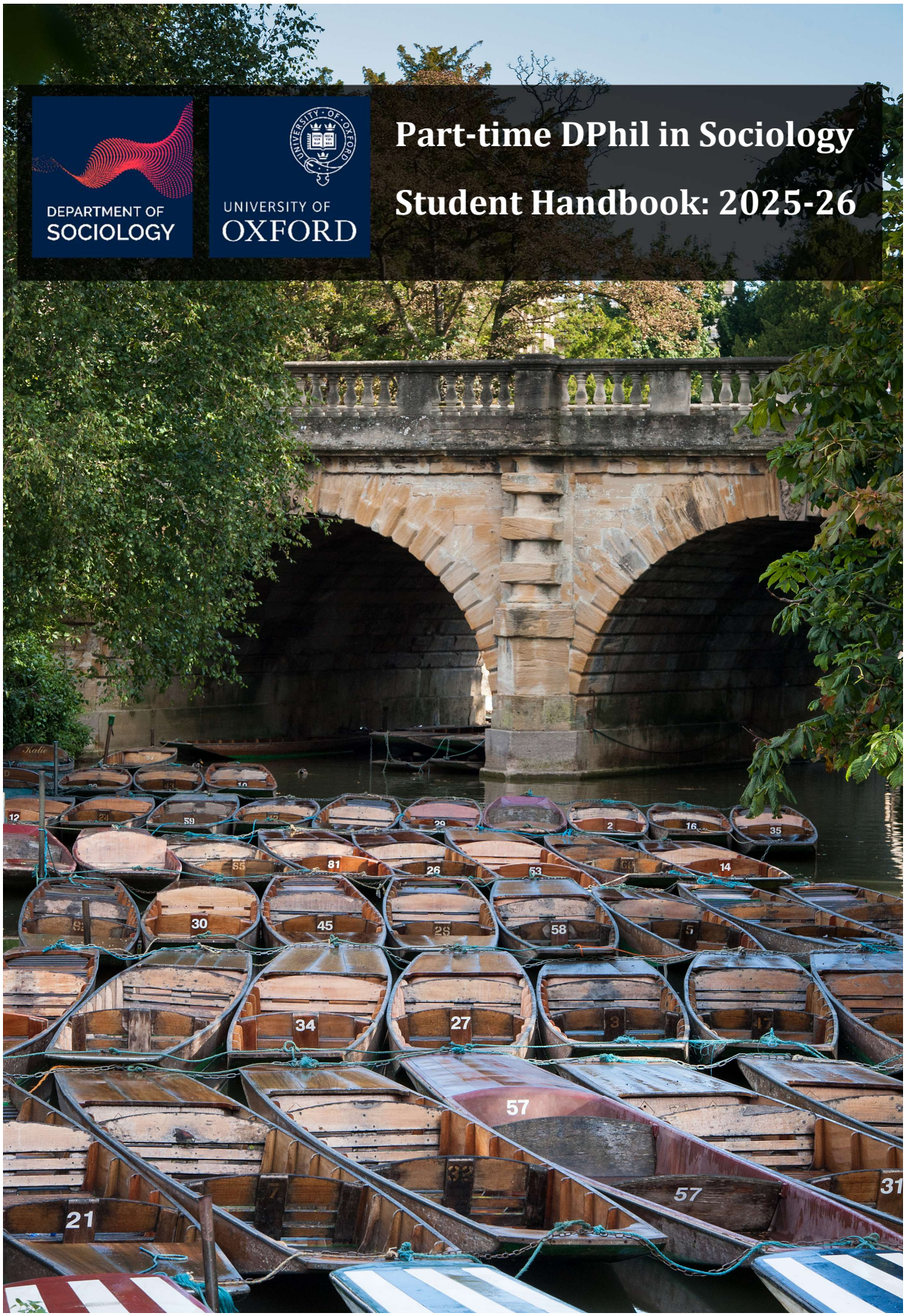
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Part-time DPhil in Sociology

Student Handbook: 2025-26



About this student handbook

This handbook applies to students starting the DPhil in Sociology in Michaelmas Term 2025 and the information within may be different for students starting the course in other years.

Please note that your degree is formally governed by the Examination Decrees and Regulations. These are published in September each year, and can be found online. The DPhil in Sociology handbook contains informal descriptions and interpretations of some of the most relevant rules, but any formal question must be settled primarily by reference to the Examination Decrees and Regulations.

The Examination Regulations relating to this course are available here. If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the Examination Regulations, then you should follow the Examination Regulations. If you have any concerns, please contact the Graduate Studies Officer at graduate-studies@sociology.ox.ac.uk.

The information in this handbook is accurate as of October 3rd 2025. However, it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained here on the University's Graduate website. 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 is **version 1.0** and no changes have currently been made.

Other key sources of information for students on the 2025-26 DPhil in Sociology include:

- The 'Department of Sociology Student Information 2025-26' Canvas page (SSO required). Canvas is Oxford's Virtual Learning Environment, where the Department and many courses have pages with further information, course assignments, etc.;
- the course timetable, distributed by email and available on Canvas in advance of the start of each term;
- the University pages for Graduate Forms and Graduate Forms for Exceptional Circumstances;
- the University's website for students;
- the University Student Handbook 2025/26;
- the handbooks provided by Oxford colleges, normally available on their websites.

Finally…

We welcome any feedback, concerns or suggestions received in connection to the handbook content. These should be sent to the Graduate Studies Officer, at graduate-studies@sociology.ox.ac.uk

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Overview of the DPhil

The DPhil in Sociology is a part-time, research-based degree at FHEQ Level 8 that is typically completed in six to eight years. The DPhil is examined by a thesis, prepared under guidance of one or two academic supervisors.

The DPhil programme offers training to prepare a student for academic life and the job market. They will develop skills by undertaking research under the guidance of an academic supervisor 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 sociologist.

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 cutting edge research undertaken by the scholars in the department and the many visitors that Oxford welcomes each year.

Students that successfully complete the course will have the skills necessary to apply for academic/research positions at universities in the UK and across the world, as well as to research-intense jobs in government and international organizations, NGOs, and the private sector.

Structure and 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 milestones are in place to ensure that students are make progress towards completion of the DPhil. The expected normal timetable is as follows:

1. **Admission as a 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 Monday of Week 4 of the sixth to eighth term after admission.

3. **Application for Confirmation of DPhil status**

   Those conducting substantial fieldwork in their second year will not be expected to submit for Confirmation until their seventh term. Otherwise, students should submit by Friday of Week 6 later than the eighteenth term or earlier than the twelfth term.

4. **Submission of DPhil Thesis**

   Should be submitted by the end of the sixth year.

The departmental Graduate Studies Committee encourages research students to follow this timetable for the Transfer and Confirmation of Status, as well as submission of the DPhil Thesis.

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 seventh 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 evidence).

Course Schedule

The table below shows the compulsory and recommended elements of the DPhil in Sociology. Please see further descriptions in the '*Required Workshops and Training*' section of the handbook.

	Compulsory	**Recommended**
Year 1	PRS Workshop Series	Nuffield College Seminars
	Departmental Seminars	Advanced Quantitative Methods
	Skills Training Courses	DPhil Conference (observers)
	Training Needs Analysis (TNA) with supervisor	

	Compulsory	**Recommended**
Year 2	Professional Development Workshop Series	Nuffield College Seminars
	Participate in DPhil Conference	Departmental Seminars
	Transfer of Status	

	Compulsory	**Recommended**
Year 3		Nuffield College Seminars
		Departmental Seminars
		Skills Training Courses

	Compulsory	**Recommended**
Year 4		Advanced Methods Short Courses
		Departmental Seminars
		Nuffield College Sociology Seminars

	Compulsory	Recommended
Year 5		Nuffield College Seminars
		Departmental Seminars

	Compulsory	Recommended
Year 6	**Confirmation of Status**	Visit Careers Services
	Present to DPhil Conference	Nuffield College Sociology Seminars
		Departmental Seminars
		Thesis Submission

Term Dates 2025/26

Oxford term dates for the 2025-26 academic year:

Michaelmas Term 2025: Sunday 12th October to Saturday 6th December

Hilary Term 2026: Sunday 18th January to Saturday 14th March

Trinity Term 2026: Sunday 26th April to Saturday 20st June

The dates of term for future academic years can be found here.

Recording of Lectures and Seminars

All departmental lectures and seminars are held in-person; no online or hybrid facilities are offered, and lectures/seminars are not recorded. Students with a registered disability who need recordings must obtain a Student Support Plan from the Disability Advisory Service that explicitly authorizes this accommodation. Without this, the Department may refuse requests to use laptops or other recording devices if other reasonable adjustments to take account of your disability are possible and, if such recording is authorised, the Department may impose reasonable additional controls or requirements as a result.

Usage of Generative Artificial Intelligence

Please see Annexe A.

Dissemination of Teaching or Learning Materials Outside of the Department

Students are strictly prohibited from sharing teaching or learning materials—including the content of seminar discussions and materials produced by other students or staff—to any third party, including to any social media or other online forum. Compliance with this is a mandatory requirement for participation in this course, and all students will be asked at Induction to sign a form confirming their acceptance.

Required Workshops and Training

Probationer Research Student (PRS) Workshop

Convenors: Professor Ridhi Kashyap, Dr Lynn Schneider and Dr Ignacio Carrasco

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. 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 PRS students are required to participate. The detailed schedule will be provided at the beginning of the academic year. The first major assignment early in the first term will be to present an outline of the proposed doctoral research project.

Discussion of methodology and final presentations will be in Hilary term.

Class Proceedings

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 a 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.

Researcher Integrity Training

The University's Research and Innovation Committee decided that introductory

research integrity training should be made compulsory for all University researchers, including postgraduate research students. Therefore, **all DPhil Sociology students must successfully complete the University's introductory research integrity training course before they apply for Transfer of Status.**

Successful completion of the course requires a mark of 80% in a test and researchers will receive a certificate of completion via email upon successful completion. This email should be retained as evidence of successful completion of the course.

The Research Degrees Panel of Education Committee agreed that all postgraduate research students admitted from Michaelmas term 2021 should be required to successfully complete the training course and are asked to provide evidence when applying for Transfer of Status. Students are also required by regulation to have successfully completed the training before Confirmation of DPhil Status can be approved, and must submit their certificate as part of their application for before Confirmation of DPhil Status (unless already provided as part of their application for Transfer of Status).

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 in Oxford and elsewhere. Please consult Social Sciences Division website and the National Centre for Research Methods website for an overview of training opportunities. Students are asked to report on their training needs in their Michaelmas Term Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) report and to review their skills training annually.

Advanced Quantitative Methods

PRS students that have not had previous similar training are recommended to attend and submit all coursework for the Advanced Quantitative Methods (AQM) optional paper for MSc and MPhil students. This paper is taught in Hilary Term and PRS students that wish to participate should consult with both their supervisor and the AQM course provider. Information about the AQM paper can be found in the MSc Sociology Student Handbook, which is available via Canvas and on the departmental website.

Professional Development Workshop Series

The department provides a series of professional development workshops, typically in Hilary Term, for DPhil Sociology students in their second year. Attendance is compulsory and students that are conducting fieldwork in in this term will instead be required to attend in their third year. More advanced doctoral students are welcome to attend if they wish. Examples of workshop topics include: 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 the relevant Hilary Term and the workshop series is

coordinated by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS).

Departmental Seminars

Departmental Seminars are held during term throughout the year at 12.45 on Mondays. See the 'Events' page on the departmental website for further details. **Attendance is compulsory for all first year DPhil Sociology students, and highly recommended for students in their second and third years.**

Students are also highly encouraged to attend the Nuffield College Sociology Seminars. Details are available on the Nuffield College website.

Departmental DPhil Conferences

The Departmental DPhil Conference is held annually, typically in Michaelmas Term. Students with DPhil status present their work, comment on each other's papers and receive feedback.

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

Participation is a compulsory part of the DPhil Sociology programme. All other DPhil students are very much encouraged to participate as the conferences are always interesting and informative and give students an idea of the nature of other doctoral work in sociology.

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.

You are also encouraged to take a look at the National Centre for Research Methods website for details of further training opportunities outside of the University.

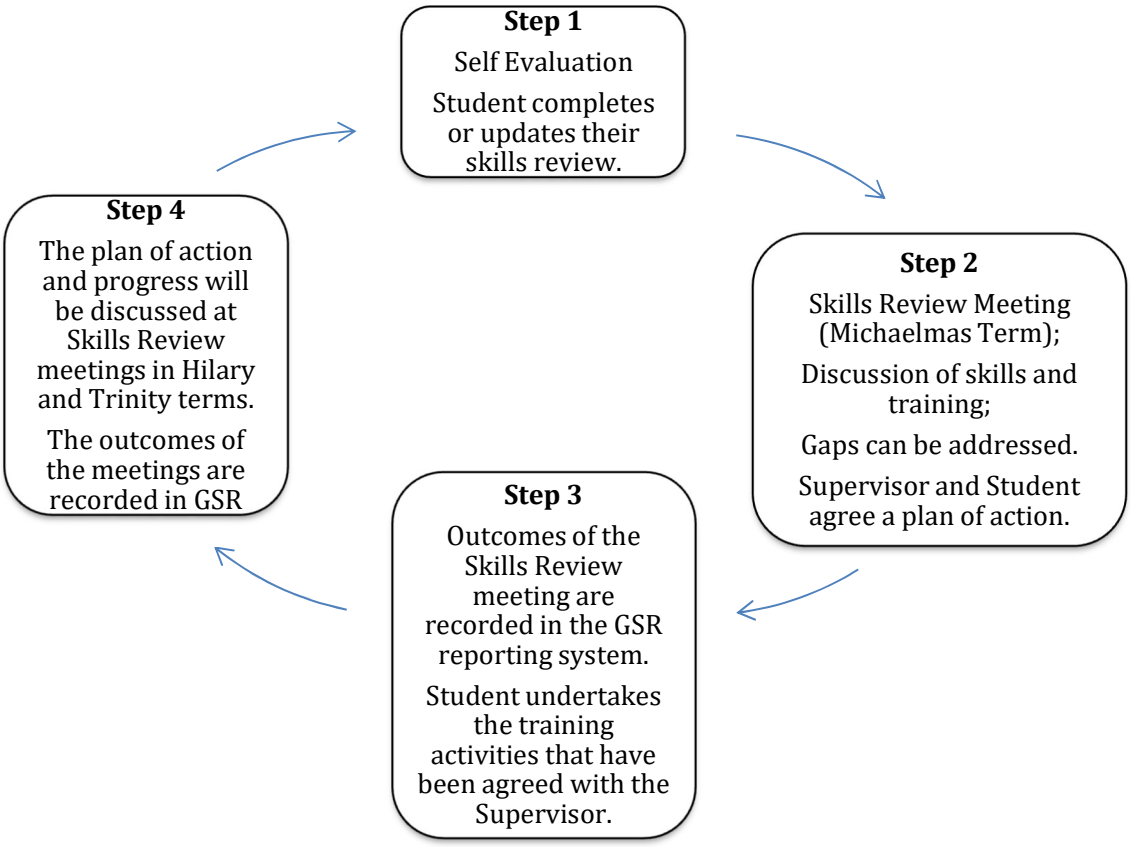
Skills Review

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.

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

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



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 and Skills Development 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. To support your broader development as a researcher, the Social Sciences Division also organises a skills training programme covering a range of generic and transferable skills. Further information is available online, where you can also browse and search for courses.

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 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 sessions 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.
- 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 Oxford University Language Centre offers specialist language 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 Centre for Teaching and Learning website provides further information on teaching and teaching development within the Social Sciences Division.

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 is the first formal milestone of the DPhil Sociology.

The Purpose, Timing and Application for Transfer of Status

The Transfer of Status assessment is to ensure that the student is making satisfactory progress in the development of the research, to ensure that the work is of potential 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 that 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. Further information is also available in the Education Committee "Policy on Research Degrees".

The Timing of Transfer of Status

The *Examination Regulations* state that PRS status can be held for a maximum of four terms. The Graduate Studies Committee of the Department of Sociology requires **submitting for Transfer of Status by Monday of Week 4 in Trinity Term of the second year.**

How to Apply for Transfer of Status

Candidates that intend to submit an integrated thesis (articles-based thesis) should also submit a GSO.31 form when applying for Transfer of Status (available here).

Applications for transfer of status should be made using the on-line Transfer of Status application accessible via the My Student Record tab in Student Self Service. The application form can also be accessed through the Graduate Forms webpage, where a link is available to the Student Self Service. Students are required to complete and submit the form online and to upload supplementary information on development of both research specific and personal and professional skills during their time as a Probationer Research Student. Students are also required to indicate whether their work requires research ethics approval and to provide evidence that they have successfully completed the University's online researcher integrity training course.

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 the departmental Research Facilitator: (drec@sociology.ox.ac.uk).

Applications for transfer of status should be made using the on-line Transfer of Status application accessible via the My Student Record tab in Student Self Service. The application form can also be accessed through the Graduate Forms webpage, where a link is available to the Student Self Service. Students are required to complete and submit the form online and to upload supplementary information on development of both research specific and personal and professional skills during their time as a Probationer Research Student. Students are also required to indicate whether their work requires research ethics approval and to provide evidence that they have successfully completed the University's online researcher integrity training course.

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

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 the departmental Research Facilitator (drec@sociology.ox.ac.uk).

In addition to the aforementioned form(s), 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
- 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. 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 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.

Assessment and Success Criteria for of the Transfer of Status

The Transfer of Status Assessment

Students, in consultation with their academic supervisor(s), will nominate two assessors to read the transfer application and to interview the candidate (for both the first and second attempt if the student is referred back).

The nominated assessors must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies on behalf of the Graduate Studies Committee, and neither assessor will be the student's supervisor. The assessors will normally be academic staff working in the University of Oxford; only in exceptional circumstances will external assessors be appointed. It is common for one or both of the assessors to be reviewers for both the 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.

Assessments for both the Transfer and Confirmation of Status should take place in-person in Oxford. Students should therefore ensure that they are present in Oxford when their assessment is due to take place. One of the assessors may attend online if necessary and students conducting fieldwork may be interviewed online for their first Transfer of Status attempt. Otherwise, assessments may take place online only by permission of the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS).

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 DPhil
- 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 six or at most eight years for the Part-time 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 Part-time DPhil within six, or, at most, eight years from initial registration as PRS.

Outcomes of Transfer of Status

The assessors may recommend one of five outcomes, which must be considered and approved by the Graduate Studies Committee (excluding option (ii)):

(i) **Successful transfer** – Accompanied by suggestions and advice for future progress.

(ii) **Revision of application** – The assessors may request further minor clarifications before making a first recommendation. In such cases it should be possible to complete the additional work within one month of the assessment.

(iii) **Referral for a second attempt at transfer** – This should take place within one term of the first attempt and normally involve the same assessors. A fresh application form should be completed and an interview should always be held. If the first attempt is made in the 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 D.Phil. 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.

(iv) **Transfer to the MLitt** – Although the work presented was not suitable for 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.

(v) **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)-(iv) should normally be chosen. At the second attempt, options (i), (ii), (iv) or (v) 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*).

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 student who has not applied to transfer status by the end of their fourth 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 six 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 by completing an on-line application accessed via Student Self Service. The application will then be considered by the student's supervisor and College, with the final decision being made by the DGS.

In exceptional cases only, an extension of PRS status may be granted beyond six terms. Applications for such extensions require the approval of the University's Education Committee for formal dispensation from the *Examination Regulations*. Students should contact their Graduate Studies Assistant for details of the application process. Any extensions to PRS status do not affect the overall time permitted for registration on the DPhil.

Confirmation of Status

The Purpose, Timing and Application for 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, a 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. Further information is also available in the Education Committee "Policy on Research Degrees".

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, the Graduate Studies Committee of the Department of Sociology highly recommends under the subject specific regulations that students **apply for Confirmation of Status by Friday of Week 6 of the twelveth term for those not undertaking substantial fieldwork, or by Friday of Week 6 of the fourteenth term for those doing fieldwork in their fourth year**.

How to apply for Confirmation of Status

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

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

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 a 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. If applicable: statement(s) on the contribution of each co-author, signed by all co-authors
- 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.

Assessment and Success Criteria for the Confirmation of Status

The Confirmation Assessment

Supervisors are asked, in consultation with their student, to suggest names of appropriate assessors. The Director of Graduate Studies will appoint two assessors, neither of whom is the student's supervisor, on behalf of the Graduate Studies Committee. The assessors will read the confirmation assessment materials and interview the candidate (for both the first and second attempt if the student if referred back). 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 sub fusc is not worn.

Assessments for both the Transfer and Confirmation of Status should take place in-person in Oxford. Students should therefore ensure that they are present in Oxford when their assessment is due to take place and one of the assessors may attend online if necessary. Otherwise, assessments may take place online only by permission of the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS).

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.

Instructions to Assessors

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

An applicant for confirmation of status should be close to having a complete thesis plan, and the work submitted should be close to reading as a complete thesis chapter. In contrast to the transfer assessment, omissions and missing perspectives are much more serious at this stage, but if the student can satisfy the assessors at interview that matters will improve, this should not be a reason to decline recommending confirmation of status. The work should be presented in a scholarly fashion and should be essentially of the standard expected of a D.Phil. thesis in the final examination, though it is not expected that every footnote should be in place yet etc. The assessors should judge the application against the criteria for success defined below. As with the transfer assessment, the assessors should aim to provide constructive criticism and advice to the student to identify and address deficiencies and thereby strengthen their thesis, rather than presenting a judgemental verdict. Dismissive or aggressive remarks are not appropriate. If it is unclear during the assessment how the research will be completed, or the proposal is over-large, the assessors may request a revised thesis outline or further written work before submitting the initial report.

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

In particular, the assessors are asked to consider the clarity of the goals, the chapter structure, the timetable for completion and progress to date, and the significance to the existing literature and field. They should also provide an evaluation of the written work submitted by testing whether the work is presented in a scholarly and lucid manner. More specifically, the assessors should consider commenting on whether the student has presented evidence of being able to undertake research that provides a significant and substantial contribution in the particular field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls.

Also, they should consider whether the student has developed a systematic acquisition and understanding of the substantial body of knowledge at the forefront of their field and a thorough understanding of the techniques for research needed for advanced academic enquiry. Furthermore, the student should show the capacity to design, carry through and defend the thesis within three or at most four years. Finally, for non-native English speakers, the report should indicate the assessors' view of the student's ability to present and defend the work in English.

Significant differences of opinion between the assessors will be adjudicated by the DGS and/or Graduate Studies Committee, in consultation with the assessors and supervisors.

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 six, or at most eight, 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 six, or at most eight 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 six or at most eight 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 five outcomes, which must be considered and approved by the Graduate Studies Committee (excluding option (ii)):

(i) **Successful Confirmation** – Accompanied by suggestions and advice for future progress.

(ii) **Revision of application** – The assessors may request further minor clarifications before making a first recommendation. In such cases it should be possible to complete the additional work within one month of the assessment.

(iii) **Referral for a second attempt at confirmation** - This should take place within one term of the first attempt and normally involve the same assessors. A fresh application form should be completed and an interview should always be held. If the first attempt is made in the final term permitted, a one-term extension is automatically granted to allow the second attempt. This extension does

not affect the total amount of time permitted for registration on the D.Phil., however if the student has already been registered on the D.Phil. 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 D.Phil. see the comments in retrospect as helpful, having given them the opportunity and incentive to make substantial improvements to the thesis and to reduce the risk of a far more time-consuming referral of the final thesis.

(iv) **Transfer to MLitt** – Although the work presented was not suitable for confirmation of D.Phil. status, nonetheless, the assessors felt it was still strong enough for the lower award which is a less demanding and shorter-timescale research degree. In cases where transfer to a lower award is approved, if the student is already in their ninth term or beyond, a formal extension of time will also be needed to allow the student to stay on the graduate register for the lower degree, otherwise their status will lapse, and they will have to subsequently apply for reinstatement to the Register of Graduate Students.

(v) **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 be chosen. At the second attempt, options (i), (ii), (iv) or exceptionally (v) 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. It is possible to apply for a deferral of confirmation of status for up to three terms, as long as the total number of terms from admission as a graduate student does not exceed twelve.

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 complete an online application accessed via Student Self Service. Students are required to complete the form, which should then be signed by the student's supervisor and College. The Director of Graduate Studies 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, their 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*. Students should contact their Graduate Studies Assistant for details of the application process.

DPhil Thesis and Examination

DPhil Thesis Overview

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 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. They must also submit a GSO.31 form for the submission an integrated thesis as part of their Transfer of Status application or at the next opportunity. 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 master's 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.

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.

DPhil Examination

Appointment of Examiners

Applications for the appointment of examiners should be submitted by completion of the GSO.3 form 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 reserves should be indicated 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.

Candidates that have been granted permission to submit an integrated thesis (articles-based thesis) should also submit a copy of their completed GSO.31 form when applying for the appointment of examiners.

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 six years of part-time study.

DPhil Thesis Submission

The University Guide to Research Examinations provides useful information.

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 Officer 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 a digital copy of their thesis with the Bodleian Libraries. The digital copy should be deposited in the ORA 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 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).

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 Thesis Library Copy & Leave to Supplicate

All DPhil candidates will still need to submit an electronic copy of their DPhil thesis to the Oxford University Research Archive (ORA) a minimum of five working days prior to their graduation date. Students will not be able to attend a degree ceremony (even in absentia) without doing so. Information regarding this process can be found on the Bodleian website and will be sent with your result letter.

Supervision

All doctoral students have one University supervisor, or occasionally two joint supervisors, to guide them through their course of study.

The supervisor reports on the student's progress to the Graduate Studies Committee 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 crucial for the student to keep in regular contact with their supervisor and to keep the supervisor fully informed as to the progress of their studies.

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

Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR)

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 they do 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 four-year submission deadline. Supervisors are nevertheless encouraged to read and comment on such students' final thesis drafts.

Ethical and Practical Considerations for DPhil Research

Research Ethics Workshops

The Introductory Ethics Session and CUREC Workshops will be hosted by the departmental Research Facilitator, and attended by MSc, MPhil and DPhil students in the department. **DPhil Sociology students are strongly recommended to attend the Introductory Ethics Session and at least one of the CUREC Workshops in their first year.**

Ethical Review Procedures for Research (CUREC application)

Research Ethics Review and Approval

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.

Why is ethics scrutiny and approval important?

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

What to do:

- **Check if and how you need to apply for approval**: Visit the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) site and identify if you need a CUREC form filled in using the decision flowchart. You can also check where and how to apply for ethical approval with the flowcharts here.
- **Decide whether your project needs CUREC 1A/B or CUREC 2 protocol**: This depends on the sort of research you are doing and the information it involves. To check which you will need, complete Section A of the CUREC 1A form. The form will advise you whether to continue with the CUREC 1A application or start a CUREC 2. All application forms for ethical approval can be found here.
- **Apply well in advance**: You will not be able to undertake any research until your relevant CUREC application has been approved. Please start the process of completing the form and gather then required material as soon as possible. When writing any CUREC application, assume that you are the expert in your topic area and explain your project methods clearly and simply. 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 a 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 split into two categories: external (participant) or internal (researcher) use. Documents for external use include invitation letters/emails, information sheets, written consent forms,

oral consent scripts, project recruitment advertisements, participant-completion surveys or questionnaires (paper or online). Please see CUREC page on informed consent for more details. Documents for internal use include sample research instruments (researcher-completion surveys or questionnaires, semi-structured interview guides), detailed study protocols, oral consent record forms or evidence of data access arrangements.

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 might evolve as part of refining project methodology.)

- Complete the relevant CUREC form electronically and send it in Word (editable) format from your Oxford email account to drec@sociology.ox.ac.uk . **You must follow the endorsements procedure as explained in the form:** applications are not valid until approvals, training completion certificates and relevant supporting documents have been provided.

- 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 CUREC 2 process. Once your research has received ethical approval, you will be notified by a relevant CUREC subcommittee on your unique approval reference number.

Approval of research using publicly available data is routine. **Ideally, you should have completed the process of receiving ethical approval by the time you submit your thesis topic to the Graduate Studies Officer.** 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/B protocol, applications submitted early in Hilary Term should have sufficient time for approval. If you believe that you may need CUREC 2 approval, please contact drec@sociology.ox.ac.uk, as soon as possible in Michaelmas Term for advice.

Other Resources

- Oxford 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.

Preparation

Safe fieldwork is key for 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 if travelling to fieldwork outside the UK. Your department also needs accurate information on where you are, and when and how to contact you while you are away. The travel risk assessment process should help to plan your fieldwork by thinking through arrangements and practicalities. The website for the Social Sciences Division provides videos detailing fieldwork experiences that may be useful for reference.

It is vital that supervisor-approved risk assessments and travel insurance applications are submitted around one month before planned travel. Forms for high-risk travel should be submitted even further in advance, to allow the forms to be approved by the Divisional Safety Officer, and possibly by the University Safety Office. You are advised to talk to your Supervisor at the earliest opportunity.

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. CUREC website provides a selection of useful Best Practice Guidance to support researchers.

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

Training

Training is recommended key as part of your preparation. Even if you are travelling to familiar destination (e.g. home) there may be unknown risks arising from the new context the situation of your fieldwork creates.

Social Sciences Division Research and Skills Training (termly)

Full details and dates on the Social Sciences Division 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.

Health and Safety

The Safety Office offers training and guidance including 'Emergency First Aid for Fieldworkers' and 'Fieldwork Safety Overseas: A full day course geared to expedition-based fieldwork'.

Travel Insurance

A separate online form is needed to apply for the University's travel insurance. Please note that the University's insurance application will not be validated without a risk assessment completed in good time in advance. 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 online.

The Foreign and Commonwealth 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. All travel plans to FCO advisory areas must be referred to the Safety Office by the Head of Administration and Finance for approval. To check if your travel plans might be affected by an FCO advisory 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 data collection with no interaction with human participants (e.g. from social media) or use of previously collected personal data (not fully anonymised), you will also need to consider the ethical implications of such activity. Please refer to the university's policy for research ethics.

Regulations Governing Graduate Degree Courses

The most relevant rules are summarised below. 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?

The University defines plagiarism as follows:

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

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*]

Online Plagiarism Quiz and Resources

All DPhil students are required to complete the Online Avoiding Plagiarism Course and to email a copy of the certificate of completion to the Graduate Studies Officer by no later than the end of Week 2 of Michaelmas Term of their first year.

Students should carefully read the Oxford Students website guidance for the avoidance of plagiarism, as well as refer to relevant study skills and training for good academic practice**.**

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]

Plagiarism and University Policy

Cases of plagiarism are taken extremely seriously and where examiners suspect that this has occurred, they bring the matter to the attention of the Proctors.

Students should refer to the University Student Handbook for information about the Proctors, Disciplinary Procedures and outcomes in relation to plagiarism.

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

Fees

Course fees are published on the university website and payable to the student's college at the start of the course. DPhil Sociology students pay fees for a maximum of nine terms, or six terms 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's residency requirements apply to all full-time students. T**he residence requirement for the DPhil Sociology is six terms, or three terms for a DPhil candidate who has successfully taken the Oxford MSc or MPhil.** Students must be in Oxford for this period. Residence as a Recognised Student does not count towards residence required for Oxford degrees. Additional residence requirements may apply to scholarships or other forms of funding. Overseas students must familiarise themselves and comply with any UK Visa Rules and Regulations.

Applications made to the Graduate Studies Committee for dispensation from the residence requirement can be considered if and only if it is essential for the work on the thesis to be carried out away from Oxford. The maximum number of terms for which such dispensation may be granted is three.

Candidates for research degrees should note that, with the consent of their college (and the support of their supervisor) they may leave Oxford for a period, as long as they return and fulfil the necessary residence requirement before submitting their thesis. It should be noted however that fees will continue to be payable during such absence.

Suspension of Status as a Graduate Student

With the support of their supervisor and college, students may apply to the Graduate Studies Committee for suspension of status for a specified period. The Graduate Studies Committee may consider applications for suspension on the following grounds:

- Where the student is prevented from pursuing their course of study in circumstances which are outside their control though there are good grounds for believing that they will be able to resume work within a reasonable

period (e.g. medical problems, mental health concerns, maternity leave, paternity leave and unexpected domestic crises).
- To take up temporary work which is likely to be relevant to their subsequent career and the opportunity for which is unlikely to recur.

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 their postgraduate work at some later date. Retrospective suspensions will only be considered in the most exceptional circumstances.

Please see 'Graduate Forms for Exceptional Circumstances' for application forms for 'Suspension of Status' and 'Return from Suspension of Status'.

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.

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 their supervisor know when illness has prevented work on the thesis.

Paid Work and Teaching Opportunities

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.

There are several opportunities to teach in the department and the university in general. 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.

Please also consult the Education Committee's paid work guidelines for Oxford graduate students.

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 the ESRC Studentship Officer at the Social Sciences Division to check whether the proposed employment contradicts the terms of their ESRC studentship.

Committees and Representation

Sociology Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)

The members of the Sociology Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) for 2024-25 are:

- Professor Christiaan Monden, Director of Graduate Studies (Chair)
- Dr Michael Biggs, Taught Course Director
- Professor Heather Hamill
- Student representative or representatives (the student reps attend only the unreserved business)

The committee will:

- Consider applications for admission,
- Appoint a University Supervisor for each student,
- Consider applications from students during the course of study (e.g. change of course; Transfer of Status; Confirmation of Status; Extensions of time etc.)
- Appoint examiners for MLitt and DPhil candidates
- Review the programme of teaching and consider 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 Officer 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 Officer.

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 once per term. Membership includes student representatives from each degree programme, the Director of Graduate Studies, the Taught Course Director and the Graduate Studies Officer. The Head of the Department and the Head of Administration and Finance may also attend, along with other departmental administrative staff.

All students are welcome to attend and are encouraged to submit items for discussion via their student representatives. Students are encouraged to put themselves forward for this committee and if there are more volunteers than places, an election will be held.

Divisional and University Representation

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

Supporting You

Problems and Advice

Students experiencing academic, administrative, or personal problems have several possible courses of action open to them.

Every college has their own system 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 Officer in the first instance. The Taught Courses Director, the Director of Graduate Studies or the Head of Department will, if necessary, consult the appropriate authorities on your behalf. For issues about a particular course, please first talk to the course provider in the first instance.

- 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 Colin Mills. 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.

- On a more personal level, the University Counselling Service is able to support students experiencing a range of problems, including those relating to mental health and academic work. Additionally, Nightline (01865 270270) 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.

- The Disability Coordinator for the Department is the Graduate Studies Officer.

- If you are looking for work or developing your employability skills, you can access the support and advise here. To help you prepare for after graduation or career development, including information on Career Fairs can be found University Careers Service.

English Language Support

The University of Oxford Language Centre provides a wide range of general and specialised courses in foreign languages and Academic English.

Student Welfare and Support Services

The University's unique and close-knit collegiate system provides a wealth of pastoral and welfare services for students to support engagement with studies and University life, promoting student wellbeing by providing opportunities for social interaction and sport and arts. Additionally, the central Student Welfare and Support

Services department offers professional support that complements provision in colleges and departments. More detail can be found in the University's Common Approach to Support Student Mental Health.

The Disability Advisory Service (DAS) can provide information, advice and guidance on reasonable adjustments to teaching and assessment. DAS can also assist with organising disability-related study support, such as a Student Support Plan (SSP).

The Counselling Service is here to help you address personal or emotional problems that get in the way of having a good experience at Oxford and realising your full academic and personal potential. They offer a free and confidential service and the counselling team are committed to providing culturally sensitive and appropriate psychological services. Students can request to see a male or female therapist, a Counsellor of Colour, or to attend a specialist group such as the LGBTQ+ or Students of Colour Groups. All support is free and confidential.

The Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service provides a safe and confidential space for any student, of any gender, sexuality or sexual orientation, who has been impacted by sexual harassment or violence, domestic or relationship abuse, coercive control or stalking, whenever or wherever this took place.

A range of peer support 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.

Students may also take interest in the campaigns and activities of the Oxford Students' Union, as well as the numerous university clubs and societies covering a wide variety of interests.

Recommended resource:

Ayres, Zoe (2022), *Managing your mental health during your PhD : a survival guide,* Springer (SOLO)

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 including the Code of Discipline.

Students should consult the 'Student Conduct' page on the Oxford Students Website for information about the University conduct regulations and the Proctors' role in enforcing disciplinary regulations under statutes IX and XI.

As a student, it is your responsibility to consult and be familiar with the Statutes and Regulations, which include rules on non-academic behaviour and academic conduct. Students who intentionally or recklessly breach regulations, or incite or conspire with others to do so, may face disciplinary action.

Freedom of Speech

The Department is committed to ensuring freedom of speech within the law. The full statement, endorsed by the conference of colleges, can be found on the university website.

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 the Graduate Joint Consultative Committee (GJCC) or via student representation on the department's committees.

Complaints

If your concern or complaint relates to teaching or other provision made by the department, then you should raise it with the Director of Graduate Studies, Professor Christiaan Monden.

Complaints about departmental facilities should be made to the Graduate Studies Officer, Hannah Brawn. If you feel unable to approach one of those individuals, you may contact the Head of Department, Professor Colin Mills. 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, or the Departmental Harassment Advisor (Agnieszka Swiejkowska).

The Equality and Diversity Unit also supports a broad network of harassment

advisors in departments/faculties and colleges as part of the Harassment Advisory Service. The University's Harassment and Bullying policy can be found on the Equality and Diversity Unit website, along with information about the support available for students.

Policies and Regulations

The University has a wide range of policies and regulations that apply to students. These are easily accessible through the A-Z of University regulations, codes of conduct and policies available on the Oxford Students website.

Students' attention is also drawn to the Policy on recording lectures by students.

Student Feedback

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

Equality and Diversity at Oxford

"The University of Oxford is committed to fostering an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its staff and students are respected. We recognise that the broad range of experiences that a diverse staff and student body brings strengthens our research and enhances our teaching, and that in order for Oxford to remain a world-leading institution we must continue to provide a diverse, inclusive, fair and open environment that allows everyone to grow and flourish." - *University of Oxford Equality Policy*

As a member of the University you contribute towards making it an inclusive environment and we ask that you treat other members of the University community with respect, courtesy and consideration.

The 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 (equality@admin.ox.ac.uk) for advice.

There are a range of faith societies, belief groups, and religious centres within Oxford University that are open to students. Further details can be found on the Equality and Diversity Unit website.

Who to Contact for Help

Academic Matters and Change of Supervisor	• Supervisor • Graduate Studies Officer graduate-studies@sociology.ox.ac.uk • Director of Graduate Studies Professor Ridhi Kashyap, ridhi.kashyap@nuffield.ox.ac.uk • Taught Course Director Dr Michael Biggs, michael.biggs@sociology.ox.ac.uk
DPhil Milestones and Regulations	• Graduate Studies Officer graduate-studies@sociology.ox.ac.uk • Divisional Graduate Studies Administrator graduate-studies-2@socsci.ox.ac.uk
Business of the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)	• Graduate Studies Officer graduate-studies@sociology.ox.ac.uk
DREC/CUREC Ethics Forms	• Research Facilitator DREC@sociology.ox.ac.uk
Departmental Facilities	• Graduate Studies Officer graduate-studies@sociology.ox.ac.uk
Computing and IT	• Manor Road IT itsupport@manor-road.ox.ac.uk
Advice Relating to Harassment, Illness, Disability, or other Personal Matters	• See the 'Supporting You' section of this handbook.

Every college has their own system 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 support available more widely within the University are available from the Oxford Students website, including in relation to mental and physical health and disability.

List of Abbreviations

For any further puzzling Oxford abbreviations and acronyms, visit the Online Glossary.

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

DAS – Disability Advisory Service

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

Grey Book – The Exam Regulations (now not produced in hard copy, can only be found online).

GSC – Graduate Studies Committee

GSO - Graduate Studies Office, part of the central University

GSR – Graduate Supervision Reporting

NCRM – National Centre for Research Methods. Maintains a UK research training courses database and offers bursaries.

PGT – Taught graduate

PGR - Research graduate

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

SSP – Student Support Plan

TCD – Taught Courses Director

TNA – Training Needs Analysis

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Annexe A: Guidance on Generative Artificial Intelligence Use

Scope and Background

This document sets out the principles of the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) tools for taught courses and masters' and doctoral research projects within the Department of Sociology, including thesis work. The document is written to provide department-specific guidance in the context of typical courses and projects within the Sociology department, and should be seen in conjunction with the University's guidance on the use of Gen AI[1], other relevant documents such as the University's Honour Code[2], and general information and guidance on academic conduct provided in the University's student handbook.[3]

We have defined different categories (A, B, C) of Gen AI use for courses in the Sociology department. Different courses will fall into one of these three categories, so please check with the course convenor what the policy for a given course is.

When you are permitted to use Gen AI tools to assist your learning and information-seeking in a course, we encourage you to use these tools in a responsible and critical way. In general, when using these tools, ask yourself whether using these tools is helping you learn and assisting the development of the skills that the course is intended to teach. There are well-known problems with AI tools, e.g. hallucination of papers and/or concepts, and it is your responsibility to follow up on information provided by these tools and verify their credibility. When feeding in any data into AI, carefully consider if the data is sensitive or confidential in any way, and consider the information security[4], data protection[5] and copyright risks of feeding data into Gen AI tools[6].

For all formative and summative assessments, where AI use is permitted in a specific way (Category A/B below), we require you to submit an AI disclosure statement to outline how you have used AI in the work submitted, including the model and version. If you did not use AI, you should also state this explicitly. By default, in timed, closed-book examinations no gen AI use is permitted.

AI Use Categorisation for Taught Courses

Category A: no AI use is permitted in summative assessments, but is permitted in formative assessments

For formative assessments (e.g. essays, presentations and/or problem sets), you are permitted to use AI to do background research or in an assistive capacity (for example to find recent articles or to help understand a concept). You must not use AI to summarize readings, as this will not provide sufficient knowledge or analytical

[1] https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/ai-use-in-summative-assessment and https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/research-practice/policy-generative-ai-research

[2] https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/open-book/honour-code

[3] https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/student-handbook

[4] https://www.infosec.ox.ac.uk/guidance-policy

[5] https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/data-protection-policy

[6] https://infosec.ox.ac.uk/use-generative-ai-services-such-as-chatgpt-safely

ability to understand the nuances of the argument. You are also welcome to use AI after you have written the essay to correct grammar, spelling and/or academic tone. The use of Gen AI for editing is to provide suggestions for corrections and improvements, but you should ensure you make these changes yourself. For any text generation, do not under any circumstances copy text generated by a Gen AI tool into any piece of work or read out such text in a presentation. You are not permitted to use AI to write, produce or co-author an essay.

Unauthorised uses of AI such as those outlined above constitute plagiarism as per university policy and these will be referred to the proctors (as noted in departmental exam regulations). You are also cheating yourself of the opportunity to learn. Also, remember that in a closed-book exam you will have no recourse to AI.

All formative assessments should include an AI disclosure statement, e.g. at the end of your essay (after the references), include a few sentences saying how you used AI, and noting which model and version. If you did not use AI, state this explicitly.

Category B: AI use for formative and summative assessment permitted, but in an assistive capacity (e.g. assignments) – also applies to theses

You are permitted to use AI tools in a limited but assistive capacity to support your learning and to support you in completing formative and summative assessments. In courses with multiple summative assessments, it could be that AI use is permitted for one assessment but not another – please refer to your course convenor for specific guidelines. By default, no AI use is permitted in closed-book unseen examination. When AI use is permitted for a summative assessment, AI cannot be used to complete the assessment (entirely or in part) such that AI would be considered an author or co-author of the assessment.

Examples of assistive capacity include: (1) for background literature search, assistance in finding references, understanding or engaging with an idea or concept; (2) proof-reading and editing text for grammar, spelling and/or academic tone, but only in a suggestive capacity and not to write new text; (3) for data entry or extraction tasks (e.g. from a PDF or a .CSV); (4) for improving code efficiency and testing/troubleshooting code and its execution, but not for setting up the fundamentals of the quantitative analysis, or delegating the quantitative analysis to AI around central decisions, such as choosing of the statistical or computational model, estimation procedures, variables etc. [7] In most cases it is not advisable to feed in your data into an AI model (see above also issues around data licences, information security, and data protection that are relevant when sharing any data with Gen AI tools). Consider also issues of Intellectual Property or Copyright when feeding in information into Gen AI tools. For quantitative assessments, while it may be tempting to use AI to solve the problems it will limit your opportunity to learn key concepts and build essential skills.

If there is reason to suspect AI was used extensively to author an assignment or for improper academic practice, this will be referred to the proctors. For all assessments in this category and the thesis, an AI disclosure statement that outlines how AI was used in the production of the work is required, including the model and version. If AI was not used, please also note this explicitly.

[7] Unless a course convenor specifies otherwise, this is the default position for Gen AI use in quantitative and/or coding applications.

Category C: no AI use permitted entirely for formative or summative assessments

In these cases, no AI tools are permitted for use in either formative or summative assessments. If there is suspected reason to believe AI is used in these courses, it will be referred to the proctors.

AI Use for Doctoral Projects

The Department recognises that there are different types of doctoral projects that are undertaken and linked to this there may be different use cases of Gen AI with each. The guidance here is intended to provide broad general principles, but we encourage students to discuss these in more detail with their supervisors. This document should also be read in conjunction with the University policy for using Generative AI in Research.[8]

You are permitted to use AI tools in an assistive capacity to support your doctoral research. However, AI cannot be used to do substantive work entirely or in part such that AI would be considered author or co-author of the doctoral work. Examples of assistive capacity could include: (1) for background literature search, assistance in finding references, explanation of concepts and ideas; (2) for machine translation of foreign language texts; (3) for proof-reading and editing text for grammar, spelling and/or academic tone, but only in a suggestive capacity and not to write new text; (3) for data entry or extraction tasks (e.g. from a PDF or a .CSV); (4) for improving code efficiency and testing/troubleshooting code and its execution, but not for setting up the fundamentals of the quantitative analysis such as choosing of the statistical or computational model, estimation procedures, variables etc. In most cases, it is not advisable to feed in your data into an AI model (see above also issues around data licences, information security and data protection that are relevant when sharing any data with Gen AI tools). Consider also issues of Intellectual Property or Copyright when feeding in information into Gen AI tools.

In establishing the framework or plans for data analysis, it may be helpful to use Gen AI tools as an interlocutor, i.e. to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of planned methods or approaches or to elicit feedback on your plans or ideas. This is an acceptable use. However, ultimately, the decision to use a given model or approach and its credibility is a decision that you must make in conversation with your supervisor(s). Remember that in your doctoral milestone assessments you will be expected to explain and justify your research, including detailed aspects of the methods. In these oral assessments you will not have access to AI.

While there are many opportunities offered by AI, there are also known limitations with current Gen AI tools such as hallucination of concepts and/or citations, biases, and/or their probabilistic nature that challenges core ideas of research reproducibility and robustness. Ultimately the validity and integrity of what you write in your doctoral thesis is your own responsibility.

For your summative milestone assessments of transfer and confirmation of status, you will be required to submit an AI disclosure statement as a part of your submission. This statement should outline how AI was used in the production of the work, including model and version. If AI

[8] https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/research-practice/policy-generative-ai-research

was not used, please also note this explicitly.