



**To: All Candidates for Part II Examination in Materials Science 2025/26**

**From: Professor Keyna O'Reilly, Chair of Examiners 2026**

**Subject: Part II Examination – Trinity 2026**

**Date: Friday, 13 March 2026**

**CC: Director of Undergraduate Studies; Tutorial Fellows**

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I am writing with information about the arrangements for your forthcoming examination and to provide you with a copy of the Examination Conventions for 2025/26.

The Examiners in 2025/26 are: Professor Sebastian Bonilla, Professor Marina Galano, Professor Nicole Grobert, Professor Saiful Islam, Professor James Marrow, Professor Keyna O'Reilly (Chair), and Professor Mauro Pasta. The external examiners are Professor Paul Midgley, University of Cambridge, and Professor Russell Goodall, University of Sheffield.

Candidates are reminded that in order to preserve the independence of the examiners, **you are not allowed** to contact them directly about matters relating to the examination. Any communication must be via your college, who will, if the matter is deemed of importance, contact the Proctors. The Proctors in turn communicate with the Chair of Examiners.

### **Contact Information**

If you have any queries about the Examinations or anything related to the Examinations, for example illness or personal issues, please don't hesitate to seek further advice from your college office or tutor, or from the Department's Education Support Team:  
[undergraduate.studies@materials.ox.ac.uk](mailto:undergraduate.studies@materials.ox.ac.uk).

### **Examination Conventions**

The appropriate Examination Conventions for your degree course are enclosed. Please ensure you read the Conventions thoroughly.

Exam Conventions are the formal record of the specific assessment standards for the course or courses to which they apply, and set out how examined work will be marked and how the marks are determined. The Conventions also set out the process through which marks will be used to arrive at an overall outcome.

## Deadline for the Submission of Part II Theses

Part II theses should be submitted by **4pm on Monday of Week 7, Trinity Term (8 June 2026)**. You are required to upload your thesis as a pdf file to the [Inspera](#) site.

Please refer to section 3.6 of the Conventions for details of the penalties applied for late or non-submission.

## Extensions

Please see the [Problems completing your assessment](#) page for advice on what to do if you find that illness or other personal circumstances affect your ability to submit your thesis on time.

It should be noted that the maximum extension that the examiners can normally accommodate for a Part II thesis to be examined in the 2025/26 session is 7 days. Any extension awarded for longer may mean that your results cannot be considered at the final exam board and therefore there may be a delay in the publication of results. This may also have an impact on the timing of your graduation.

## Regulations on Format of Report

For further details on print format see the [Examination Regulations](#). These are summarised below:

**Word limit:** 12,000 words for the main body of the report, plus 3,000 words for the mandatory final chapter containing reflective accounts of the project management aspects of your investigation (max 1,500 words), Ethical and Sustainability considerations (max 1,000 words), and Health, Safety & Risk assessment references (max 500 words). Word counts exclude references, title page, acknowledgements, table of contents and the three Project Management Forms. All other text is included in the word count, including the abstract, tables and the figure captions.

**Page limit:** 100 pages. This page limit excludes references, title page, acknowledgements, table of contents and appendices. Every other part of the report is included in the page limit. **All** pages of the report should be numbered sequentially.

If you feel that you have an exceptional case for exceeding the word and/or page limit, and you wish to seek permission to do so, both you and your supervisor should contact the Part II Project Organiser who will put your case to the Chair of Examiners. Such a case should be made at the earliest possible stage. The Examiners will enforce the word limit strongly, and any report submitted over the word limit will be subject to penalties as detailed in the Conventions, section 3.7.

**Appendices:** the purpose of the above word and page limits is to prevent the excessive inclusion of material that is unnecessary for development of the key argument(s) of the report. Material which is additional to the main body of the report, e.g. further detailed data, may be included in appendices. However, whilst appendices are not included within the limits of the word or page counts of the report, whether examiners read appendices is entirely at their discretion.

In addition, all copies of your report must include the following:

- a literature survey;
- a description of the engineering context of the investigation.

Candidates are reminded of the information about [plagiarism](#) issued by the University.

### **Timetable of the Viva Voce Examination**

The Part II vivas will be held over two days this year on Tuesday 30 June and Wednesday 1 July. Vivas will be held in-person and each viva lasts approximately 30 minutes. A timetable will be circulated in Trinity term. Please note that allocated viva times will only be changed under exceptional circumstances, subject to availability, and all vivas, even those rearranged, will be held during the scheduled times on Tuesday 30 June and Wednesday 1 July. In no circumstances should candidates contact the examiners directly.

### **Sub Fusc and Academic Dress**

You are reminded that you are required to wear Sub Fusc and Academic Dress to your viva. Please also note that you must wear a **commoners' gown** to the viva. Scholars' gowns are not permitted.

### **University Card**

You are required to take your University Card to the examinations as a means of identification.

### **Mitigating Circumstances**

If you believe there to be mitigating circumstances, such as illness, which may have affected your progress with the project or your viva voce examination, you can submit a mitigating circumstances notice to your examiners (MCE). For further details on how to submit a notice, see the [Problems completing your assessment](#) page.

### **Results**

The Examiners expect that results will be available to view on [Student Self Service](#) in mid-July. You will be advised by email when the results become available. This email will provide a hyperlink for you to access your results through Student Self Service using your single sign-on credentials.

### **Further Advice**

Further exam guidance, including advice on exam wellbeing, and what to do if you have problems completing your assessment, is on the [Exams and Assessments page](#) of the University website.

## Materials Science Part II Thesis Assessment

Examiners should write a report of not more than two pages giving their assessment of the thesis, taking into account the marking guidelines overleaf, and including explicit comments explaining their assessment under **each** of the headings.

<p><b>Name of Candidate</b></p>	
<p><b>Aims &amp; Objectives</b>          What were the aims and objectives of the project?          Are these clearly identified in the thesis?</p>	
<p><b>Project Management</b>          Is the account of project management clear? Does it show that the project was well managed? Were the original objectives kept to, and if they were changed, is it shown why?           Does the reflective account of H&amp;S and risk assessment demonstrate an appropriate understanding?           Does the reflective account of ethics and sustainability demonstrate an appropriate understanding?</p>	
<p><b>Engineering Context</b>          Has the candidate identified the engineering (or equivalent) context of the work?           Did the candidate reflect on the engineering implications of the <i>project findings</i>, or cover this only in a generic manner?</p>	
<p><b>Literature Review</b>          Is the background literature to the project reviewed adequately? (comprehensively, focused on the project's area and <i>critically</i>.)</p>	
<p><b>Methods</b> (including data analysis methods)          Are the methods and analysis of data used in the project clearly described? Did the student develop any new methods?</p>	
<p><b>Results</b>          Are the "raw" results attained clearly described?          Are the results analysed adequately and appropriately? If appropriate, are errors handled adequately?</p>	
<p><b>Discussion</b>          Are the results properly discussed: in themselves? in relation to previous work in the area? in relation to the aims and objectives of the project?</p>	

<b>Name of Candidate</b>	
<b>Summary and Additional Comments</b> What do you consider to be the main achievements of the project? Are these clearly identified in the thesis? What are the key strengths of the thesis? Does the thesis show original thinking on the part of the student? Are there any areas of minor, significant or serious weakness. Does the thesis show awareness of these? Comment on the quality of the report. (use of English, clarity of structure, extent to which structure & style follows that normally expected of a research thesis in the field of the research topic, coherent story, overall style, quality of diagrams and figures, use of references to previous work, etc.)	
<b>Overall Mark</b> Give short justification for mark	

**The following classification borderlines should be noted**

70 - 100	First Class
60 - 69	Upper Second
50 - 59	Lower Second
40 - 49	Third
30 - 39	Pass
0 - 29	Fail

**Qualitative Criteria for the Part II Thesis**

90-100	Thesis rated very highly in all areas of the assessment guidelines. Typically this would be an extremely high quality thesis showing extensive evidence of original thought, results very well analysed and put in context, very well presented, and with no important deficiencies.
80-89	Thesis demonstrating very strong performance across most areas, with some minor weaknesses in one or two areas. Typically this would be a very high quality thesis showing evidence of original thought, results very well analysed and put in context, very well presented, but with some minor deficiencies.
70-79	Very strong overall performance, but with significant weakness in one area or minor weaknesses in several. Typically this would be a high quality thesis showing some evidence of original thought, results well analysed and put in context, well presented. May be deficient in one or two areas accounting for a minority of the whole.
60-69	Strong overall performance, but with significant weaknesses in several areas. Typically the work would have been competently carried out and reasonably well presented and analysed. This mark range should be achievable by an average student with reasonable effort.

- 50-59 Satisfactory overall performance, but with serious weaknesses in at least one area. Typically the work would have been carried out mostly with competence, but with some flaws (e.g. errors, misinterpretations). Little evidence of original thought.
- 40-49 Poor overall performance with serious weaknesses in several areas. No evidence of original thought.
- 30-39 Poor overall performance with serious weaknesses in the majority of areas. The thesis of a candidate who has done little work and has presented this work poorly.
- <30 Very poor performance with little or no meaningful content.