sciences Division, (tel. 01865 6-14866), who will check whether the proposed employment contradicts the terms of their ESRC studentship.

Ethical Review Procedures for Research

Research Ethics Review and Approval

All Sociology Students will be asked to complete DREC checklist which will indicate the type of research they are going to conduct and which will determine whether or not further steps are required of them.

Full ethics approval is needed for all projects involving human subjects except where the data are fully anonymised, pre-existing (secondary data), and not from the NHS. Students with projects based exclusively on secondary data analysis will be asked to submit their DREC check list approved by their supervisor and DREC secretary to confirm ethics clearance process is complete prior to submission the Transfer of Status application form.

Otherwise, your DREC check list will be marked as 'requiring further action'. You will need to start full ethics application process (CUREC) prior to applying for Transfer of

Status. In which case, please ensure that you read and comply with the following. **You will not be able to undertake any research until your CUREC application has been approved. Please start the process of completing the form and gather then required material as soon as possible.**

Details of the two compulsory training sessions, which must be completed in the first two months of the DPhil, are available on page 12.

The University's policy and guidance on the ethical review of research undertaken by staff and students which involves human participants is [available on the University website](#). This includes Introduction to Research Integrity and Ethics Training, compulsory for all University researchers and students. Departmental Policy on Ethical Training Requirements for Research Staff and Graduate Students (mandatory) is available from [Canvas](#). It covers all research involving human participants, where for example,

- people answer questions about themselves or their opinions,
- people perform tasks - such as completing an online survey
- people are being observed,
- data or other identifying information about people (personal data) are being collected and used.

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 the formal requirement of funding bodies.

What to do:

- **Check how to apply for ethics approval:** Visit the Central University Research Ethics Committee ([CUREC](#)) site and check where and how to apply for ethical approval with the flowcharts [here](#).
- **Decide whether your project needs CUREC 1A or CUREC 2:** This depends on the sort of research you are doing and the information it involves. To check which you will need, fill in the first section of the [CUREC 1A checklist form](#); the form will advise you whether to continue with the CUREC 1A application or start a CUREC 2. Application forms for both sorts of ethical approval are available [here](#) under "How to apply".
- **Apply well in advance:** When writing any CUREC application, assume that you are the expert in your topic area and explain your project methods simply and clearly. This includes giving a clear idea of potential ethical issues and how you propose to address them. Remember that the ethics committee partially relies on your expertise as a researcher in your field, in order to be clear about the ethics of your project.

It is likely your application will need documents to support it and help to explain what you are doing. These documents can be broadly classified as for external (participant) or internal (researcher) use. Documents for external use include: (i) participant recruitment materials, i.e. adverts and invitation letters/emails, (ii) participant information sheets, written consent forms, oral consent scripts, and (iii) participant-completion surveys, or questionnaires (paper or online). Please see the main CUREC page on [informed consent](#) for full details. Documents for internal use include sample research instruments (researcher-completion surveys or questionnaires, semi-structured interview guides and scripts), detailed study protocols, and record of oral consent forms. Please use only the most recent versions of the [documents templates](#) downloaded from CUREC website.

In most cases, the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) will want to see final versions of external use documents in order to check compliance with the relevant University policy. As far as possible the DREC will also want to see examples of interview schedules and draft questionnaires. (We are aware that survey questions and other research instruments evolve as part of project methodology.)

- Please complete the relevant CUREC form electronically and send it together with relevant supporting documents **in Word format** from your Oxford email account to drec@sociology.ox.ac.uk. **You must provide endorsement of your form and also obtain your supervisor's endorsement (endorsement should be provided by an email confirming the provisions as indicated in the relevant CUREC form):** applications are not valid until endorsement proves and relevant supporting documents have been provided. Comprehensive instruction about obtaining valid endorsements is provided in the CUREC checklist itself.
- Please note that the anticipated turn around on ethics applications is between 5 and 30 days for CUREC 1A applications and may be up to 60 days for the more complex cases and CUREC 2 process. Once your research has received ethical approval you will receive DREC letter to confirm this with a unique reference number pertaining to your research project. Please include this letter as part of your Transfer of Status application if you have received it in time. If not, include a copy of your fully endorsed CUREC application form.

Ideally you should have completed the process of receiving ethical approval before you apply for Transfer of Status in Week 1 of Trinity Term of your first year. Please ensure that you leave enough time to complete the forms, collect the requisite signatures, and for the approval process to take place. For projects requiring CUREC 1A protocol, applications submitted early in Hilary Term should have sufficient time for

approval. If you believe that you may need CUREC 2 protocol, please contact drec@sociology.ox.ac.uk, in Michaelmas Term for advice. It is understood that those needing CUREC 2 may well take too long to be completed before the start of Trinity term even with an early application.

Other resources:

- The Research Support Service offers several different [training courses](#) for preparing for ethical review.

Risk Assessment, Insurance and Safety Considerations for Any Travel or Fieldwork

Many students will, as part of their course, be required to undertake fieldwork. Fieldwork is considered as any research activity contributing to your academic studies, and approved by your department, which is carried out away from the University premises. This can be overseas or within the UK. The safety and welfare of its students is of paramount importance to the University. This includes fieldwork and there are a number of procedures that you must follow when preparing for and carrying out fieldwork.

COVID-19: In view of the extraordinary current situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, research should be conducted remotely wherever possible. The University is working towards a measured, phased, and safe resumption of research that cannot be conducted remotely, including research involving face-to-face interactions with other people. Projects and related risks will be assessed on case-by-case basis. Further information and updates on the University and government guidance can be found [here](#). Inquiries about individual projects should be sent to: drec@sociology.ox.ac.uk.

Preparation

Safe fieldwork is successful fieldwork. Thorough preparation can pre-empt many potential problems. When discussing your research with your supervisor please think about the safety implications of where you are

going and what you are doing. Following this discussion and before your travel will be approved, you will be required to complete a travel risk assessment form. This requires you to set out the significant safety risks associated with your research, the arrangements in place to mitigate those risks and the contingency plans for if something goes wrong. There is an expectation that you will take out [University travel insurance](#). Your department also needs accurate information on where you are, and when and how to contact you while you are away. The travel assessment process should help to plan your fieldwork by thinking through arrangements and practicalities. [This website](#) contains some fieldwork experiences which might be useful to refer to.

During COVID pandemic: additional COVID risk assessment is mandatory for all fieldwork that involves travelling and face to face interactions. Please check [University Safety Office Website](#) for guidance and updates.

Any travel (including for conferences etc.) undertaken as part of University business requires the submission of a risk assessment, and qualifies for cover under the University's travel insurance policy.

It is vital that risk assessments and travel insurance applications are submitted **4-6 weeks before planned travel**. Forms for high-risk travel should include possibly most up to date assessment and must reviewed by the Divisional Safety Officer, and the University Safety Office prior to submission for Head of Department approval.

Please submit the completed forms to DREC Secretary (drec@sociology.ox.ac.uk) and Graduate Studies Administrator (graduate-studies@sociology.ox.ac.uk).

You are advised to talk to your Supervisor at the earliest opportunity. In addition, you should make an appointment to talk to the Graduate Studies Administrator (GSA) **at least one month before the start of your trip**. They can provide the appropriate links and assist with the risk assessment process.

The need to complete a risk assessment should not be seen as an obstacle, but as an integral and fundamental part of travel and

fieldwork preparation. Those conducting interviews in **areas of high risk** (e.g. areas of serious political unrest) or in **an environment which poses a higher risk than the normal place of work** (e.g. interviewing prisoners in a prison) must be able to demonstrate that they have thought properly about where risk may be present and describe clearly their proposed actions to mitigate such risk as far as is reasonably possible.

As a separate but related matter, you should always provide the GSA with an itinerary and contact details for your next of kin, in order to meet university regulations.

Training

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

Social Sciences Division Research and Skills Training (termly)

Full details and dates [on the website](#).

- Preparation for Safe Fieldwork. A half day course for those carrying out social science research in rural and urban contexts
- An Insider's Guide to fieldwork. A student led course on negotiating the practical aspects of fieldwork.
- Vicarious trauma workshops. For research on traumatic or distressing topic areas or contexts.

Safety Office courses (termly)

Full details and dates [on the website](#).

Useful links

More information on fieldwork and a number of useful links can be found on the [Social Sciences divisional website](#). Those travelling to risky areas or those carrying out particularly sensitive activities (*wherever* they may be being done) will be required to have

their forms referred to the Safety Office for approval. Sufficient time in advance of the start of the trip must be allowed for this referral to take place.

Travel Insurance

Please note that the University's insurance will not be valid if you do not have a valid risk assessment for Medium- and High-Risk travel, and do not complete this process in good time. There is no cost to students associated with taking out University travel insurance, and the policy offers a good quality of coverage.

More information on the university's scheme is available [here](#).

The Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office gives up-to-date advice on travel to anywhere in the world, country by country. You are strongly advised to refer to this in any case; and particularly where advisory information applies. All travel plans to FCDO advisory areas must be the subject of a risk assessment and will be referred to the Safety Office by the Head of Administration and Finance. To check if your travel plans might be affected by an FCDO Travel Advice please [check the website](#).

Some key points:

- Allow plenty of time (at least one month) before the start of your trip to do the planning and get any approvals
- The University has a duty of care to you wherever you are - when you are there on what may be perceived as legitimate university business. Research would count as such. Even if your trip is taking you home to your own country (e.g. you are a Turkish national going to do fieldwork in Turkey), you will still need to demonstrate that you have considered the risks and completed a risk assessment.
- If your fieldwork involves human participants or use of personal data, you will also need to consider the ethical implications of such activity. Detailed information on the university's policy on data protection and handling is available on [Research Data website](#); further details on the ethics clearance process are available .

Committees

Sociology Graduate Studies Committee

The members of the Sociology Graduate Studies Committee are:

- Dr Michael Biggs - DGS (St Cross)
- Prof Man Yee Kan – TCD (Nuffield)
- Prof Takehiko Kariya (St Antony's)
- One student representative (the student rep shall attend for unreserved business only)

For 2021-22 the Chair will be Dr Michael Biggs. The Graduate Studies Committee:

- Considers applications for admission,
- Appoints a University Supervisor for each student,

- Considers applications from students during the course of study (e.g. change of course; Transfer of Status; Confirmation of Status; Extensions of time etc.)
- Appoints examiners for MLitt and DPhil candidates
- Reviews the programme of teaching and considers changes in regulations etc.

The Committee meets twice a term (normally Tuesdays in weeks 2 and 7). It is important that students submit any applications (and all accompanying material) to the Committee, via the Graduate Studies Administrator, by Friday of week 1 and Friday of week 6 in good time for its meetings. While some matters may be dealt with under Chair's action during the vacations, this is not the norm and will not always be appropriate. Enquiries about the

work of the Graduate Studies Committee should be made to the Graduate Studies Administrator.

Academic records of all students are maintained centrally on the University student database. Each new record is opened on the issue of a formal notice of admission. Further information is added to students' records during their first term from matriculation forms and all records are continually updated as students' progress on their course.

Graduate Joint Consultative Committee (GJCC)

The GJCC exists to provide a forum for graduate students to put forward suggestions, comments and grievances about the courses and facilities provided by the department. It will usually meet every term in Week 3. Membership includes student representatives (two for MSc, and one each for MPhil, PRS and DPhil), Head of Department, teaching staff, and the Graduate Studies Administrator. Part-time DPhil students are also encouraged to act as representatives for other part-time doctoral students on their course. Some secretarial support is provided by the GSA. All students are welcome to attend and are encouraged to put forward items for discussion through their representatives.

Supporting You

Special Provision for Part-Time DPhil Students

Providing part-time students with support, both pastoral and intellectual is a key aspect of administering the course. The Director of Graduate Studies has oversight for the part-time students and maintains an overview of how you are progressing on the course. Some special provisions for part-time DPhil students are also put in place:

As with full-time students, part-time DPhil students are required to attend the departmental induction in Week 0 of their first term. These induction sessions usually take place on Monday and Tuesday. The induction will include sessions specifically tailored for part-time students, especially tailored to those students who may have been out of study for a long period of time.

Training sessions which are spread over Week 0 of Michaelmas term may also be offered on -1 Week of Michaelmas term to cater to part-time Students' needs.

A mentoring/buddy system with full-time DPhil students will be put in place for all

part-time DPhil students. This is a relatively informal process where part-time students would be 'paired' with full-time ones, which will help part-time students to have a full overview of the degree even when studying on a part-time basis. This has the advantage that you can discuss and talk over any issues with regards the requirements of their second year with those who are experiencing the full-time degree firsthand.

Part-time students are encouraged to form their own support or study group away from Oxford either by holding meetings or by establishing networks via social media channels. Facilitation of such groups, which are to be ad hoc in the first instance, have the full support of the Department, and may begin as a Department-supported chat site on WebLearn or a Facebook page primarily for the benefit of part-time students.

Important DPhil events, such as the DPhil Workshops will take place on the same days as the Departmental Seminar Series to minimize the need for part-time students to travel into Oxford. Supervisors will also be encouraged to meet with part-time students on these days. However, as above, part-time students are expected to be present in Oxford for 30 days of each academic year.

Part-time students are encouraged to use the 'hot-desk' PGT workspace on the days that they are in the Department

A part-time DPhil student representative will be sought for the GJCC committee to represent part-time DPhil students' concerns.

Access to libraries can naturally be an issue for students based outside Oxford, although this is somewhat ameliorated in the case of Sociology as the main library for the subject, the Social Science Library, is a lending library. However, the on-line resources provided by the University, coupled with the visits to Oxford outlined above, should be sufficient for most students' needs. The Social Science Library has confirmed that they will be able to support part-time students, and they have emphasised that Library staff are available to be contacted remotely (email, phone, online chat service) during working hours.

Problems, Advice

Students who have problems, academic, administrative or personal, and who are uncertain of the proper way to go about solving them have several possible courses of action open to them.

Every college has their own systems of support for students, please refer to your College handbook or website for more information on who to contact and what support is available through your college. Details of the wide range of sources of support available more widely in the University are available from the [Oxford Students website](#), including in relation to mental and physical health and disability. Furthermore, students may:

- Consult their Supervisor or the Graduate Studies Administrator in the first instance. The Director of Graduate Studies (Dr Michael Biggs) or the Head of Department (Prof Federico Varese) will if necessary consult the appropriate authorities on your behalf. The Director

of Graduate Studies, Dr Biggs, is happy for students to drop in with brief questions when he is in the Department. For longer questions, it is better to make an appointment.

- For issues about a particular course, please first talk to the course provider if appropriate.
- At your college, consult the Senior Tutor, the Tutor for Graduates or your own College Advisor, who will give similar help.
- Consult the elected graduate representatives in the Department who will give what help and advice they can.
- Consult the Graduate Studies Office in the University Offices or the Graduate Studies section of the University website, which will advise on the obtaining of necessary forms, submission of applications, dates and deadlines, deposit of theses, etc.
- Students who are not satisfied that the Department has addressed their concerns should consider making a formal complaint to the Head of Department, Professor Federico Varese. There are also some issues which the Department cannot address, e.g. complaints relating to exams, and a formal complaint to the Proctors must be made in these circumstances. See below for more information.
- On a more personal level, the University Counselling Service at 11 Wellington Square (which acts in a strictly confidential way) is experienced not only in general psychological problems but also in the special problems and blocks associated with academic work. Nightline is a confidential listening and information service run for students by students and is open from 8pm until 8am from 0th to 9th week each term. Students can phone (2)70270 or visit Nightline at 16 Wellington Square.
- The Disability Coordinator for the Department is the Graduate Studies Administrator.

Student Conduct

Students at Oxford are subject to two separate (but complementary) sets of disciplinary

regulations: the rules and by-laws of your college provided in your college handbook, or equivalent document, and the University's conduct regulations.

The University regulations covering student conduct come from three main sources:

- University statutes, in particular Statute XI on University discipline;
- regulations, issued by: Council; the Proctors, as the University's disciplinary officers, including emergency regulations for student conduct, published in the University Gazette, notified to you by your college and remaining in force for a set period; the Rules Committee (six Congregation members and six student members who meet annually to review and issue conduct regulations); the Curators of the University Libraries; the IT Committee;
- rules on access and use, made and published by people or bodies responsible for managing University land and buildings, or operating University services and facilities.

The Examination Regulations cover a wide variety of important topics, you should read them carefully. Students who intentionally or recklessly breach regulations, or incite or conspire with others to do so, are liable to disciplinary action.

For more information please see the [Student Conduct page of the University website](#).

Freedom of Speech

The Department is committed to upholding the freedom of speech, following the [University's policy](#):

Free speech is the lifeblood of a university

It enables the pursuit of knowledge. It helps us approach truth. It allows students, teachers and researchers to become better acquainted with the variety of beliefs, theories and opinions in the world. Recognising the vital importance of free expression for the life of the mind, a university may make rules

concerning the conduct of debate but should never prevent speech that is lawful.

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

It is this understanding of the central importance and specific roles of free speech in a university that underlies the detailed procedures of the University of Oxford.

Complaints

Complaints and academic appeals within the Department of Sociology

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

Where such a need arises, an informal discussion with the person immediately responsible for the issue that you wish to complain about (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 Oxford SU Student Advice Service, which have extensive

experience in advising students. You may wish to take advice from one of those sources before pursuing your complaint.

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

Complaints

If your concern or complaint relates to teaching or other provision made by the faculty/department, then you should raise it with the Director of Graduate Studies, Dr Michael Biggs.

Complaints about departmental facilities should be made to the Graduate Studies Administrator, Hannah Brawn. If you feel unable to approach one of those individuals, you may contact the Head of Department, Prof Federico Varese. 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](#). 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 departmental administrator as

appropriate. They will be able to explain the assessment process that was undertaken and may be able to address your concerns. Queries must not be raised directly with the examiners.

If you still have concerns you can make a formal appeal to the Proctors who will consider appeals under the [University Academic Appeals Procedure](#).

Harassment

The Department is committed to fostering an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all students are respected. Harassment or victimisation is regarded as unacceptable behaviour and is not tolerated in any form. All members of the University are expected to treat each other fairly and with respect, courtesy and consideration.

Help and advice can be found in the Department by contacting your Supervisor, the DGS, the GSA or the Departmental Harassment Advisor (Agnieszka Swiejkowska, the Research Facilitator).

You can also contact your college for support and advice.

For more information about where to go for help and advice, please see the [Harassment webpage](#) on the University site. You can also read the University's [Harassment Policy here](#).

Whom to talk to about what

Academic Matters

- Supervisor
- Graduate Studies Administrator
Hannah Brawn
graduate-studies@sociology.ox.ac.uk
- Taught Course Director
Dr Man Yee Kan
man-yee.kan@sociology.ox.ac.uk
- Director of Graduate Studies
Dr Michael Biggs
michael.biggs@sociology.ox.ac.uk

Business of the Graduate Studies Committee

- Graduate Studies Administrator
Hannah Brawn
graduate-studies@sociology.ox.ac.uk

Ethics Forms

- Research Facilitator
Agnieszka Swiejkowska
01865 1 86177
DREC@sociology.ox.ac.uk

Use of Departmental Facilities

- Graduate Studies Administrator
Hannah Brawn
graduate-studies@sociology.ox.ac.uk

Computing and IT

- Manor Road IT
01865 2 84840
itsupport@manor-road.ox.ac.uk

Change of Supervisor (see page 31)

- Supervisor
- Graduate Studies Administrator
Hannah Brawn
graduate-studies@sociology.ox.ac.uk
- Taught Course Director
Dr Man Yee Kan
man-yee.kan@sociology.ox.ac.uk

Confidential Advice Relating to Harassment

- University's confidential harassment number
01865 2 70760

Equality and Diversity at Oxford

"The University of Oxford is committed to fostering an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its staff and students are respected." [Equality Policy \(2013\)](#). Oxford is a diverse community with staff and students from over 140 countries, all with different cultures, beliefs and backgrounds. As a member of the University you contribute towards making it an inclusive environment and we ask that you treat other members of the University community with respect, courtesy and consideration.

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

further details or contact us directly for advice: equality@admin.ox.ac.uk.

The Equality and Diversity Unit also supports a broad network of harassment advisors in departments/faculties and colleges and a central Harassment Advisory Service. For more information on the University's Harassment and Bullying policy and the support available for students [visit the dedicated webpage](#).

There are a range of faith societies, belief groups, and religious centres within Oxford University that are open to students. More information can be found [here](#).

Student welfare and support services

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 [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:

A range of services led by students are available to help provide support to other students, including the peer supporter network, the Oxford SU's Student Advice Service and Nightline. For more information, [visit the webpage here](#).

Oxford SU also [runs a series of campaigns](#) to raise awareness and promote causes that matter to students.

There is also a [wide range of student clubs and societies](#) to get involved in.

List of Abbreviations

CUREC and DREC – University and Department Research Ethics Committees respectively, these terms also used to refer to the Ethics assessment forms

DGS – Director of Graduate Studies

DPhil – Doctor of Philosophy

DTP – [Doctoral Training Partnership](#). Oxford is part of the Grand Union DTP with Brunel and the Open University. It is funded by the ESRC and it is the means by which several of our doctoral students receive financial support. It is also facilities various training activities open to all Oxford students.

EPC – Education Policy Committee

ESRC – Economic and Social Research Council

GJCC – Graduate Joint Consultative Committee

GSC – Graduate Studies Committee

GSR – Graduate Supervision Reporting

NCRM – [National Centre for Research Methods](#). Maintains a UK research training courses database and offers bursaries.

Proctors – The two Proctors (Senior and Junior) have responsibilities under the statutes and regulations for aspects of student discipline, for ensuring the proper conduct of examinations and for dealing with complaints.

PRS – Probationer Research Student

SSD – Social Sciences Division

TCD – Taught Courses Director

TNA – Training Needs Analysis

For any further puzzling Oxford abbreviations and acronyms, visit the [Online Glossary](#).