



Materials Graduate Student Handbook 2024-25

Version 1.0 (13/10/2024)



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This handbook applies to postgraduate research students commencing studies during the academic year 2024/25 on one of the Oxford University Materials Science research degree programmes listed below:

DPHil in Materials

MSc (Research) in Materials

DPHil students following the Oxford Fusion Power EPSRC CDT programme

DPHil students following the Oxford Materials 4.0 EPSRC CDT programme

The information in this handbook may be different to that for students starting in other years.

If you are enrolled on a different DPhil programme, for example the IMAT EPSRC CDT or the MSD DPhil in Computational Discovery, but are based for your research in the Department of Materials you **must** refer to the Handbook (or equivalent) for your particular DPhil programme* and not to the present Handbook. Nonetheless, for local information about the Department of Materials you may find some of the content of the present Handbook helpful.

* This is especially important in respect of course requirements and the 'milestone' examinations for Transfer of Status and Confirmation of Status.

The information in this handbook is accurate as at 13 October 2024, however it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at www.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges. 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.

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CHECKLIST FOR KEY ACTIONS BY DPHIL IN MATERIALS STUDENT (Bold = mandatory)

Action	Period Due	Completed (dd/mm/yy)
Enrolment	Annually, MT	
Submit to GSR and discuss with your supervisor your quarterly GSR report	Quarterly until thesis submission	
Discuss with your supervisor your research training needs	As necessary, at least annually, Y1-3	
Discuss with your supervisor your transferable 'career skills' training needs	Annually, MT, Y1-3	
YEAR 1		
Attend Induction	Wk 0, MT	
Attend Safety Lecture	Wk 1, MT	
Complete Risk Assessment and DSE Forms	Wk 1-3, MT	
Submit on-line 'Grad Student' Questionnaire for review by Graduate Studies Office (Fri Wk 4), then upload to 'Materials: PGR Progression' site by Wk 8	Wk 4, MT Wk 8, MT	
Attend Workshop Induction (unless opted out)	MT	
Attend Information Skills Workshop	Wk 2, MT	
Attend IOM ³ Presentation	Wk 3, MT	
Attend Project Management Workshop	Wk 4, MT	
Attend Looking to the Future Workshop	Wk 5, MT	
Attend Junior Demonstrating Training Workshop	Wk 6, MT	
Attend JCCG 'Owning a Successful DPhil' or MPLSD 'Your Successful DPhil'	tbc, MT	
Upload Project Management Form 1 to 'Materials: PGR Progression' site	Wk 0-1, HT	
Attend relevant parts of Presentation Skills Workshop	tbc, HT	
Attend Writing Skills Workshop	tbc, HT	
Attend Managing Your References Workshop	tbc, HT	
Attend and obtain satisfactory assessments on 2 lecture courses	MT, HT	
Attend a minimum of 7 colloquia	MT, HT	
Informal meeting with Lead Assessor	Wk 2-4, TT	
Upload Literature Review to 'Materials: PGR Progression' site	Wk 8, TT	
Upload Project Management Form 2 to 'Materials: PGR Progression' site	July	
Complete on-line course on Research Integrity Training	Before applying for Transfer	
Apply for Transfer of Status (on-line form GSO.2)	July	
YEAR 2		
Transfer of Status Interview	Wks -3 to +1, MT	
Upload Project Management Form 3A to 'Materials: PGR Progression' site	Wk 0-1, HT	
Present Research Talk to Department	Wk 7, HT	
Upload Project Management Form 3B to 'Materials: PGR Progression' site	July	
YEAR 3		
Upload Project Management Form 3C to 'Materials: PGR Progression' site	Wk 0-1, HT	
Submit Poster for Competition	Mon, Wk 3, HT	
Present Poster to Department	Wk 6, HT	
Apply for Confirmation of Status (on-line form GSO.14)	Wk6 HT to Wk6 TT	
Confirmation of Status Interview	Wks 0 to 10 TT	

Upload Project Management Form 4 (3 y projects) to ‘Materials: PGR Progression’	Wk 2, TT
Upload Project Management Form 3D (3.5 y projects) to ‘Materials: PGR Progression’	July
Apply for Appointment of Examiners (3 y projects)	July
Submit Thesis via on-line portal (3 y projects)	Sept
DPhil Viva (3 y projects)	Sept to Dec
YEAR 4	
Upload Project Management Form 4 (3.5 y projects) to ‘Materials: PGR Progression’	Wk 0-1 MT
Apply for Appointment of Examiners (3.5 y projects)	Jan to Feb
Submit Thesis via on-line portal (3.5 y projects)	March
DPhil Viva (3.5 y projects)	TT

Materials students following one of the EPSRC CDT DPhil programmes have different timings for some of these required elements – details are given in [Section 4.7](#) of this Handbook and via [Appendix XII](#).

Materials students following a standard DPhil in Materials programme **and who have full funding for forty-eight months**, for example EPSRC Industrial CASE studentships, follow the same timings as the 3.5-year DPhil except: (i) a PMF3e is uploaded in weeks 0-1 of the eleventh term (usually HT of Year 4); (ii) PMF4 is uploaded in weeks 0-1 of the twelfth term (usually TT of Year 4), **not** in weeks 0-1 of MT; (iii) the target date to apply for appointment of examiners is July of Year 4; and (iv) unless there are exceptional circumstances the latest date for thesis submission is the end of the four-year period (usually 30th September).

MSc(Research) in Materials students follow the same pattern as years 1 and 2 for DPhil in Materials students, except that in week 5 of Trinity Term in their second year they submit Project Management Form 4. An MSc(Research) in Materials Diary is given in [Appendix IX](#).

Additional timetabled events are listed in the DPhil diary in [Section 4](#) of this handbook, where you will read an overview of the Department’s DPhil programmes (please see [Appendix IX](#) for an overview of the MSc(Res) programme.

It may be helpful to understand that some of the compulsory requirements identified in bold in the checklist above serve more than one purpose, and to be aware of the rationale behind their inclusion and their sequence. For this reason a summary of, and brief rationale for, the compulsory requirements for students following a Materials research degree programme is given in [Appendix XI](#).

Via [Appendix XII](#) you will find information about concise, year-by-year, timelines for each Materials Research Programme, showing the key required elements [3.5y DPhil, 4y DPhil, 3y DPhil, 2y MSc by Research, 4y Fusion Power DPhil, 4y Materials 4.0 DPhil].

INDUCTION COURSE PROGRAMME

7th – 8th October 2024

HUME-ROTHERY LECTURE THEATRE (HRLT)

Please note: This in-person event shall be recorded

Monday 7th October

9.00 – 9.15	James Marrow (Interim Head of Department) Welcome to the Department of Materials
9.15 – 9.35	Adrian Taylor (Director of Graduate Studies) Outline of the Induction Programme Overview of the Department's Support Structure for Research Students
9.35 – 9.45	Pete Nellist (Practical Courses Organiser) Gaining Teaching Experience
9.45 – 9.55	Sally Charles (Enterprise Programme Manager, MPLS) Short talk on Enterprise Training provision
9.55 – 10.05	SHORT BREAK
10.05 – 10.15	Chim Chu (Oxford University Innovation) Intellectual Property and Commercialization
10.15 – 10.20	Chim Chu (Oxford University Innovation) Consultancy Opportunities for Research Students
10.20 – 10.35	Phani Karamched (EM Support Scientist) Electron Microscopy Facilities: Access and Training
10.35 – 10.45	Helena Cotterill (Materials Access & Outreach Manager) Introduction to Access and Outreach
10.45 – 10.55	Rajat Nama (Chair of JCCG) Overview of the Materials Joint Consultative Committee for Graduates (JCCG) Explanation of JCCG nomination procedure
10.55 – 11.00	Benedict Keates (MatSoc Representative) Introduction to MatSoc
11.00 – 11.20	BREAK FOR REFRESHMENTS
11.20 – 12.45	Tours of the Department Central Sites in Small Groups
12.45 – 13.30	BREAK
13.30 – 14.15	PHOTOGRAPHS (Hume-Rothery Meeting Room)
14.15 – 17.00	Meeting with your Supervisor Students to be collected from the <u>Hume-Rothery Lecture Theatre</u> at 2.15pm

Tuesday 8th October

9.00 – 10.00	Adrian Taylor (Director of Graduate Studies) Introduction to the Materials Research Degrees, including the key milestones
10.00 – 10.10	Angus Wilkinson (Chair of Equality and Diversity Committee) Information about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
10.10 – 10.20	SHORT BREAK
10.20 – 10.40	Rajat Nama (Chair of JCCG) Nomination of first-year candidates for the role of JCCG year representative Election of 3 or 4 first-year representatives
10.40 – 11.05	BREAK FOR REFRESHMENTS (PHOTOGRAPHS IF MISSED ON MONDAY) Includes opportunities to meet with members of JCCG.
11.05	Coach to Begbroke departs from outside the Hume-Rothery Building
11.20 – 12.50	Tour of Begbroke Site
12.50	Coach for return to Hume-Rothery Building departs from Begbroke
13.05 – 14.10	BREAK
14.10 – 14.20	Introduction to University IT Services – Please briefly browse the resources available via https://skills.it.ox.ac.uk/inductions-students
14.20 – 14.50	Paul Warren (IT Manager) Introduction to Materials IT and Audio-visual Services
14.50 – 15.00	SHORT BREAK
15.00 – 15.30	Grace Sewell (Materials Librarian) Materials Library
15.30 – 16.00	Rachel Scanlon (Bodleian Subject Librarian) Introduction to the University's Radcliffe Science Library
16.15 – 16.45	Rachel Scanlon (Bodleian Subject Librarian) Tour of the Radcliffe Science Library (RSL)

The following talks / workshops form part of the Materials Induction Course for new graduate students and you are strongly advised to attend. **Those in bold are compulsory.** Further details in the [Termly Lecture List](#).

- **Tuesday 15th October, 10.00 – 11.00 SAFETY LECTURE (Diana Passmore & Daniel DeBrincat, Department Safety Officers)**
- Monday 21st October, 10.00 – 11.00 INFORMATION SKILLS WORKSHOP (Rachel Scanlon)
- Friday 1st November, 11.00 – 12.00 BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE INSTITUTE OF MATERIALS, MINERALS & MINING (Jamie Graham, IOM3)

● **Friday 8th November, 12.00 - 13.00 and 14.00 - 16.00**
PROJECT MANAGEMENT: Dr Paul D Warren - ex NSG (Pilkington Glass) & Adrian Taylor

● **Friday 15th November, 15.00 – 16.30**
LOOKING TO THE FUTURE - WHAT DO EMPLOYERS SEEK?
Adrian Taylor and a Careers Advisor from the OU Careers Service

● **Wednesday 27th November, 11.00 – 11.30**
INFORMAL INTRODUCTORY MEETING WITH YOUR DEPARTMENT ADVISOR
Refreshments, including coffee, juice, biscuits & cake, provided

● **Monday 18th November, 11.30 – 13.00 repeated on Friday 22nd November, 11.30 – 13.00**
WORKSHOP ON JUNIOR DEMONSTRATING: Pete Nellist & Diana Passmore

Michaelmas Term

MECHANICAL WORKSHOP SAFETY TRAINING COURSE

This workshop safety training course is mandatory for anyone who wishes to use our mechanical workshop facilities and is also useful as general skills training and safety awareness – even if you never need to use workshop equipment yourself, you may well be responsible one day for people who do.

The default position is that we recommend all new research students other than those who are engaged in wholly theory or modelling projects to attend a training course during Michaelmas or Hilary Term but, with the permission of your supervisor, you may opt out of this.

IF YOU DO OPT OUT AND SUBSEQUENTLY FIND THAT YOU NEED TO USE THE WORKSHOP, IT WILL BE NO USE AT THIS TIME PLEADING THAT YOU DESPERATELY NEED ACCESS TO THE WORKSHOP FOR YOUR RESEARCH – YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE TO WAIT SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE THE WORKSHOP STAFF RUN THE NEXT TRAINING COURSE.

WELCOME

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the Department of Materials at Oxford University. We are proud to be one of the world's leading materials research laboratories and strive to continually strengthen our reputation for research excellence. You are joining a Department made remarkable by the incredibly talented people that constitute it. Graduate students play a crucial and valued role in this.

The technological world faces significant engineering grand challenges which will impact on economic, environmental, and societal progress across the globe. Materials Science is central to so much of this and the Department is rightly proud of our continuing contributions in areas such as Energy Generation (for example nuclear fusion and fission, photovoltaics), Energy Storage (for example improved batteries, super-capacitors), Transport (for example improved turbine engines, light-weighting of automobiles), Quantum Technologies (for example quantum information processing, photonics), and Healthcare (for example biomaterials, superconductors for MRI scanners).

Your work, whether in these example areas or not, will add to the wealth of knowledge and technology available. As well as contributing to the department's 300+ peer-reviewed research outputs each year, graduate students play an active part in patenting of new ideas and in many and varied activities transferring our research knowledge beyond the academic world. These activities include events to promote the public understanding of science, interactions with school pupils and teachers, and the setting up of spin-off companies.

With so much to do, and such strongly motivated people, it is important that you strike some balance and remember to factor in some time for you. Time away from work, letting your mind reset, is good for you and in the long run benefits your productivity and creativity.

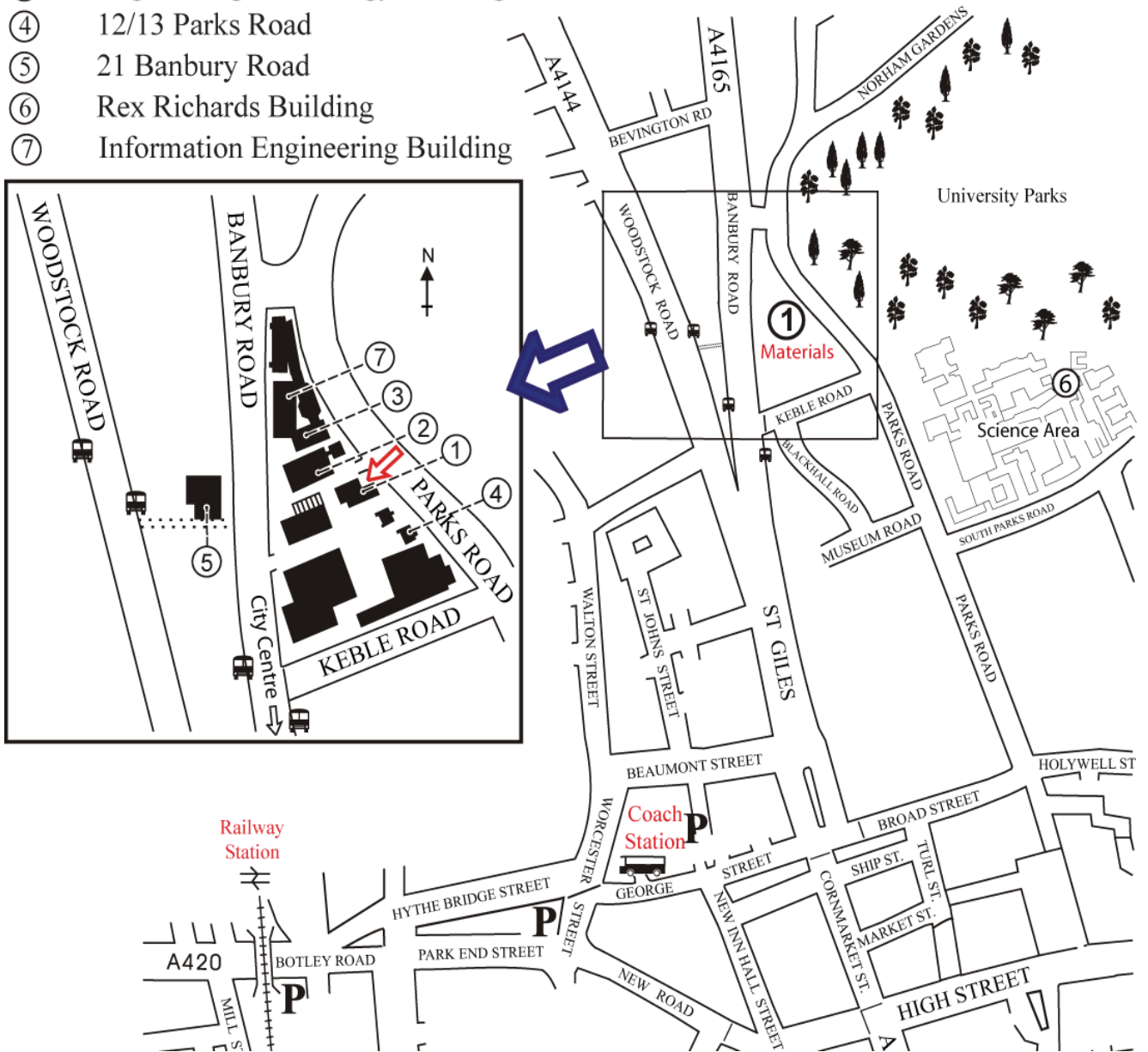
We wish you every success in your work at Oxford, and urge you to make the most of our vibrant and exciting research environment, to enjoy your time in the department, and to aim always to produce the highest quality research.

Professor James Marrow, Professor Chris Grovenor, Professor Jason Smith, Dr Adrian Taylor and Mrs Fernanda Haswell-Martin

Department of Materials Senior Leadership Team

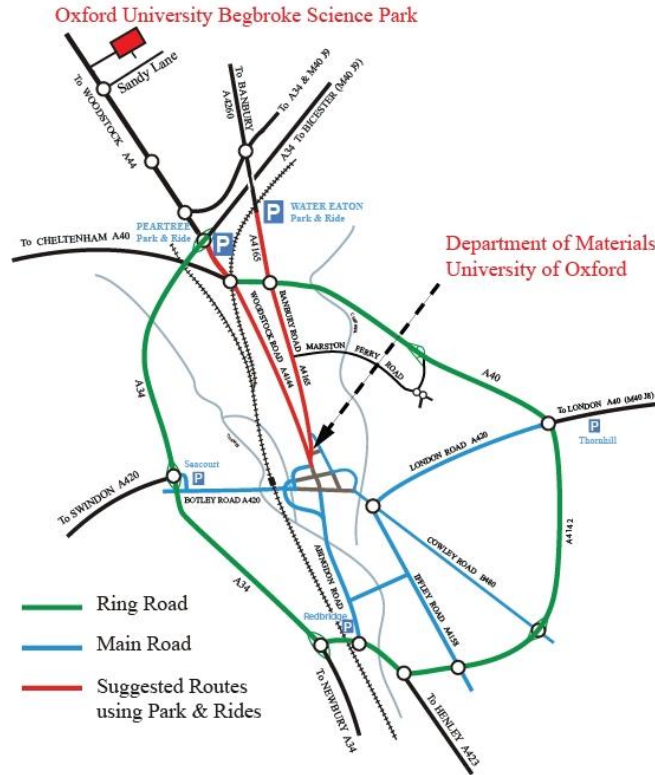
Department of Materials – Map of Central Site

- Reception
- ① Hume-Rothery Building
- ② Holder Building
- ③ Engineering Technology Building
- ④ 12/13 Parks Road
- ⑤ 21 Banbury Road
- ⑥ Rex Richards Building
- ⑦ Information Engineering Building

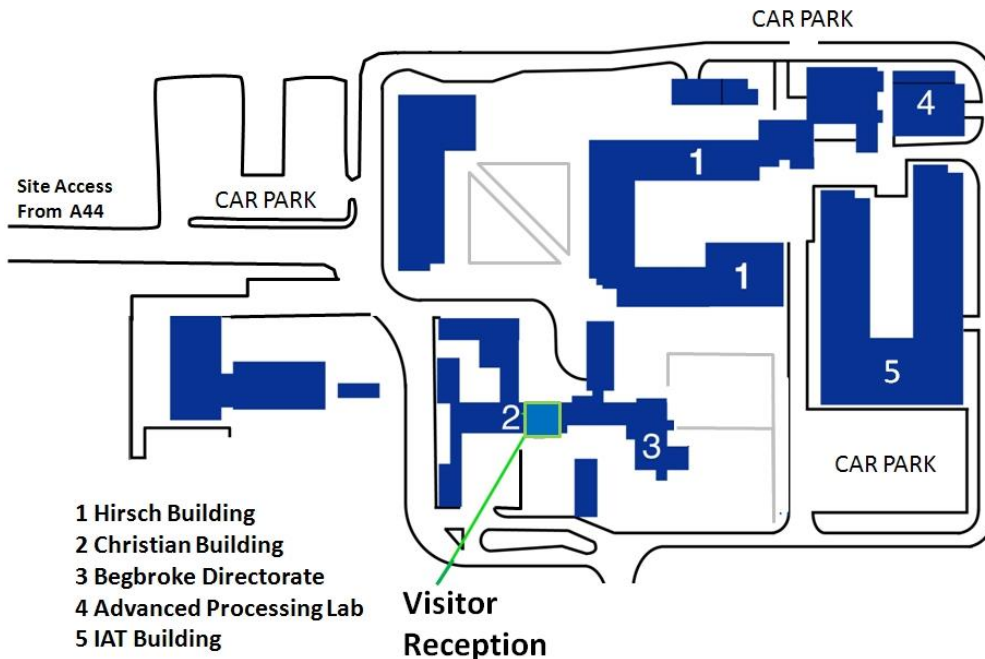


Contact us at: Materials Graduate Studies
 Department of Materials
 University of Oxford
 16, Parks Road, Oxford, OX1 3PH
 Email: graduate.studies@materials.ox.ac.uk

Department of Materials – Maps of Begbroke Site



Oxford University Begbroke Science Park



A minibus operates from the central site (stop outside the Hume-Rothery Building) to the Begbroke site several times a day. The journey takes approximately 15-20 minutes. Timetables are posted on the Departmental notice boards and are circulated to all members of Department via the 'notices' mail list and are available on the Begbroke webpage <http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/local/begbroke.html>. Research students who finish a piece of work at Begbroke after the last bus may, if approved by their supervisor, take a taxi back to Oxford and claim reimbursement.

1. INTRODUCTION

Your years as a graduate student are an exciting time when you will explore the challenges of performing creative research with the accompanying dreams, frustrations, and fulfilment. This '[Materials Graduate Student Handbook](#)' is provided to help you make the most of these few years by describing the structure of the 'DPhil' and 'MSc by Research' programmes within the Department of Materials. **It is essential that you read this handbook; it is your initial resource in the event of any queries and it gives much helpful guidance on the Materials research degree programmes.** The Handbook is supplemented by the MPLS Graduate School's 'Researcher Training & Development Opportunities' booklet and is complemented by four other handbooks/resources at which you should take a quick look, referring to them in more detail as appropriate during your studies:

(i) The Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division's on-line '[MPLS Graduate Student Handbook](#)' can be found on the MPLS website in sections. This is produced by the Graduate School of the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division (MPLSD) which comprises the Departments of Mathematics, Statistics, Computing, Engineering Science, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, Biological Sciences, Physics, and Materials. It describes in detail the structure of postgraduate training at Oxford University that is common to all the Mathematical, Physical and Life Science departments. It explains in an informal way the rules and regulations that govern the pursuit and award of research degrees. **THERE IS ALSO A USEFUL OVERVIEW OF THE PROCEDURE FOR SUBMISSION OF YOUR THESIS AND THE EXAMINATION PROCESS.** Information on Training and Professional Development is provided too. You can find out more about the MPLS Graduate School, of which you are a member, and what it offers you <http://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/>.

(ii) The Materials 'Postgraduate Lecture Synopses and Research Colloquia 2024-25' booklet can be found on the Oxford Materials website at [Postgraduate Handbooks & Lecture Synopses](#). This booklet details the courses available to graduate students and lists the Departmental Colloquia that will be given during Michaelmas Term. It is important that you peruse this carefully before you decide which courses you would like to attend during your first year. We will return to courses and colloquia in sections 6 and 9 of the present Handbook.

(iii) [The Materials Information Centre \(MIC\)](#). This describes some of the facilities within the Department such as the library, mechanical workshops, research instruments, and computing laboratories that are available to all graduates. For other Materials research facilities see [Research Resources](#). The MIC also links to the procedures needed, for example, in ordering consumables and equipment both from the main stores and from external suppliers, getting logged onto the University Computing network and arranging for work to be carried out in the mechanical workshops. Finally, it includes information and links on how to claim re-imbusement for expenses and payment for casual employment such as teaching.

(iv) The MyOxford app . See <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/it/myoxford> for further information and a QR code for the app.

Finally, in Appendix VII of the present handbook there is a summary of the minimum provision for research students in the Department of Materials.

Timetables for lecture courses, research-specific skills training and transferable career skills training offered by the Department of Materials can be found at

<http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/teaching/lecturelists.html>.

To book a place on a Materials lecture or training course please contact the person teaching the course, inform them you are a Materials research student wishing to undertake their course, and ask them if you may attend the course and if you need to book a place or may simply attend informally.

The timetable for MPLS Graduate School transferable career skills training courses can be found at

<https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training/pgp>.

There are some 400 academic lecture courses, research-specific skills training courses and transferable career skills training courses available to you across the MPLS Division; you can find out about these via the individual [MPLS department websites](#) or at [Lecture Lists](#).

2. SAFETY, DEPUTY SUPERVISORS, TRAVEL, EXTERNAL WORKING, EXPORT CONTROL LEGISLATION, OPEN ACCESS & ACT ON ACCEPTANCE, RESEARCH INTEGRITY, AND WELFARE, WELLBEING & MENTAL HEALTH

The Department takes safety matters very seriously. It is compulsory, and part of the Induction Course, that you attend the **Safety Lecture** given by Diana Passmore & Daniel DeBrincat, members of the Department's Safety Team, at 10.00 am on Tuesday of Week 1 (15th October 2024). You will not be allowed to undertake any experimental work until you have attended the briefing and received adequate safety training. Please note that in the event of injury to other persons as a result of your negligence you could be subject to civil claims for damages. Soon after the safety lecture you and your supervisor must complete, and submit to the Department Safety Officer (DSO), a project risk assessment form; the form is available via the Health & Safety section of the [Materials Information Centre](#) .

Extract from the Head of Department's 'Statement of Health & Safety Organisation' (see the 'Department Safety Policy' document, available via the Health & Safety section of the [Materials Information Centre](#) and which should be read by all new research students):

"The department is committed to preventing accidents, incidents and near misses that could affect its staff, students and visitors. We are committed to a **no-blame** reporting culture to encourage all persons to report accidents, incidents and near-misses."

An important policy of the University Health and Safety Committee is that a **Deputy Supervisor** must be appointed to cover for times when your **Responsible Supervisor** is unable to act, for example due to temporary illness or temporary absence on leave. The Deputy Supervisor's responsibilities when providing this cover include the approval of any novel experimental work or to stop it if worried by the safety aspects. If you have three or more supervisors you must agree with your Responsible Supervisor which of the other supervisors is to be your formal Deputy Supervisor. If you have a sole supervisor then your **Department Advisor*** will be your Deputy Supervisor.

*The roles of your Department Advisor are explained in [Section 3](#).

If at any time a student is unable to contact and/or gain a response from their Responsible Supervisor on any matter related to Safety the student must instead seek advice from their Deputy Supervisor.

If an **unexpected total** lack of contact/response by a student's Responsible Supervisor continues for more than two working weeks this supervisor's research student(s) should alert the Head of Department (HoD) and the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). The HoD and the DGS, if possible in consultation with the Responsible Supervisor, will decide what, if any, are the appropriate alternative/additional supervision arrangements and the DGS will inform the affected PGR students of

these alternative/additional arrangements. In cases where the student has an experienced co-supervisor, normally this person will temporarily take on the role of Acting Responsible Supervisor.

In cases of **pre-planned total** lack of contact/response by a student's Responsible Supervisor, such as a period of annual leave, the Responsible Supervisor will have alerted their students and the deputy supervisors of these students both to the planned absence and to the alternative supervision arrangements that are in place for the period of absence.

Travel, and working in a laboratory external to the University of Oxford

Materials students who are travelling beyond the UK in connection with their studies **must** take out travel insurance through the University scheme, even if this travel is solely for attendance at a conference. In all cases where a student intends to work in a laboratory external to the University, whether overseas, at another university or company in the UK or even just at a company based at the Begbroke Science Park, and whether just for a few hours or an extended period of time, it is **compulsory** for the student together with their supervisor to carry out risk assessments for this work and to ensure that all appropriate insurances are in place including those to cover both liability **of** the student and liability **to** the student (for example in the case of a work-related injury).

Further guidance is available from the Department Safety Officer. Risk assessment forms for overseas travel and work in an external laboratory can be found via [travel and fieldwork risk assessment](#). Travel insurance forms can be found at <https://finance.admin.ox.ac.uk/travel-insurance>. These forms need to be signed by you and counter signed by **both** your supervisor and the Head of Administration and Finance (HAF).

Export control legislation

Individual academics and researchers in the University have an obligation at law to consider whether they may need a licence from the UK [Export Control Organisation](#) (ECO), part of the UK Department of International Trade to 'export' goods, technology, software, designs or other related 'know-how'. Failure to obtain a licence or to comply with its provisions may constitute a criminal offence involving potential fines, legal costs and/or prison sentences of up to 10 years. See [further information and guidance on Export Control Legislation](#).

Open Access and Act on Acceptance

The University of Oxford academic community wishes to ensure the widest possible access to its world-class research. The value and utility of research outputs increases the more broadly they are available to be considered and used by others. A core component of this is [open access](#).

Oxford's policy is that all authors should deposit the peer-reviewed manuscripts (Author Accepted Manuscripts – AAMs) of newly-accepted papers into the University's repository ORA via Symplectic Elements. Please visit [Deposit Your Work](#) for details of what to deposit and how.

Research integrity and ethics

The University of Oxford is dedicated to the highest standards of research integrity. As set out in its Academic Integrity in Research: Code of Practice and Procedure, it expects all members of the University including staff and students, and those who are not members of the University but who are conducting research on University premises or using University facilities, to observe the highest standards in the conduct of their research.

The following website provides links to the relevant University policies, guidelines and procedures which are intended to promote the responsible conduct of research in the University's ongoing research activities.

You are asked to reflect on how this applies to your own research

<https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/integrity>. In particular see the [Research Integrity Checklist](#) .

Before you apply to Transfer Status, towards the end of year one, from Probationer Research Student (PRS) to DPhil or MSc(R) student it is mandatory that you have completed the University's on-line course on '[Research Integrity Training](#)'. More information on Research Integrity can be found in [Appendix XIII](#).

Welfare, Wellbeing and Mental Health

The University, its Departments and the Colleges provide a wide range of support for the welfare, wellbeing and mental health of our students and staff. Details can be found on the University webpages at [Welfare & Wellbeing](#) and via the Mental Health section of the [Materials Information Centre](#) . The latter includes links to [Mental Health Support](#) (which includes the Department's **mental health first aid** scheme) and to information about the availability in the Department of [Quiet/Private Rooms](#) and how to book them.

The Department of Materials **Disability Coordinators** are Philippa Moss and Tom Heath.

If you have declared a disability and a Student Support Plan (SSP) has been issued by the University's Disability Advisory Service (DAS) then Philippa Moss (philippa.moss@materials.ox.ac.uk) will contact you soon after Induction.

The Department of Materials **Disability Lead** and **Welfare Contact** for Materials research students is the DGS (currently Adrian Taylor).

If you need initial advice about a disability or well-being matter please contact the DGS in the first instance (adrian.taylor@materials.ox.ac.uk), copying your message to graduate.studies@materials.ox.ac.uk and including the phrase 'disability question' or 'well-being question' in the subject line of your email.

3. RESEARCH SUPERVISION & SUPPORT

An effective relationship and good communication between you and your supervisor(s) is key to the smooth progress of your DPhil. You will be supervised by a single Supervisor or two or more Co-supervisors (for the case where projects involve expertise in more than one area). One of these supervisors will be designated as your **Responsible Supervisor** with primary responsibility to the Department for guiding your academic progress and providing pastoral care. You may also have an Associate Supervisor (typically a researcher with less than 3 years' experience at post-doctoral level). You could have an External Supervisor, for example if your project involves collaboration with another university or an industrial company or laboratory. Your supervisor(s) will be your main source of information and advice throughout the course of your research. Their responsibilities include:

- (i) planning the framework of your research programme (in the light of the programme structure discussed in [section 4](#));
- (ii) advising you about lecture courses, both specialist and broadening (see [section 6.1](#));
- (iii) advising you about transferable 'career skills' and more generally about skills-training courses, including those on research techniques (see [section 6.2](#));
- (iv) advising you about safety;
- (v) advising you about literature sources;
- (vi) regularly meeting with you to discuss your work;
- (vii) keeping you informed of your progress (both informally and through the formal report submitted to the University (GSR) at the end of each quarter, taking into account the project management forms submitted at regular intervals to the Department by you (see [section 5](#));
- (viii) advising you about the content of written submissions such as your literature review, first year progress report, 2nd year talk, 3rd year poster and your thesis;
- (ix) advising you about the 'milestone' progression examinations (transfer of status and confirmation of status);
- (x) offering informal guidance on careers;

- (xi) providing pastoral care.

Continuation on the course depends on your satisfactory progress, so you should take very seriously any warnings expressed by your supervisor(s) that you are not working as well as you ought. You should also bring to their attention, in good time, any problems that are significantly affecting your progress whether academic or personal, before the situation becomes too serious. The University, Department and College carefully monitor the progress you make with your project, and copies of your supervisor(s) reports will be available to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and to your College Tutor for Graduates plus your College Advisor. **If you have significant concerns, of any kind, do not just tick a box on the GSR report, in addition please arrange to meet the DGS (Dr Adrian Taylor). Remember too that you can meet with Adrian at any time during your DPhil / MSc(Res), not just at the time of the quarterly GSR reports.**

It occasionally happens during the course of a research degree that relations between the student and the supervisor(s) can become strained, perhaps due to differences in opinion as to the direction in which the research should proceed. You will, therefore, be assigned a **Department Advisor** who is reasonably familiar with the field of your research and to whom you can turn for independent advice. Remember that your Department Advisor should be someone other than any of your supervisors: during your first two weeks in the Department you need to agree with your supervisor(s) who should be your Advisor and who should be your **Deputy Supervisor** (see [Section 2](#)); if you have a sole supervisor then your Department Advisor also takes the role of Deputy Supervisor.

Of course, your **Director of Graduate Studies** (DGS) and members of the Graduate Studies Committee (see [section 15](#)) are also always available for a confidential chat. In addition, you might like to seek advice from your **College Advisor** (who will be assigned by College) or your College Tutor for Graduates. Please note that your College Advisor must not be one of your supervisors.

The Department and Colleges all work together to ensure that your time here in Oxford is as trouble free as possible. It is a good idea to meet your advisors during your first term as a probationary research student. Informal advice is available from your **JCCG representatives**. Finally, as explained at Induction, the Department has a zero tolerance policy towards harassment and several members of staff are designated, trained **Anti-Harassment Advisors** who will treat any issues you raise with them in strict confidence.

As described in subsequent sections of this Handbook, during your research programme there are two formal 'milestone' progress assessments, the Transfer of Status exam (DPhil and MSc) and the Confirmation of Status Exam (DPhil only). Your supervisor must name four members of the Faculty

of Materials who could act as your Lead Assessor for these exams – the DGS will select one of these to take on the role.

Once you have agreed, in consultation with your supervisor(s), on your Department Advisor, Deputy Supervisor and candidates for the role of your Lead Assessor, you must inform the **Materials Graduate Studies Office**. You do this by entering the names on the 'New Graduate Student' on-line Questionnaire, a condensed specimen copy of which is included as an appendix to the present handbook. Make sure you complete all the items on this on-line form and submit it by the end of Week 4 of your first term for review by the Materials Graduate Studies Office. Remember too to save a pdf copy of the on-line submission and upload it to your folder in the 'Materials: PGR Progression' on-line site.

If you become concerned that your working relationship with your Responsible Supervisor has shortcomings and matters do not improve in the course of a few weeks you are encouraged to discuss your concerns with the DGS, Adrian Taylor, without delay. This discussion may be in strict confidence if that is your preference.

Information on the expectations and responsibilities of research supervision, and guidance on fulfilling these, is available as follows:

1. The Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Divisional Code of Practice on the Supervision of Research Students can be found via the link within the webpage

<http://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-for-postgraduate-research-students/supervision> and in [Appendix VIII](#) of the present Handbook.

2. Very helpful guidance to both students and supervisors can be found at:

(i) The Oxford Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) on-line course and guidance on DPhil Supervision (Sciences) (<https://www.ctl.ox.ac.uk/online-courses>).

(ii) The Vitae guides on 'Supervising a Doctorate' at <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/doing-research/supervising-a-doctorate> and 'Doing a Doctorate' (supervision and key relationships) at <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/doing-research/doing-a-doctorate/starting-a-doctorate/supervision-and-key-relationships>.

(iii) The Materials JCCG (our staff - graduate student liaison committee) usually run an annual student-led course in Michaelmas Term, 'Owning a Successful DPhil', which includes guidance on the

supervisory relationship. All probationer research students in Materials are strongly recommended to attend either this course or the MPLS course in (vii) below.

(iv) The University of Oxford Education Committee's (EdC) 'Policy on Research Degrees' (<https://academic.web.ox.ac.uk/files/policyandguidanceresearchdegrees2022finalforpublicationpdf>).

Within this document please see in particular the '**Responsibilities of the Student**' section, which you can read at the end of Appendix VIII of the present Handbook.

(v) The Quality Assurance Agency's Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality (<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>), see: Advice and Guidance - Research Degrees (<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/the-quality-code/advice-and-guidance/research-degrees>)

(vi) The UKRI Statement of Expectations for Postgraduate Training (<https://www.ukri.org/publications/statement-of-expectations-for-postgraduate-training/>).

(vii) The following training courses are run at least annually:

Students: In addition to the Materials JCCG course on 'Owning a Successful DPhil', the MPLS Division normally run an induction course 'Your Successful DPhil'.

Supervisors: In addition to the on-line course on DPhil supervision mentioned at 2(i) above, CTL run a 'Starting to teach at the University of Oxford' on-line course for new academic staff, which includes a session on Research Supervision; and on-line courses on the Admission of Research Students.

4. OVERVIEW OF DPHIL PROGRAMME

The present section provides an overview of the 777 working days that make up a 3.5 year DPhil project. An illustrative DPhil diary is provided together with a year-by-year outline. More detail on the key topics mentioned in the Diary and the Outlines is then given in sections 5 onwards. The present section also provides an introduction to (i) our 'Materials: PGR Progression' on-line site and (ii) the University's 'GSO forms'.



[Section 4.7](#) identifies the variations on the 3.5 year programme that apply to the 4-year EPSRC CDT DPhil programmes.


An equivalent overview and diary for our MSc (Research) Programme are given in [Appendix IX](#).

The University rules stipulate that unless dispensation has been granted you must be resident within a 25 mile radius of the city centre for at least 6 terms (2 academic years) before you can submit your DPhil thesis (unless you already hold an Oxford MSc degree, when the residence requirement is reduced to 3 terms). The rules also stipulate that the maximum time normally allowed for a student to complete the research and write the thesis is 12 terms (4 academic years). However, funding for research studentships is usually only for 3 or 3½ years. Thus, the Department aims for DPhil students to submit their theses within 3-3½ years (4 years for a CDT DPhil, reckoned from the date you embark on the CDT programme). A schedule for keeping to this timetable is illustrated below under the title 'A DPhil Diary'.

A DPhil Diary

1st Year	
Michaelmas Term, October - January	
Week 0	First year Induction Course, including meeting with Responsible Supervisor, Assignment of Deputy Supervisor, Department Advisor and propose Lead Assessor
Week 1	Safety Lecture MPLS Grad School 'Your Successful DPhil' Workshop (repeated in Wk 2 & later in MT)
Week 2	Information Skills Workshop
Week 3	Latest date for submission of Personal Registration and Risk Assessment Form and DSE Form Institute of Materials, Minerals & Mining Talk
Week 4	Deadline for completion of on-line 'New Graduate Student' Questionnaire Project Management Workshop
Week 5	Looking to the Future Workshop
Week 6	Training Workshop for prospective Teaching Assistants on 'Junior Demonstrating' in the UG Teaching Lab
Week 7	Informal meeting with your Department Advisor
Weeks 7-9	GSR Report
MT	Attend Workshop Induction

MT tbc	JCCG's Owning a Successful DPhil Workshop tbc
MT tbc	LabVIEW Training tbc
MT or HT tbc	Patent Information Workshop
Weeks 1-8	Attend graduate lecture courses (including 2 assessed) Thursday Departmental Colloquia
Hilary Term, January - April	
Week 0-1	Upload Project Management Form 1 (with Gantt Chart) to 'Materials: PGR Progression'
HT	Presentation Skills and PowerPoint workshops
HT	Writing Skills, Lab Notebooks, IPR and Patents workshop
Weeks 7-9	GSR Report
HT	Managing your References Workshop
HT	Research Impact and Open Access (Chemistry and Materials)
HT	Intensive one-week Academic Writing Course (for non-UK students)
Weeks 1-8	Attend graduate lecture courses (including 2 assessed) Thursday Departmental Colloquia
Trinity Term (including the Long Vacation), April - October	
Weeks 1-4	Thursday Departmental Colloquia
Weeks 2-4	Arrange informal meeting with your Lead Assessor
Weeks 7-9	Submit GSR Report
Week 8	Upload Literature Review to 'Materials: PGR Progression'
Before July	Complete on-line course on 'Research Integrity Training'
July	Upload Project Management Form 2 (with Gantt Chart) to 'Materials: PGR Progression' Apply for Transfer of Status (by submitting on-line GSO.2 form)
Mid-September	GSR Report
	
2nd Year	
Michaelmas Term, October - January	
Friday, Week 1	Normal latest date for Materials Transfer of Status Interviews
Weeks 1-8	Thursday Departmental Colloquia
Weeks 7-9	GSR Report
Hilary Term, January - April	
Week 0-1	Upload Project Management Form 3a (with Gantt Chart) to 'Materials: PGR Progression'
Weeks 7-9	GSR Report
Week 7	2nd Year Talks, Monday to Friday, 9.00 am – 6.00 pm, KEEP ALL DATES FREE! Hetherington Prize
HT	Academic Writing Course (for non-UK students)
Weeks 1-8	Thursday Departmental Colloquia
Trinity Term (including the Long Vacation), April - October	
Weeks 1-4	Thursday Departmental Colloquia
Weeks 7-9	GSR Report
July	Upload Project Management Form 3b (with Gantt Chart) to 'Materials: PGR Progression'
Mid-September	GSR Report
	

3rd Year	
Michaelmas Term, October - January	
Week 1	Active Job Hunting - Introduction to Oxford University Careers Service Careers and Networking Evening with Alumni
Week 7-9	GSR Report
Weeks 1-8	Thursday Departmental Colloquia
Hilary Term, January - April	
Week 0-1	Upload Project Management Form 3c (with Gantt Chart) to 'Materials: PGR Progression'
Week 3	Deadline for submission of poster for Competition
Week 6	3rd Year Poster Presentation Session (Rolls Royce and Ironmongers' Prizes)
Weeks 7-9	Submit GSR Report
Weeks 1-8	Thursday Departmental Colloquia
Week 6 HT to Week 6 TT	Apply for Confirmation of DPhil Status (by submitting on-line GSO.14 form)
Trinity Term (including the Long Vacation), April - October	
Weeks 0 to 10	Confirmation of Status interview
Week 2	Upload to 'Materials: PGR Progression' Project Management Form 4 (3 year projects only), to include thesis outline and Gantt Chart
Weeks 1-4	Thursday Departmental Colloquia
July	Upload Project Management Form 3d (with Gantt Chart) to 'Materials: PGR Progression' (3½ year projects only) GSR Report
Week 10	Latest date for Materials Confirmation of Status Interviews
July	Apply for Appointment of Examiners (on-line form GSO.3) – 3 year projects
Mid-September	GSR Report
September	Submission of thesis via on-line RTDS portal – 3 year projects
	
4th Year (3½ Year Projects Only)	
Michaelmas Term, October - January	
Weeks 0-1	Upload to 'Materials: PGR Progression' Project Management Form 4 (3.5y projects) to include thesis outline and Gantt Chart
Week 1	Active Job Hunting - Introduction to Oxford University Careers Service Careers and Networking Evening with Alumni
Weeks 7-9	GSR Report
Weeks 1-8	Thursday Departmental Colloquia
Hilary Term, January - April	
Jan-Feb	Application for Appointment of Examiners (on-line form GSO.3) - 3½ year projects
March	Submission of thesis via on-line RTDS portal - 3½ year projects

- Materials students following one of the EPSRC CDT DPhil programmes have different timings for some of these required elements – details are given in [Section 4.7](#) of this Handbook. Via [Appendix XII](#) you will find concise, year-by-year, timelines for each Materials Research Programme, showing the key required elements [3.5y DPhil, 4y DPhil, 3y DPhil, 2y MSc by Research, 4y Fusion Power DPhil, 4y Materials 4.0 DPhil].

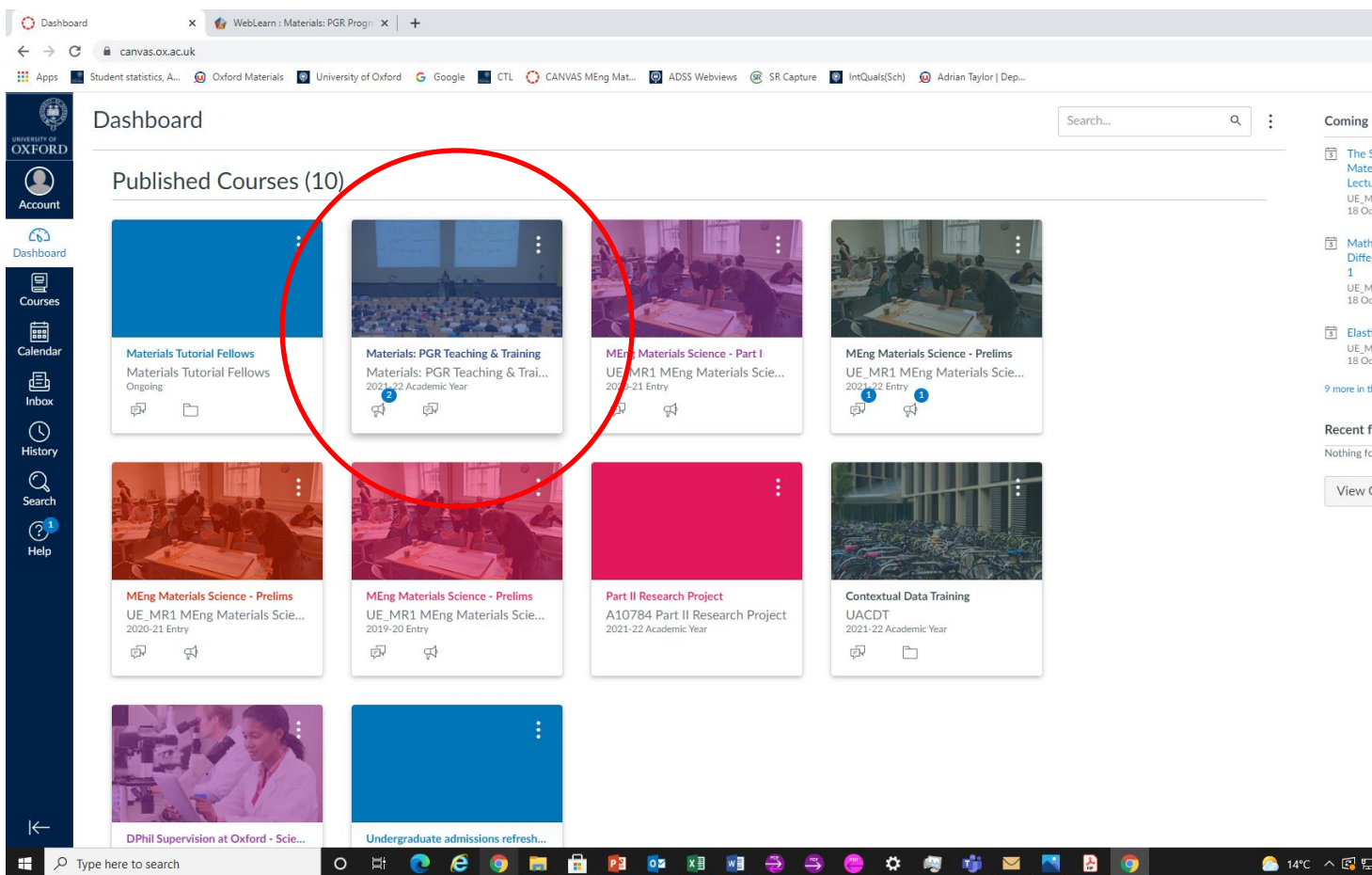
• Materials students following a standard DPhil in Materials programme **and who have full funding for forty-eight months**, for example EPSRC Industrial CASE studentships, follow the same timings as the 3.5-year DPhil diary except: (i) a PMF3e is uploaded in weeks 0-1 of the eleventh term (usually HT of Year 4); (ii) PMF4 is uploaded in weeks 0-1 of the twelfth term (usually TT of Year 4), **not** in weeks 0-1 of MT; (iii) the target date to apply for appointment of examiners is July of Year 4; and (iv) unless there are exceptional circumstances the latest date for thesis submission is the end of the four-year period (usually 30th September).

Note:

The JCCG (Staff – Student Committee) will meet every term at 12 noon on Wednesday of Week 1.

4.1. THE 'MATERIALS: PGR PROGRESSION' ON-LINE SITE

During the course of your DPhil or MSc (Res) programme there are several formal requirements that you have to meet, for example six-monthly project management reviews, submission of a literature review and presenting a research talk. All the paperwork associated with these requirements is uploaded by you to the named folder we create for you on our '**Materials: PGR Progression**' on-line site; the site is accessible via your [CANVAS VLE dashboard](#) – the link to the site being found within the 'Materials PGR Teaching & Training' course). Guidance on how to upload a document is given on the site.



Thus you, your supervisor(s), your Department Advisor, the DGS, and where appropriate your assessors for Transfer and Confirmation of Status, all have easy access to these documents, all in one place. You will first use this on-line folder to upload a pdf of your 'New Graduate Student' Questionnaire.

4.2. GRADUATE STUDIES OFFICE (GSO) FORMS

(See also [Section 13](#) for more guidance on the forms relating to thesis submission and the DPhil or MSc(R) examination.)

Throughout your studentship you will need to complete various graduate forms (known as GSO forms), including transfer of status, confirmation of status and an application for the DPhil examination. Most of the forms and associated notes can be found on the website Graduate Forms Online at <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/progression>. If you find yourself in "exceptional circumstances" you may need to complete an exceptional circumstance form, such as a deferral or extension of time form which can be found at <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/progression/exceptional>.

Over a period of several years the University is gradually moving the Word document GSO forms to an on-line system. When you access a particular form via the links given above you will be directed to the appropriate on-line form or Word document.

Once you have completed and submitted your part of an on-line form it is circulated automatically in the correct sequence to each person who has to review the form and add content and signature.

The GSO forms that are not yet on-line remain available as Word Documents - once you have completed and submitted your part of this type of form you then circulate it by email in the correct sequence, as defined by the numbered sections, to each person who has to review the form and add content and signature, **keeping it as a Word document at all stages.**

With the exception of a GSO.28 application, Word-based GSO forms should be sent to the Materials Graduate Studies Office only when all sections except the DGS section have been completed. The DGS will then review the form and normally give his final approval; such forms then will be sent by the Materials Graduate Studies Office to the Graduate Studies Assistant at MPLSD.

When you circulate these forms by email, you must use the phrase "[GSO.<insert form number here> submission](#)" in the subject line, and the form must be kept as a Word document at each stage so that the next person in the sequence is readily able to complete their part of the form. If any of the signatories is unwilling to add their e-signature to this Word document they may

instead type their name into the signature box and cc graduate.studies@materials.ox.ac.uk when they email the form to the next person in the sequence.

There is one potential exception to the procedures above:

GSO.3 (Application for appointment of examiners) – an on-line form

Usually as above, but if your thesis exceeds the word limit the procedure with this form is modified. In this case in addition to completing the form and obtaining a signature from your supervisor, you must obtain a letter of support from your supervisor to justify the need to exceed the word limit. The GSO.3 form also includes an option for you to request an 'early examination' – this option should be used only in exceptional circumstances and does not guarantee that an early exam will be possible.

4.3. THE FIRST YEAR

(The specific timings given are for a student who commenced the programme in Michaelmas Term)

You have arrived at the start of your postgraduate degree as a Probationer Research Student (PRS). The University rules allow you to hold this status normally for up to 4 terms. PRS students who arrive intending to pursue a Materials DPhil (or MSc by Research), are expected to transfer to DPhil (or MSc by Research) status near to the end of their first year. Permission to apply to transfer is subject to the approval of your Supervisor, College and Director of Graduate Studies, normally following the completion of **four threshold requirements**:

- (i) passes in two assessed courses (see [Section 6](#));
- (ii) attendance at a minimum of seven Colloquia during the first two terms (see [Section 9](#));
- (iii) completion of the University's mandatory on-line course on 'Research Integrity Training' (see [Appendix XIII](#))
- (iv) submission of your literature review (see below)

Two members of staff, other than your Supervisor(s), College Advisor or Departmental Advisor, will be appointed as the Assessors for your Transfer of Status application, which is normally submitted in your tenth month as a PRS.

In the period of weeks two to four of your third term you will meet with your Lead Assessor for an independent, informal discussion of your progress to date. Further information on this meeting, which **you** must arrange, is given in [Section 10](#).

By the end of Trinity full-term of your first year or its equivalent if you started in HT or TT, you are required to have completed a substantial Literature Review ([Section 10.3](#)). This should ensure that you are familiar with the prior work in your area of study before you progress too far with your research. Your Literature Review must be submitted by Friday of week 8 of Trinity Term. After your Transfer of Status interview you will receive written feedback on this Review from your Lead Assessor.

Having attended the Writing Skills workshop, completed your literature review, **ensured that you understand what is the new science and/or technology it is anticipated your project will reveal**, engaged appropriately with your project management and held regular discussions with your supervisor, you should be beginning to have some sense of what are the requirements for a thesis (see also [Section 13](#)) and what might be the content of your thesis.

Once you have met the four threshold criteria:

In your tenth month, and normally no later than the end of that month (usually 31 July), you should complete and submit an 'Application Form for Transfer of a Graduate Student from One Status to Another' (form GSO.2), following the procedure set out in [Section 10](#) of the present Handbook. In considering your application your Supervisor, College and Director of Graduate Studies will take into account your progress over the whole of your first year to date.

Noting that many students, academic staff and support staff take their main annual leave during the summer, it really is important that you submit the on-line GSO.2 by 31 July in order that everything is in place for your transfer interview in mid-September to early October. If your GSO.2 is not submitted by 31 July do not be surprised if there are delays in your Transfer of Status process. Other than in exceptional circumstances your transfer interview cannot take place until the DGS has approved your GSO.2 application.

[Section 10](#) of this Handbook provides more detail on the transfer of status process and examination.

The purpose of the transfer of status process is to ensure that you have a convincing research proposal, that you are making satisfactory progress in its development, and to satisfy the assessors that the work is potentially of DPhil or MSc by Research quality. Satisfactory progress in this context includes not only your ability to generate an appropriate amount of good quality data, but also your ability to understand both these data and the broader project and your ability to begin to take ownership of the project.

Submission of the GSO.2 form will, if approved, initiate arrangements for your **transfer of status examination**, which will be conducted by two assessors (neither of whom may be your Supervisor, your Department Advisor or your College Advisor). This examination will include a 15 to 30 minute

interview with the assessors, normally to be held within the period of weeks -3 to +1 of your 4th term. Please see [Section 10.4](#) for information on who is responsible for arranging the date for this interview.

Further information about transfer of status and other 'progression' matters can be found in subsequent sections of the present Handbook and on the MPLS Graduate School webpages at <http://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-for-postgraduate-research-students/progression>.

PLAGIARISM: During your first year you are required to ensure that you have a clear understanding of what is plagiarism, and when and how to reference prior work (including that published by you) and collaborative work. Please read [Section 21](#) of the present Handbook very carefully, and consult your Responsible Supervisor if you need any clarification. In addition we advise you to complete the University's on-line course on [Plagiarism](#).

4.4. THE SECOND YEAR

Your project should now be proceeding apace, you should be making good progress with your research and you should feel increasing ownership of this research.

During week 7 of Hilary term of your second year you will present to all members of the Department a short talk on your research (see [Section 11](#)). By Tuesday of week 6 you should upload to the 'Materials: PGR Progression' site an abstract of your talk. A senior member of the Department will Chair the talk and will judge whether or not your progress as demonstrated by the talk is satisfactory. Thus you and your supervisor are provided with an informal, independent opinion on your progress.

Your supervisor(s) will attend this talk. If the second year talk is unsatisfactory you may be required to give another talk during week 7 of Hilary Term of your third year.

During your second year you will continue to devote a small proportion of your time to the development of transferable career skills. Among other courses, you might wish to engage with the excellent and varied suite of 'Enterprise & Entrepreneurship' courses offered by the MPLS Division.

4.5. THE THIRD YEAR

Your DPhil project should now be coming together nicely and if you continue to make good progress with your research you will be on track to have your status as a DPhil student confirmed 30 to 33 months after you commenced your DPhil (usually in the 3rd full term of Year 3). To remain on target for completing within the allotted time you should most probably be starting to write-up your thesis by Easter (3 year projects), or October (3½ year projects), allowing yourself six months to produce the finished final copy (see [Section 13](#)). The Project Management Form that you submit approximately 6 months before your funded period ends must include an outline plan for your thesis.

During your third year, **and no later than Week 6 of your third term in this year** (for a Michaelmas term starter with no periods of suspension this will be Trinity Term), you will need to complete and submit on-line form GSO.14 to apply to be considered for **Confirmation of Status** as a Student for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. This will initiate the arrangements for the formal assessment of your application to confirm DPhil status. **It is suggested that you and your supervisor aim to apply for Confirmation at the end of the second term of your third year, that is 2½ years after you commenced your DPhil research.** If your GSO.14 is not submitted by the end of Week 6 of Trinity Term of your 3rd year do not be surprised if there are delays in your Confirmation of Status process. Other than in exceptional circumstances your confirmation interview cannot take place until the DGS has approved your GSO.14 application.

[Section 12](#) of this Handbook provides more detail on the confirmation of status process and assessment.

The purpose of confirmation of status is to enable research students to receive an assessment of their work by two assessors other than their supervisor(s). It is intended to provide an important indication of progress towards submission of a satisfactory thesis. In order to benefit fully from the constructive feedback from the assessors, normally the Confirmation interview for a Materials DPhil student should take place no later than nine months before your intended thesis submission date.

Normally the two independent assessors who conducted your Transfer of Status Examination will also assess your Confirmation of Status application. This assessment will include a 15 to 30 minute interview with the Assessors, normally to be held during the third term of your third year and normally by the tenth week of that term (and no later than 30th September of your third year, or the final day of your third year if you did not commence your research degree during a Michaelmas term). Please see [Section 12.2](#) for information on who is responsible for arranging the date for this interview.

Further information about confirmation of status and other 'progression' matters can be found on the MPLS Graduate School webpages at <http://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-for-postgraduate-research-students/progression>

Four to six weeks BEFORE you are ready to submit your thesis, you should apply for the 'Appointment of Examiners' (on-line form GSO.3). This form requires certification by you that the thesis is your own work except where otherwise indicated, by your supervisor that you have satisfied residency requirements, and by your college. This form can be accessed from the website <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/progression>. Once copies of your thesis and abstract have been submitted via the on-line RTDS portal to the Examination Schools, your Internal Examiner will arrange the date for your oral examination (*viva voce*) (see [Section 13](#)). When you complete the form you will be asked to enter the **Word Count** of your thesis.

Poster Competition

In the third year you are required to present a poster in the Department's DPhil Poster Symposium and Competition that is held in Hilary Term. One poster per student should be submitted, on a topic associated with your research, either in the category of 'public understanding of science' or in the category of a 'standard scientific conference'. For each category there will be a prize of £200 for the best poster, sponsored by the Ironmongers' Company and by Rolls Royce respectively. The poster competition also provides an opportunity to socialise with your peers whilst finding out more about their latest research. If you wish you may submit a poster which you have displayed at a conference as long as it is appropriate (please check with your supervisor if you have any doubts). Your poster can be portrait or landscape.

You may find it helpful to look at the slides on Poster Presentation Skills that are available at [Postgraduate Skills Training](#) (see Communication Skills section).

You will be asked to participate in peer review of two posters authored by your fellow students and in return will receive comments on your poster from two other students. The thought that you give to presenting some or all of your work as a clear scientific story in your poster should aid you when you come to write your thesis.

By noon on Monday of 3rd week HT you must submit to Materials Graduate Studies Office four copies of your poster on A3 size paper. **At the same time a pdf copy of this A3 version should be uploaded to the 'Materials: PGR Progression' site.** The paper copies will be sent to the judges to shortlist 10 finalists for the prizes in advance of the poster session itself. The winners will be decided on the day, after the judges have looked at the full-size A0 posters. (If you miss the 3rd week

deadline you will not be eligible for the competition, but still **will** be required to show a poster in 6th week.)

Remember that the content of your poster will be seen by the external judge, who was until recently a senior scientist at Rolls Royce, and that after the competition some of the posters may be displayed in the Materials Section at Rolls Royce Derby. **Hence consult carefully with your supervisor regarding the intellectual property revealed in your poster.**

4.6 CAVEAT

A hard and fast timetable for the successful completion of a DPhil project is, of course, not possible, given the unpredictability of creative research. The DPhil Diary suggests that you should have applied for confirmation of DPhil status during your third year and that you should have started writing six months before your 3 or 3½ year funded period has expired. These times should be taken as a guide illustrating what is generally required in order to submit within time. Part of the purpose of the Project Management Scheme is to enable students themselves to monitor their own progress and to flag to their supervisor and the Department a warning signal as soon as possible if they feel that their DPhil schedule is slipping (see [Section 5](#)). **If you are not devoting most of your effort to thesis writing at the 36 month milestone, you should arrange to meet with the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss your progress.**

4.7 OXFORD MATERIALS DPHIL STUDENTS FOLLOWING AN EPSRC CDT (4 year) PROGRAMME

Provided they have led to an evidenced pass result, lectures undertaken during the first year of a 4-year EPSRC CDT programme are acceptable in lieu of the two assessed lecture courses required for the Materials Transfer of Status process. However, CDT students **are** expected to attend at least seven colloquia during the first two or three terms for which they are based mainly in the Department of Materials at Oxford.

Students on the **4-year EPSRC CDT** programmes have slightly different timetables for their progression and project management requirements. For the **Fusion Power** and **Materials 4.0** EPSRC CDTs these are as follows:-

FUSION POWER CDT and MATERIALS 4.0 CDT

Year 1

Wk 0 MT	Induction
Wk 4 MT	Submit on-line 'New Graduate Student' Questionnaire
Wk 0-1 TT	PMF1 to the 'Materials: PGR Progression' on-line site
Y1 TT to Y2 HT	Attend a minimum of 7 colloquia and the 3 compulsory workshops (Project Management, Looking to the Future, Junior Demonstrating)

Year 2

Wk 1-2 MT	PMF2 to 'Materials: PGR Progression'
Wk 2-4 HT	Informal meeting with Lead Assessor for Transfer of Status
Fri Wk 6 HT	Deadline for submission of Literature Review
Fri Wk 8 HT	Deadline to apply for Transfer of Status
Wk 0-1 TT	PMF3a to 'Materials: PGR Progression'
Wks 1-5 TT	Interview for transfer of status examination, and decision

Year 3 ***

Year 4

Wk 0-1 TT	PMF4 to 'Materials: PGR Progression'
July	Apply for Appointment of Examiners
September	Submit thesis

Year 5

MT 2025 DPhil Viva

***** For further detail and information on the period from Y2 TT to September Y4 please see the Fusion Power CDT or Materials 4.0 CDT timeline provided on our 'Materials: PGR Progression' on-line site as per Appendix XII in the present Handbook.**

If you are unsure which programme you are following, then please contact the Materials Graduate Studies Office (graduate.studies@materials.ox.ac.uk) for clarification.

5. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

A Project Management scheme is included in our graduate programme structure. This allows and encourages you as the student to take responsibility for the successful outcome of your research by assessing expectations and progress throughout the duration of your programme (see the 'project management form' entries in the relevant timeline provided via Appendix XII. Guidance can be found at <http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/teaching/pg/pgprojectmanagement.html> and the Project Management Form templates are available on the '**Materials: PGR Progression**' site. The scheme will enable you to flag up any concerns you might have that your research is not keeping to schedule, so that your supervisor(s) and, if necessary, the Graduate Studies Committee can consider whether to take remedial action. **If you are expressing such concerns on a particular Project Management Form, you must also send a short e-mail to the Director of Graduate Studies to warn him of this.** He will then consider your Project Management Form as a priority matter. In all other cases unless we become concerned over your progress your PMFs are reviewed only by you and your supervisor(s). You upload most of your project management forms to the Materials: PGR Progression site in weeks 0-1 of HT and at the start of the 'Long Vacation' (in July). Integral to each PMF is a 'training needs analysis' and appended to your PMF there will always be an updated Gantt Chart. NOTE: The Gantt Chart should always show a timeline for your WHOLE DPhil.)

It is compulsory that you attend the Project Management workshop on Friday of Week 4 MT during which initial training is provided and the workings of the scheme will be explained. In advance of this workshop you are requested to prepare a first draft of your Project Management Form 1 (excluding the Gantt Chart where there will be specific training). To enable this you will need to discuss your project, its overall scientific objectives, your objectives for the next six months, your training needs, and your resources needs with your supervisor. There are some helpful prompts in the MPLS Division's '[Project Initiation Plan](#)' and '[Training Needs analysis documents](#)'.

Experience of basic project management, a useful generic skill, is valued by graduate recruiters, and for those of you who remain in academia Gantt charts are often a requirement when academics apply for research funding.

6. GRADUATE COURSES (ACADEMIC LECTURE COURSES, RESEARCH-SPECIFIC SKILLS TRAINING, AND TRANSFERABLE 'CAREERS SKILLS' TRAINING)

6.1. ASSESSED LECTURE COURSES

The examiners of your DPhil or MSc thesis will be asked to state whether they are satisfied that 'the candidate possesses a good general knowledge of the particular field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls'. The role of lectures is therefore not only to deepen your knowledge in your own specialist area of research but also to broaden your general knowledge within materials science and engineering. Accordingly, the first requirement for transfer from PRS to DPhil/MSc status is that you have passed two assessed courses, at least one of which must fall in an area **not** directly related to your own research topic. The extensive programmes of colloquia offered by the Department and its research groups fulfil a similar broadening role.

To pass an assessed course you must (i) normally have attended a significant proportion of the complete course of lectures (some lecturers will define this more specifically in the synopsis for the course) and (ii) obtain a grade of at least 50% on the written work set by the lecturer (this is equivalent to a 'Pass' at MSc level and is regarded as satisfactory for the purpose of transfer of status).

The on-line handbook on '[Postgraduate Lecture Synopses and Research Colloquia](#)' lists the assessed courses on offer under the title 'Postgraduate Teaching'. These include the third year M-level undergraduate options, which you may attend and offer for assessment by submitting the appropriate coursework – provided of course that you have not already taken the course as an undergraduate! Other courses are assessed by a series of mathematical problems or written questions that you must complete and submit to the lecturer for marking. You should agree your choice of assessed courses with your supervisors, to make sure they are acceptable for your transfer requirement.

Due to the diverse range of students' academic backgrounds and the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of modern research, your supervisor might advise you to attend courses other than those listed; either others given within the Department (eg the first year Crystallography course) or from outside. Listings of all lecture courses that are being given within the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division can be found via each department's website. Links to these websites can be found at [MPLS Department Websites](#).

If you wish to offer as one of your **two assessed courses** a course from another department or a Materials course that is not listed in the current Materials Postgraduate Lecture Synopses, then you

should first discuss with your supervisor whether this is appropriate and then request approval from the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), indicating to him how the course will be assessed. Once approval is given, you can book a place on the course with the host department or course lecturer as appropriate. Provided your performance on the course can be properly assessed the DGS will be sympathetic to your request because the Department's policy is to make graduate provision responsive to the needs of the individual student.

Academic lecture courses taught as part of the Year one Fusion Power and Materials 4.0 CDT programmes, are acceptable in lieu of the two assessed lecture courses required for the Materials Transfer of Status process.

By week 7 of your first term (usually MT) Please let the Materials Graduate Studies Office know which assessed courses you are taking.

If you attend a Materials undergraduate lecture course as one of your assessed courses, please let the lecturer know so that he/she is aware of the need to provide an assessment for you. On any work submitted please put your name followed by 'postgraduate' in brackets so the assessor knows you are a postgraduate and not an undergraduate.

Usually in Hilary term the lecturer will inform the DGS (via the Materials Graduate Studies Office) if your performance in the assessed work was satisfactory. The lecturer will also provide you with feedback on your performance. Normally this will be provided within four working weeks of your submission of the work for assessment, may be verbal or written, and will comprise more than just a grade or a short sentence. If you do not receive this feedback, please politely remind the lecturer and if the reminder has no effect then please inform the Materials Graduate Studies Office.

Note that the on-line handbook on 'Postgraduate Lecture Synopses and Research Colloquia' gives only the list of lectures and the term in which they are given. The lecture times and venues will be available at the start of each term and can be found on the Department web site under <http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/teaching/lecturelists.html>. Information on courses and workshops offered by the MPLS Division is available at <https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training>. Timetables for lecture courses and workshops offered by other departments can be found via each department's website. Links to these websites can be found at [MPLS Department Websites](#).

6.2 SKILLS-TRAINING COURSES (Research-Specific Skills and Transferable Career Skills) (For Teaching Skills see Sections 8 and 17 of this Handbook)

Graduates need to be skilled not only in the experimental and/or theoretical techniques relevant to their own research, but also in skills for communicating their results to a wider audience and for managing their own research programme and future career development. The Materials handbook 'Postgraduate Lecture Synopses and Research Colloquia' lists the different skills training courses on offer under the title 'Postgraduate Training'. **You should keep a log-book or portfolio to record the various training that you undertake**, of all kinds, formal and informal, since you may be asked to summarise this by your research sponsor or by a prospective employer and you will be required to summarise it on your applications for transfer of status and confirmation of status. There is an expectation by some sponsors and by the University that you will engage in approximately 100 hours per annum of transferable career skills training during years one to three of your research degree. Included in the 100 hours is skills training and feedback provided by your supervisor, for example on presentation skills, report writing or writing a scientific paper.

Transferable career skills are those in addition to your academic and research skills that employers both inside and outside academia value. The UK Government and funding agencies believe that these skills are essential for maintaining employability in a global economy which is increasingly requiring people to respond to and anticipate change.

If you wish to attend a 'course' external to the Department of Materials for which there is a modest charge and which is important for your research, including a 'summer school', then your supervisor is permitted to cover the costs from the 'baseline research costs' allowance she/he receives for each research student whose project is not funded directly by a sponsor.

MPLS Graduate Training Framework

You might find it helpful to use the framework set out in the table below as a tool for planning and recording your training needs as you progress through your DPhil programme. It has been pre-populated with the small number of courses that are compulsory for Materials research students.

Phase Category	Foundations Phase (0-12 months)	Intensive Research Phase (12-30 months)	Completion Phase (24+ months)
Transferable Career Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Project Management ● Career Planning ● Teaching (JD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research Talk 	
Research Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Safety Induction Talk ● Colloquia ● The University's on-line 'Research Integrity Training' course 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Poster Presentation
Academic Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Two assessed lecture courses ● Literature Review 		

Notes:

1. The phases are for guidance rather than rigid timescales.
2. The skills categories are defined as follows: **Academic skills** are lecture courses/subjects that form an extension to, and fill gaps in, UG-level knowledge; **research skills** are those needed to actually carry out research, for example safety, equipment use, programming; **transferable career skills** are those which are core to every student's development and are genuinely transferable, although they may have a subject nuance.
3. Therefore Academic skills and Research skills sit in departments. Transferable career skills sit in both Department and Division (and other providers as appropriate).

Several years ago University College London compiled a table of key transferable career skills:

Academic Learning Actively Using Sources	Analysing Data Solving Problems	Thinking Critically Managing Projects
Self-Management Reflecting on Learning Assessing Oneself	Managing Time Being Independent	Being Creative/Innovative Managing Resources
Communicating Writing Presenting	Listening Communicating Globally	Using Information Technology Planning and Making Decisions
Working with Others Working in Teams Understanding Others	Negotiating Assessing Self and Peers	Leading Managing Change

The Vitae organisation has compiled a **Researcher Development Framework** (RDF) which you are strongly encouraged to browse:

The Vitae 'Researcher Development Statement' (<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/vitae-publications/rdf-related/researcher-development-statement-rds-vitae.pdf>).

The RDF provides a framework for planning and supporting the personal, professional and career development of graduate students and research staff. It encourages individual researchers to identify strengths and prioritise their professional development. It helps them consider the skills and experiences that will enhance their career prospects and to articulate their knowledge, behaviours and attributes to employers.

The RDF and RDS are made up of four top level domains which encompass the knowledge, behaviour and attributes that are needed to be a successful researcher. These are:

- A: Knowledge and intellectual abilities
- B: Personal effectiveness
- C: Research governance and organisation
- D: Engagement, influence and impact

The RDS is put in context by the UKRI Statement of Expectations for Postgraduate Training (<https://www.ukri.org/publications/statement-of-expectations-for-postgraduate-training/>).

Further information on the Researcher Development Statement (RDS) and RDF can be found at

<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework/> and <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/why-focus-on-professional-development>.

Some of the skills training courses available to you as a Materials graduate student are:

- (i) Project management skills (Dr A O Taylor and others, MT Week 4);
- (ii) Presentation skills (Staff of IT Services, HT);
- (iii) Writing skills, lab notebooks, IPR and patents (Prof H E Assender & others, HT);
- (iv) Information skills (Staff of the Bodleian, MT Week 2);
- (v) Career-planning (Alumni of Dept, OU Careers Service & Dr A O Taylor, MT Week 1);
- (vi) Workshop skills (workshop technicians, throughout year);
- (vii) Microscopy skills (see Materials Postgraduate Lecture & Training Course Synopses – an optical microscopy course and a very wide range of electron microscopy courses);
- (viii) A suite of 'Enterprise' training courses (see MPLS courses);
- (ix) Institute of Materials – Benefits of student membership (Jamie Graham, MT Week 3);
- (x) Preparing an article for submission to a materials journal (Prof Richard Todd – a recording)
- (xi) Teaching skills (Lecturing, laboratory demonstrating, tutorials, classes, maths classes, [see lecture lists]);
- (xii) Managing your References - Bibliographic software (Staff of the Bodleian, HT);
- (xiii) Academic Writing Skills (for non-native English speakers);
- (xiv) Foreign Language Skills (**register on-line with the [OU Language Centre](#) by noon on Wednesday of MT Week 1**);
- (xv) Your successful DPhil course (MPLS event);
- (xvi) An introduction to Public Engagement and Science Communication (see MPLS courses);
- (xvii) Patent Literature (Staff of the Bodleian, HT);
- (xviii) Owning a successful DPhil (run by JCCG, MT, tbc);
- (xix) Research Integrity (on-line course via [Integrity & Ethics Training](#));
- (xx) Research Impact and Open Access - Chemistry and Materials (Staff of the Bodleian, HT);
- (xx) LabVIEW training, tbc (MT,tbc);
- (xxi) Dr Taylor's 2022 slides on the topic of 'Poster Presentation Skills' and a recording plus associated slides from his 2024 talk on 'Practical Tips for Delivering a Research Talk', are available at [Postgraduate Skills Training](#) .

The Project Management Workshop in Week 4 of Michaelmas Term is compulsory.

The Career Planning Workshop in Week 5 of Michaelmas Term is compulsory.

The Training Workshop for Junior Demonstrators (MT, Week 6) is compulsory.

The University's on-line course on Research Integrity Training is compulsory before you apply for Transfer of Status. For more information on Research Integrity and the on-line course see [Appendix XIII](#).

It is also strongly recommended that you attend some of the workshop sessions in Hilary Term on 'Presentation skills' and on 'Writing skills', since you will need the former to give a good presentation at your first-year interview and second-year talk, and you will need good writing skills for your Literature Review, first-year report and your thesis. These courses assume you know the basics of word processing and use of Powerpoint, but introductory courses to these (and a wide range of other IT courses) are available from the University IT Services (<http://www.it.ox.ac.uk/do/training-and-facilities>).

Students whose first language is not English, should consider attending the courses on 'Academic Writing' and 'Advanced Communication Skills' that are offered by the Oxford University Language Centre at 12 Woodstock Road (<http://www.lang.ox.ac.uk>). For some, this attendance will have been set as a compulsory course requirement.

You should also attend the lecture in Week 2 of Michaelmas Term on 'Information Skills' as the latter is critical for accessing the research already done in your chosen field. Information on accessing and searching the materials literature can be found at <http://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/friendly.php?s=oxford>.

In Michaelmas Term of your first year, sometimes supported by one or two alumni/ae of the Department, together with a representative from the Oxford University Careers Service, Dr Taylor will run a compulsory and very useful workshop on Career Planning - Looking to the Future. Further information about the Careers Service can be found on their website (<http://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/>).

Towards the end of your degree there is an opportunity to discuss career opportunities for Materials Scientists on a one-to-one basis with several alumni and alumnae of the Department. This complements the many activities available through the OU Careers Service.

The MPLS Division also offers a range of courses on enterprise and entrepreneurship, as outlined to you at Materials Induction. See <https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training/enterprise/enterprise>.

The MPLS Division runs a workshop on 'Your Successful DPhil', which to some extent complements the Department's Project Management Scheme, details can be found at <https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training/mpls-training/our-courses/mpls-induction-courses/your-successful-dphil>.

As mentioned already in [Section 3](#) of this Handbook, in Michaelmas Term the JCCG run a workshop on "Owning a Successful DPhil".

If you wish to attend a transferable, academic or research skills training course that is not offered by the Department of Materials or MPLS Division and for which a fee is charged, you may apply to the Director of Graduate Studies for funding using a copy of the form shown in [appendix VI](#) of this handbook. A Word version of this form can be found via the ‘Materials: PGR Progression’ site.

If you wish to use the supervised mechanical workshop, then it is mandatory that you first attend a Workshop skills course given by one of the technicians.

Similarly, if you wish to use the electron microscopes, then you should first complete an access and training request form (see [Section 7](#) of this Handbook).

You should also attend the lecture in Week 4 of Michaelmas Term by Jamie Graham on the benefits of student membership of the Institute of Materials. The receipt of their monthly magazine ‘Materials World’ and attendance at their meetings should both increase your general knowledge and improve your networking skills! If you are not already a student member of the IOM3 the first year’s membership is paid for you by the Department if you attend this lecture.

You may wish to develop skills in ‘Public Engagement’. The ability to communicate the essence of your work to a non-scientist, to excite them, without hyperbole, about its potential applications and benefits, and to help them understand any associated societal risks is a valuable transferable skill. To find out more see the ‘Public Engagement’ pages of the MPLSD website (<http://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/support-services>).

Further transferable skills training information and courses can be found via the MPLSD Researcher Training site at <https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training/pgr> .

For example in addition to the transferable skills training courses offered by the Materials Department, the MPLS Division’s Graduate School and other academic departments, Oxford University IT Services and the Bodleian Library provide a wide range of courses, and courses in foreign languages are offered by the Oxford University Language Centre (OULC).

[OULC Courses](#)

If you wish to develop your skills in a foreign language that is not essential to the progress of your research the Department will fund or partially fund one such OULC course as follows:

- General Course (non-priority) – Subject to completion of the course, the Department will fund up to three terms of study (current cost = £125 per term)

- Fast-track course – Subject to successful completion of the full course the Department will fund 50% of the total cost of the course (current total cost = £545). Often a student's college will also fund 50%.

In both cases you should submit in advance an application for funding (see paragraph on previous page). You will need to pay for the course yourself initially, and once you have completed the course may claim reimbursement via an expenses claim to which you attach (i) evidence that you have paid the course fees, (ii) a copy of the approved funding application form and (iii) a copy of the OU Language Centre 'Certificate of Course Completion' or 'Certificate of Course Attendance'.

Finally, a wide range of on-line courses and training are available via the University IT Services site '[Self-service Learning](#)'.

6.3 VITAE

Vitae was set up under the sponsorship of the UK's Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC). The Vitae website contains an excellent section, originally designed by postgraduate students, 'Postgraduate Researchers', and you are strongly advised to browse through this at your earliest convenience (<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/doing-research/doing-a-doctorate>). It contains several interlinked sections some of which we have referred to earlier in this Handbook, including:

- Managing yourself
- Planning your research project
- Developing as a researcher
- Career management
- Completing your doctorate – tips on writing your thesis, submission and viva
- Supervision and key relationships.

In their February 2001 review of the original site, Science magazine wrote: 'The great strength of this site is that it has been put together for a very specific target group (doctoral students) and has clearly been written by people who know what they are talking about.'

7. TRAINING IN ELECTRON MICROSCOPY

The David Cockayne Centre for Electron Microscopy (DCCEM) offers an extensive range of research instrumentation, and training courses that run throughout the year. The DCCEM allocates researchers to practical training courses that are suitable and timely for their research projects. A provisional plan for access to electron microscopy(EM) and requisite training is normally drawn up between DCCEM research support and project supervisors prior to the arrival of new graduate

students in order to get teaching and training off to an efficient start. Researchers normally master one technique or instrument before embarking on the next, and training is tailored to match instrument capability with the scientific objectives of user projects. There are three research support scientists, each specialising in one of the three main technique areas of scanning electron microscopy (SEM), transmission electron microscopy (TEM) and focused ion beam (FIB).

EM training courses are designed to teach new users how to obtain the required data for their research project and also use the instrumentation safely. Following successful completion of a training programme, "approved users" may book equipment themselves, operating within the booking rules detailed on the website and on-line booking form. These are designed to give a fair share of instrument time to all. Requests for additional instrument access outside the booking rules should be directed to the relevant support scientist. DCCEM support scientists are here to make sure you get the most out of EM for your research project so do not be afraid to ask questions about EM or data analysis.

The Postgraduate Synopses booklet contains the EM training course synopses and details of associated post-graduate level lecture courses. More information can be found at <http://www-em.materials.ox.ac.uk/>. Applications for training and access will be made by your supervisor using the online form provided in consultation with the relevant research support scientist. For further information please contact DCCEM staff at emaccess@materials.ox.ac.uk, or Dr Neil Young directly at neil.young@materials.ox.ac.uk.

8. OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS - AMBASSADOR PROGRAMMES

Oxford Materials Science has a very active Access and Outreach team. Each year we offer a wealth of activities and events aiming to inform schools about this exciting discipline, raise aspirations, and inspire the next generation of Materials Scientists. The outreach team are supported by staff and students across the department in realising these aims and welcome your involvement as an ambassador.

What do I gain as an ambassador?

Apart from it being good for the Department as a whole if some of our research students are involved with such schemes, it is a good thing to have on a CV for jobs in industry or education: for anyone even remotely thinking of a career in teaching it can be very helpful indeed as it provides useful contacts in teaching and a good insight into what is involved. Anyone who is already involved with schools through their children, as governors etc., may also find it useful. Finally, developing

communication skills with the general public, as well as communicating with other scientists and engineers, is a valuable personal skill in itself.

How do I get involved?

- (i) Information on outreach ambassador programmes is outlined below and further details are available from the Access & Outreach Manager, Helena Cotterill, in the Department. (Email: schools.liaison@materials.ox.ac.uk). Helena will be very pleased to hear from you so just drop our Access & Outreach team an email expressing interest.
- (ii) Student members of the Department are invited to complete this online form to express interest in acting as ambassadors at outreach workshops and projects we are running: <https://oxford.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/oxford-materials-outreach-ambassador-mailing-list-2023-24>.
- (iii) Keep an eye out for emails or Departmental Newsletter items requesting assistance with specific activities.

8.1 Materials Outreach Ambassador

There are a wide range of opportunities to help with the Department's substantial outreach work to schools: giving short talks, assisting with laboratory-based workshops for school pupils, helping with open days, visiting schools, acting as a student mentor for residential courses held at Oxford, and supporting our wealth of collaborative events. We offer training and support to those interested in developing and delivering outreach activities and we are always looking for enthusiastic volunteers. An overview of our outreach events can be found at <http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/admissions/schools/schools-outreach-events.html>.

8.2 Making Materials Matter Ambassador

Making Materials Matter (MMM) aims to inspire students to become the next generation of materials scientists and engineers through early and sustained engagement from Y8 to Y10 (these are the years leading up to the sitting of GCSE exams in the summer of Y11, normally at age 16). The project has been running since 2016/17 (with a gap due to the pandemic) with support from the Ironmongers' Company working closely with the University of Oxford in particular. We are planning to relaunch the programme this academic year.

The core programme is run for Y8 students and their teachers. It is centred on independent research projects pursued by groups of 10 students at their schools, with guidance from materials ambassadors and support from their teachers. Prior to the pandemic, we had 10 partner schools (7 in London, 3 in Sheffield) and materials ambassadors involved from Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial, and

Sheffield. The projects are managed by MMM ambassadors and the students have around 5 months in which to carry out the project. At least one visit to each school is made by the ambassadors and the students report their work during a “Student Conference” in Oxford. Finally, a teachers’ conference is held at Ironmongers’ Hall to share resources and raise awareness of materials science within the school curriculum. To sustain engagement with previous project participants, follow up events are held for Y9 and Y10 students that previously completed the main programme. Further details on this project including a short video clip can be found at <http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/admissions/schools/making-materials-matter.html> .

8.3 STEM Ambassador

This important voluntary programme aims to put “real” scientists and engineers in school classrooms with the intention of motivating school children towards further study and careers in science and engineering. STEM Ambassadors bring a fresh and inspiring perspective to STEM subjects and careers, engaging young people from around the country. They achieve this by delivering a range of activities such as career talks, mentoring, practical workshops, and exhibitions.

Further information can be found at <https://www.stem.org.uk/stem-ambassadors> and you can apply online directly from this website.

8.4 Discover Materials Ambassador

Discover Materials (DM) is a collaboration between a group of UK universities’ Materials Science Departments, the Henry Royce Institute for Advanced Materials, and other members of the materials science community. The group also manages a network of student ambassadors from the partner universities, and they are always looking for more students to join the network. As a Discover Materials Ambassador you would become a part of a UK-wide network of Materials Science communicators, have the opportunity to improve your skills in outreach and public engagement through a variety of training opportunities, and get the chance to participate in various collaborative outreach activities, from engaging the public at national science festivals to contributing to digital content on the [Discover Materials website](#). Please get in touch with the Department of Materials Access & Outreach Manager, Helena Cotterill, (Email: schools.liaison@materials.ox.ac.uk) if you have any questions or are interested in joining the Discover Materials Ambassador network.

9. DEPARTMENT COLLOQUIA

A requirement for transfer from PRS to DPhil/MSc status is that you have attended at least seven colloquia during your first two terms (or your first three terms if you are following either the Fusion Power or the Materials 4.0 EPSRC CDT programme), to include at least three of the Department's Thursday afternoon Colloquia during this period. The Department regards attendance at the Thursday afternoon colloquia as very important in broadening your general knowledge about materials science and engineering. The invited lecturers are asked to spend the first part of their talk in bringing up to speed graduate students with little or no expertise in the colloquium topic. Coffee and biscuits are served immediately before the colloquium in the foyer outside the Hume-Rothery lecture theatre. This is to encourage students and others to meet the speaker, if they so wish, and to discuss the topic of the talk amongst themselves and with the other academic staff attending. By means of a simple on-line [Colloquia Attendance Form](#) on at least a termly basis you will submit a record of each colloquium you have attended and wish to count towards the minimum of seven required for transfer of status.

At least three of your minimum of seven colloquia must be from the Department's Thursday afternoon series.

Subject to the above constraint:

- (i) some students involved in interdisciplinary projects may feel they want to attend colloquia in other departments in order to broaden or deepen their knowledge of other subjects. This is acceptable.
- (ii) some students may wish to broaden their knowledge by attending other colloquia, seminars, etc organised within the Materials Department (for example Begbroke, MML, Characterisation or QIP seminars and ad hoc colloquia). This is acceptable provided that the colloquium is NOT from the series run by your own main research grouping (normally, subject to guidance from your supervisor, you are expected to attend these anyway). For example MML students may not count the MML seminars, but may count QIP or Characterisation Seminars, etc. Similarly FI students may not count FI colloquia.

In cases (i) and/or (ii) above, the Department will accept towards the 1st year course requirement attendance at up to four colloquia that are not part of the Thursday afternoon series. In addition to checking that such a colloquium is permitted under the above rules, students will need to obtain the agreement of their supervisor if they wish to count a colloquium of this type towards those required for transfer of status.

Information on colloquia within the Materials Department and elsewhere can be found at
<http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/news/colloquia.html>.

For colloquia in other departments see for example,

Physics (<http://www2.physics.ox.ac.uk/research/seminars/colloquia>),

Engineering (<https://eng.ox.ac.uk/events>),

Chemistry (<https://www.chem.ox.ac.uk/talks-and-seminars>),

Maths (Solid Mechanics) (<https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/events>),

Medical Sciences Division (MSD) (<https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/>).

10. TRANSFER OF STATUS

Helpful general guidance on 'Transfer of Status' may be found on the MPLS Grad School website, (<https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-for-postgraduate-research-students/progression>).

As outlined in [Section 4.3](#) of the present Handbook, you commence your research degree with the status of Probationer Research Student and towards the end of your first year your progress is assessed in the Transfer of Status examination that is conducted by two members of staff we appoint as your Assessors. Remember that none of the following may act as your assessor: Your Supervisor(s), Department Advisor or College Advisor.

The purpose of the transfer of status process is to ensure that you have a convincing research proposal, that you are making satisfactory progress in its development, and to satisfy the independent assessors that the work is potentially of DPhil or MSc by Research quality. Satisfactory progress in this context includes not only your ability to generate an appropriate amount of good quality data, but also your ability to understand both these data and the broader project and your ability to begin to take ownership of the project.

If you are successful in the examination your assessors will recommend that you transfer to either DPhil Status or MSc by Research Status, as appropriate.

In the normally rare event that the assessors of a Materials student are minded to recommend 'Failure to Transfer Status' the student will be asked to attend a second interview, conducted by the two assessors together with at least three members of the Department's Graduate Studies Committee including the DGS, and with his/her supervisor(s) in attendance. Following this second interview, which will be held as soon as practicable after the first, informed by a discussion between the Materials Graduate Studies Committee members, assessors and the supervisor(s), your Assessors will reach a final recommendation. In the event the two assessors cannot agree on the outcome the DGS will have a casting vote, for which purpose he would take into account the views of all present at the discussion. The primary purpose of the second interview is to allow consistency across all Materials PGR students in any 'failure to transfer' outcomes.

If the 'Failure to Transfer Status' recommendation is confirmed, then the student has a right to one, and only one, further attempt to transfer status, usually one term after the original attempt.

In the present section we provide more detail on the key stages of transfer of status.

10.1 INFORMAL MEETING WITH LEAD ASSESSOR

During the period of weeks two to four of their third term an informal meeting is held between the student and their Lead Assessor. The informal meeting with Lead Assessor procedure is as follows:

1. Student arranges directly with their Lead Assessor a mutually convenient time for the informal meeting, of duration 15 to 30 minutes. The Lead Assessor is to stipulate the venue (and, if not using the Assessor's office, will ask the student to book a meeting room).
2. One week in advance of the meeting, the student will provide to the Lead Assessor, by email, the two documents described under (i) & (ii) below.

(i) As a single, one-page, Word document

The full name of the student

The name(s) of their supervisor(s)

The name of the programme for which they are registered [normally this will be one of - DPhil in Materials, MSc(R) in Materials, 'Fusion Power' CDT or 'Materials 4.0' CDT]

The agreed title of their research project

A 100-word summary of the new science to which it is anticipated the project will lead.

(ii) A copy of a recent update of their Gantt Chart

In addition, the above two documents will be uploaded in pdf format by the student to their 'Transfer' subfolder on our 'Materials: PGR Progression' on-line site. Please read the notes you will find on the 'Overview' page of this site. **For these pdf uploads please give the documents filenames according to the following protocols:**

SURNAME Forename PRS Informal Progress Meeting New Science

SURNAME Forename PRS Informal Progress Meeting Gantt Chart

3. At the start of the meeting the Assessor will ask the student to summarise in five minutes their progress and principal achievements to date. To aid this summary the student may wish to bring to the meeting paper copies of up to five A4 'slides'.

Following the discussion between assessor and student, verbal comments will be offered on the student's progress and on their project. Should the Lead Assessor have significant concerns he or she will, in addition, communicate these to the Supervisor and DGS by email.

10.2 PREPARING FOR TRANSFER OF STATUS FORM

In weeks 7-9 of the third term of your first year (Trinity Term in most cases), as in every quarter, you are required by the University to submit a GSR report. At the time you discuss this particular GSR report with your supervisor you might find it helpful to use the MPLS Division's 'Preparing for Transfer of Status' form as a prompt to discuss with your supervisor your readiness to be considered for transfer of status. The form is available via the MPLS website (<https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-for-postgraduate-research-students/progression>).

If your supervisor believes you are not yet ready to apply for transfer of status, exceptionally the examination may be deferred; in such cases your responsible supervisor should seek advice from the DGS.

10.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

By the end of your third full term, usually Trinity Term of your first year, you must successfully complete a Literature Review, the aim of which is to ensure that early in your project you are fully conversant with the prior research in your area of study. The Literature Review and subsequent Progress Report also provide vehicles for you to practise your scientific writing skills, to gain an understanding of good academic practise when referencing the work of others and the avoidance of plagiarism, and for your supervisor to advise on any further training that might be necessary. Your supervisor will provide you with guidance on the content. You should ask him/her to identify one or two published review chapters (eg in a thesis) that provide good examples.

The Literature Review must be submitted as a pdf file and be formatted for double spacing with 3.5 cm left margin and 3 cm for top, bottom and right hand margins, using either Times New Roman 12 font or Arial 11 font or Calibri 11 font (note: margins specified to allow for binding should you wish to print a paper copy.) This pdf review should be submitted via your 'Transfer' subfolder on our 'Materials: PGR Progression' site by noon on Friday of week 8 of your third full term. Please read the notes you will find on the 'Overview' page of this site.

****Please make sure that you submit your review on time****

The filename for the report should be formatted as follows:

SURNAME Forename PRS Literature Review

The Review should comprise a 5,000 to 6,000 word survey of your research field (the word count excludes the title page, table of contents, acknowledgements, references and figure captions). Your survey should not omit any references to work that would crucially affect the nature or direction of research, but it should not be simply a catalogue. It should show critical judgement and discussion,

and above all it should tell a scientific 'story', setting the scene for your own work. You should regard this as the preparation of an early draft for a chapter of your eventual thesis. Its structure and content are discussed further in the 'Writing Skills' workshop. Your Literature Review will be read by your lead transfer of status assessor, whose written comments on overall standard, breadth of coverage, critical judgement shown, and style and presentation of the review will be provided to you via the 'Materials: PGR Progression' site, normally after the Transfer of Status exam. A satisfactory Literature Review is a requirement for transfer of status.

NOTE: If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to ask for an extension to the Literature Review submission deadline, your supervisor needs to approve this request and e-mail graduate.studies@materials.ox.ac.uk to confirm this is appropriate.

A further incentive for writing a high-quality critical review is provided by the Materials Science and Technology (MST) Editorial Board, which offers a Materials Literature Review Prize for the best review from a graduate studying in the UK. Further information can be found on the website of Taylor and Francis (<https://think.taylorandfrancis.com/journal-prize-est-iom3-publication-awards-ymst-literature-review-prize-2/>). Winning reviews are published in the journal, Materials Science & Technology. Students from the Department have won a number of prizes in the past, so a high standard has been set.

10.4 APPLICATION PROCESS (GSO.2) and EXAMINATION FOR TRANSFER OF STATUS

In the tenth month of your first year, usually July, it is time for you to apply to be considered for transfer of status. To do so you submit an on-line GSO.2 form and associated documents, as described below. In Appendix X to the present Handbook you can see a sample copy of the assessment form and associated guidelines that will be used by your Assessors.

Within the GSO.2 form your supervisors have to write a short report on your progress. In this report they comment on:

- (i) Your progress, including the quality of your work, your competence and application to your project, the balance between your own input to the project and the assistance given by your supervisor and the members of the research team, your original contributions to date, and your readiness to undertake advanced, increasingly independent, research.
- (ii) The proposed research project.
- (iii) The extent to which the project forms part of a well-established research programme in the group.

- (iv) Any major factors outside your control that have significantly affected the progress of the work.

IMPORTANT GUIDANCE ON COMPLETING AND SUBMITTING THE ON-LINE GSO.2 FORM

Please read this guidance very carefully

- **Before** you submit your on-line GSO.2 application you must have:

(i) Uploaded to your Transfer folder on the [Materials: PGR Progression](#) site, your literature review

(ii) Submitted your colloquia attendance record using the Microsoft Form here: [Colloquia attendance form 2024-25](#)

(iii) informed our Education Support (ES) team by email of the titles of the two lecture courses for which you have submitted work for assessment.

- Access the GSO.2 form in the usual way via [Graduate Forms](#)

If needed, further guidance can be found in section 5, 'On-course Applications', of the "Student Self Service for Students Manual". The manual is accessed via [Student Self Service | University of Oxford](#) ; see the **Related Documents** section mid-way down the side-bar on the right-hand side of the webpage.

- Complete your parts of the form ('Declaration of consent; 'Main form'; 'Additional details');

A note on the 'Skills training & development' section.

Taking guidance from the helpful examples provided within the form please take care to list 'research skills' in section A and transferable 'career skills' in section B. For example, since you all attended the Project Management training in year one and have practised this at six monthly intervals thereafter you can include a bullet point for 'Project Management Training' in section B.

- Upload the Certificate that confirms you have completed the University's on-line Research Integrity course

- Submit the GSO.2 application

The submitted form will be circulated on-line automatically in turn to your responsible supervisor, your college and the Materials DGS.

If you believe there are mitigating circumstances which may have had a significant impact on your progress to date you should inform the DGS in writing of these at the same time you submit your GSO.2 form.

- When the DGS has reviewed and endorsed your application, our Education Support (ES) team, will email you to prompt you to upload to your GSO.2 application the two 'milestone' documents - namely your 2,500 word summary of progress to date and the full version of your up-to-date Gantt Chart.

Provided with the email prompt will be guidance on the upload procedure.

Further information on the 'milestone' documents is provided below.

- Soon after you have uploaded your milestone documents, our ES team will (i) alert your assessors that your application is ready for review and (ii) prompt you to contact your assessors in order to arrange the date for your transfer interview.

If either of your assessors does not respond to your efforts to make contact then please ask your Responsible Supervisor to contact the assessors.

Normally your transfer interview should be held very near to the end of your first twelve months (thus for most students in the period mid-September to early October).

The two 'Milestone' documents:

1. A 2000 to 2500 word summary of your research progress to date.
The report should be no more than 2,500 words (excluding the title page, table of contents, acknowledgements, references and figure captions). It should give an account of the background to your project (including brief references to the key literature), an outline of your research plans for the full duration (2, 3, 3.5 or 4 years) of your project (including an explicit indication of the new science it is anticipated that the project will lead to if all goes to plan – typically this new science section should be 300-500 words in length), and a description of the progress you have made so far. When writing this report please use the first person singular – that is, 'I' rather than 'we' – to distinguish clearly those parts of the report which refer to your **own** work (experiments, results, conclusions, plans for the rest of the project, etc).
2. An updated copy of your latest Gantt Chart, using a legible font size. Be sure that this chart is concise but includes sufficient task lines within the work packages, to enable your assessors to understand your current intended work plan for the duration of your project.

Please ensure you have submitted your on-line GSO.2 application by the end of July (or your tenth month of Y1):

Noting that many students, academic staff and support staff take their main annual leave during the summer, it really **is** important that you submit the on-line GSO.2 form by 31 July in order that everything is in place for your transfer interview, which for most students needs to take place in mid-September to early October. If your GSO.2 is not submitted by 31 July do not be surprised if there are delays in your Transfer of Status process.

The Transfer Interview and Assessment

At the Transfer interview, which involves only you and your two assessors, you will be asked about your work and progress over the whole of your research project to date and your plans going forward.

Prior to the interview your Assessors will have read your GSO.2 form and the Lead Assessor will have assessed your Literature Review and uploaded a report on the latter to the confidential Supervisor/Assessors sub-folder within your folder on our 'Materials: PGR Progression' site.

The duration of the interview will be between 15 to 30 minutes; the first five minutes for you to summarise your work to date and your intended next steps, and the remainder of the time for your Assessors to ask questions and engage in discussion with you.

For your five-minute introduction you may use up to five slides.

At the end of this five-minute introduction you should display an additional final slide to summarise the new science to which it is anticipated your project may lead.

After the interview your Assessors complete a report form and make a recommendation on the outcome of the assessment (as mentioned already, you can see a blank copy of this form in Appendix X of the present Materials Graduate Course Handbook – do have a look at this form as it gives a good idea of what the assessors will be taking into account).

The DGS then reviews the Assessors' report and makes the final decision on the outcome.

Finally, you will receive an e-mail direct from the MPLS Division once your Transfer outcome has been processed.

11. SECOND-YEAR TALK

Monday to Friday (9.00 am – 6.00 pm) of Week 7 in Hilary Term are reserved for the second-year talks, in which the students present their current research findings. **In your second year you must keep all of these days free**. If you have a clash, in the majority of cases your timetabled talk will take priority. In certain circumstances it may be agreed you can postpone your talk for a year or in exceptional circumstances such as family bereavement or hospital appointment, we will make best efforts to try and re-organise the talk schedule. Please e-mail graduate.studies@materials.ox.ac.uk and give an outline of the position if you fall into either category to seek postponement for a year or reschedule of talk.

The talks will be scheduled by the DGS in a series of themed Heats, a member of academic staff acting as 'Convenor' for each Heat. Within each Heat there may be a number of sessions, each chaired by a research group leader. The Convenor of the Heat in which your talk takes place will give collective written feedback to all speakers in their Heat within two weeks of the talks and in a case where significant improvement is needed will write individually to the student concerned.

The presenter of the best talk in each Heat, as judged by the Convenor and the session chairs, will give their talk again in a Final, to be held on Friday of Week 7 HT in the Hume-Rothery Lecture theatre. The winner of each Heat will receive a prize of £25.

The best talk in the Final in terms of effective communication of science is awarded the Hetherington – Armourers & Brasiers' Prize. This provides a prize of £200 and the winner's name is added to the list on the award board in the foyer to the library. The talks in the Final will be judged by the DGS and senior members of academic staff. They will be looking at the quality of the visual aids; the pace and diction; the structure of the talk; the ability to get points across to a mixed audience at peer-group level; self-confidence and the handling of questions; effectiveness of your presentational style; and timing.

You are required to include in the introduction section of your talk one slide which explicitly identifies the key new science to which the project has led and/or is expected to lead. The talk should include an appropriate introduction for a mixed audience of Materials Scientists, but focus mainly on your own results, the interpretation of these results and how they relate to other work in the field. The talks are each allocated 20 minutes, which comprises 15 minutes for presentation and 5 minutes for questions. Please take care to time your talk carefully. You are requested to load your slideshow onto the desktop of the PC in the lecture theatre in advance of your session – remember to include your name in the filename! Your progress as indicated by this talk provides a useful informal guide on your trajectory towards Confirmation of DPhil Status. If the senior member of staff who chairs the

session in which you give your talk has concerns over your progress the DGS will alert you and your supervisor to these concerns, giving you ample time to address these in advance of your Year 3 Confirmation of Status assessment.

In advance of the talks please upload to our 'Materials: PGR Progression' site an abstract for your talk, of length 100 to 150 words, as a pdf, **using the following protocol for the filename:** SURNAME Forename Y2 talk abstract. **Please remember to include in the abstract your name and talk title!**

And immediately after giving your talk please upload your slides under the filename: SURNAME Forename Y2 talk slides.

The members of each research group are requested to make arrangements such that for each speaker from your group one or more group members will take notes during the talk in order to provide constructive feedback on strengths and weaknesses. You will be able to provide this feedback soon after the talks and in the light of the generic feedback provided by the Convenor.

The Head of Department and the DGS wish to strongly encourage all research students and supervisors to support the individual speakers and the event by attending at least one of the several sessions. Further, we encourage the speakers to attend their own session and **at least** one other session. Unless they have made special alternative arrangements, normally at least one of a student's supervisors is required to attend a student's talk. Unless there are exceptional reasons please show courtesy to your fellow scientists by attending a whole session and not just "parachuting in" for one talk within a session. Do try to come along to the Final too to support the speakers.

12. CONFIRMATION OF DPHIL STATUS

Helpful general guidance on 'Confirmation of Status' may be found on the MPLS Grad School website, (<https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-for-postgraduate-research-students/progression>).

As outlined in [Section 4.5](#) of the present Handbook, towards the end of your third year your progress is reviewed in the Confirmation of Status assessment that normally is conducted by the two members of staff who were appointed in Year One as your Assessors.

The purpose of Confirmation of Status is to enable research students to receive an independent assessment of their work by two assessors other than their supervisor(s). It is intended to provide an important indication of progress towards submission of a satisfactory DPhil thesis. In order to benefit fully from the constructive feedback from the assessors, normally the Confirmation interview for a Materials DPhil student should take place no later than nine months before your intended thesis submission date.

If you are successful in the assessment your assessors will recommend that your DPhil Status is confirmed.

In the normally rare event that the Confirmation of Status assessors of a Materials student are minded to recommend 'Failure to Confirm Status', if the 'Failure to Confirm Status' recommendation is confirmed upon review by the DGS, then the student has a right to one, and only one, further attempt to confirm DPhil status, usually one term after the original attempt.

If after a **2nd attempt** at Confirmation of Status the assessors of a Materials student are minded to recommend 'Failure to Confirm Status' the student will be asked to attend a second interview, conducted by the two assessors, together with at least three members of the Department's Graduate Studies Committee including the DGS and with his/her supervisor(s) in attendance. Following this second interview, which will be held as soon as practicable after the first, informed by a discussion between the Materials Graduate Studies Committee members, assessors and the supervisor(s), your Assessors will reach a final recommendation. In the event the two assessors cannot agree on the outcome the DGS will have a casting vote, for which purpose he would take into account the views of all present at the discussion. The primary purpose of the second interview is to allow consistency across all Materials PGR students in any 'failure to confirm' outcomes.

In the remainder of the present section we provide more detail on the key stages of confirmation of status.

12.1 PREPARING FOR CONFIRMATION OF STATUS FORM

In weeks 7-9 of the second term of your third year (Hilary Term in most cases), as in every quarter, you are required by the University to submit a GSR report. At the time you discuss this particular GSR report with your supervisor you might find it helpful to use the MPLS Division's 'Preparing for Confirmation of Status' form as a prompt to discuss with your supervisor your readiness to be considered for confirmation of DPhil status. The form is available via the MPLS website

<https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-for-postgraduate-research-students/progression> .

If your supervisor believes you are not yet ready to apply for confirmation of status, exceptionally the examination may be deferred; in such cases your responsible supervisor should seek advice from the DGS.

12.2 APPLICATION PROCESS (GSO.14) and ASSESSMENT FOR CONFIRMATION OF DPHIL STATUS

Towards the end of the second term of your third year, usually Hilary Term, it is time for you to apply to be considered for confirmation of status. To do so you submit an on-line GSO.14 form and associated documents, as described below. In Appendix X to the present Handbook you can see a sample copy of the assessment form and associated guidelines that will be used by your assessors.

Within the GSO.14 form your supervisors have to write a short report. In this report they include comments on the progress of your research and your proposed timetable for thesis submission.

IMPORTANT GUIDANCE ON COMPLETING AND SUBMITTING THE ON-LINE GSO.14 FORM

Please read this guidance very carefully

- Access the GSO.14 form in the usual way via [Graduate Forms](#)

If needed, further guidance can be found in section 5, 'On-course Applications', of the "Student Self Service for Students Manual". The manual is accessed via [Student Self Service | University of Oxford](#) ; see the **Related Documents** section mid-way down the side-bar on the right-hand side of the webpage.

- Complete your parts of the form ('Declaration of consent; 'Main form'; 'Additional details'):

- In the 'Progress report' section provide your 500 to 1000 word progress report.

This report should include an outline of the key new science which the project has achieved and/or is on target to achieve, and should include a list of any awarded patents and/or **first author**, refereed journal articles that have arisen from your work to date (provide this list in the format of 'title of article/patent' followed by the full reference of the article/patent).

- In the 'Timetable' section simply type the following statement, "My current estimate is that I shall submit my thesis in <state month & year> (please see Gantt chart for further details)."

- Complete the 'Skills training & development' section.

Taking guidance from the helpful examples provided within the form please take care to list 'research skills' in section A and transferable 'career skills' in section B. For example, since you all attended the Project Management

training in year one and have practised this at six monthly intervals thereafter you can include a bullet point for 'Project Management Training' in section B. Similarly you all presented a third year poster, and had the opportunity to attend training on preparing a poster, so you can include a bullet point for 'Communication Skills – Poster Presentation'. In section D, among other content you can include a full list of any publications, patents, conference talks, etc.

- Upload the Certificate that confirms you have completed the University's on-line Research Integrity course (you will recall that you completed this course prior to transfer of status).

- Submit the GSO.14 application

The submitted form will be circulated on-line automatically in turn to your responsible supervisor, your college and the Materials DGS.

If you believe there are mitigating circumstances which may have had a significant impact on your progress to date you should inform the DGS in writing of these at the same time you submit your GSO.2 form.

- When the DGS has reviewed and endorsed your application, our Education Support (ES) team, will email you to prompt you to upload to your GSO.14 application the 'milestone' document - namely the full version of your up-to-date Gantt Chart.

Provided with the email prompt will be guidance on the upload procedure.

Be sure that your Gantt chart uses a legible font size, and is concise but includes sufficient task lines within the work packages to enable your assessors to understand your achieved and currently intended work plan for the duration of your project through to thesis submission.

- Soon after you have uploaded your milestone document, our ES team will (i) alert your assessors that your application is ready for review and (ii) prompt you to contact your assessors in order to arrange the date for your confirmation interview.

If either of your assessors does not respond to your efforts to make contact then please ask your Responsible Supervisor to contact the assessors.

Normally your confirmation interview should be held within the time window defined approximately by the middle of your 31st month on-course and the end of your 33rd month on-course (thus for most students during weeks 0 to 10 of Trinity Term of your third year).

Please ensure you have submitted your on-line GSO.14 application no later than Week 6 of Trinity Term of your third year (or your 32nd month as an enrolled research student):

If your GSO.14 is not submitted by the date given above not be surprised if there are delays in your Confirmation of Status process.

The Confirmation interview

At the Confirmation interview, which involves only you and your two assessors, you will be asked about your work and progress over the whole of your research project to date and your plans going forward. Prior to the interview your assessors will have read your GSO.14 form including your supervisor's report within this form. The duration of the interview will be between 15 to 30 minutes; the first five minutes for you to summarise your work to date and your intended next steps, and the remainder of the time for your Assessors to ask questions and engage in discussion with you. For your five-minute introduction you may use up to five slides. At the end of this five minute introduction you should display an additional final slide to show in outline your vision at present of the table of contents for your thesis (chapter headings only, not sections within chapters).

After the interview the Assessors complete a report form and make a recommendation on the outcome of the assessment (as mentioned already, you can see a blank copy of this form in Appendix X of the present Handbook – do have a look at this form as it gives a good idea of what the assessors will be taking into account).

Finally, you will receive an e-mail direct from the MPLS Division once your Confirmation outcome has been processed.

13. THESIS WRITE-UP, SUBMISSION AND VIVA

The 'Postgraduate Researchers' section of the Vitae website <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/doing-research/doing-a-doctorate/completing-your-doctorate/writing-and-submitting-your-doctoral-thesis> contains an excellent section on 'Writing-up', with many helpful tips. Some of these will be covered during the 'Writing skills' lecture in Hilary Term, which will also deal with the practicalities of producing the thesis.

The primary source of advice on the structure and scientific content of your thesis is your responsible supervisor. Before you first discuss this with her/him you should look at a recently published thesis from your research group.

A typical structure for a DPhil or MSc by Research thesis is:

Title Page

Abstract

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

Introductory chapter

Literature Review chapter

Apparatus, Experimental/Computational Methods, and Background Theory chapter

Results and Discussion chapters

General Discussion, Conclusions, and Future Work chapter

References

You are entitled to receive thorough formative feedback on one draft of each chapter of your thesis provided that the chapter is submitted to your responsible supervisor by a mutually agreed planned date. Normally your supervisor will provide feedback within three working weeks of receiving a draft chapter.

You are also entitled to receive an overall opinion on your final draft of your whole thesis provided that the final draft is submitted to your responsible supervisor by a mutually agreed planned date. Normally your supervisor will provide feedback within three working weeks of receiving this final draft.

The Examination Regulations are explicit that **work submitted for examination must be solely the work of the candidate, except where otherwise clearly indicated.** If, after reviewing the relevant guidance and training provided by the University, Division and Department (including that in section 21 of the present Handbook), you are uncertain on any aspect of **plagiarism (including auto-plagiarism) and/or copyright** be sure to seek **guidance from your responsible supervisor** as soon as possible.

Proof-reading

It is your responsibility to ensure your thesis has been adequately proof-read before it is submitted. Your supervisor may alert you if they feel further proof-reading is needed, but it is not their job to do the proof-reading for you. You should proof-read your own work, as this is an essential skill in the academic writing process. However, for longer pieces of work such as a thesis 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 (students should bear in mind 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). Proof-reading assistance may also be provided as a reasonable adjustment for disability or special educational needs. **Your thesis may be rejected by the examiners if it has not been adequately proof-read.**

The MPLS Division offers training in proof-reading as part of its [Scientific Writing](#) training courses.

Please note the Clauses in the Examination Regulations - General Regulations Governing Research Degrees covering (i) thesis content and (ii) the use of 3rd Party proof-readers for pieces of work of 10,000 words or more (<https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/>) :

“Work submitted for examination must be solely the work of the candidate, except where otherwise clearly indicated. It is not permitted for a student to ask or allow someone else to make material changes to their work, for example, by rewriting passages of text or rewriting formulae or code. Failure to adhere to these regulations could constitute a breach of academic integrity and contravene the Proctors' Disciplinary Regulations for Candidates in Examination. Candidates are responsible for the proof-reading of their work. Proof-reading by a third party is acceptable provided it constitutes no more than advice on the following: spelling and punctuation, formatting, grammar and syntax. A third party may not be used to change the text of the thesis so as to clarify, develop or change the ideas and arguments, reduce the length of the thesis, provide help with referencing, correct information within the thesis, or translate the thesis into English.”

Following a successful examination and once 'leave to supplicate' has been granted, you will need to prepare at least one hard-bound copy of the thesis; this is for the Department's Library. You may wish to have a hard bound copy for yourself and it is a courtesy to provide a hard-bound copy to your Responsible Supervisor. You are required to submit an electronic copy of your thesis to the Oxford Research Archive (you should check what, if any, automatic period of embargo is applied – only after this period will it be accessible via the ORA). For this purpose you will need to provide copies of permissions granted for the use of any copyrighted material that may be within your thesis (see [Section 21](#), under 'copyright'). It is up to you to cover the cost of hard-binding your thesis. However,

you can claim a contribution of £35 towards the cost of DPhil or MSc theses when you submit one final hardbound copy to the Department Librarian.

Further detailed information on the examination process may be found in:

- (i) **the notes of guidance** (<http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/progression>) from the University Graduate Studies Office. You should look at these notes early on during the writing of your thesis and make sure that you are in a position to **submit the on-line form GSO.3** and, if needed, **GSO.3c, also on-line, four to six weeks prior to submitting your thesis.** If you do not submit these forms within the timeline recommended above, do not be surprised if your examination is delayed. In form GSO.3 you are asked to state the date by which you will submit your thesis. It is OK to submit sooner than this date, but you are expected to submit by or very soon after this date. If you do over-run please contact the Research Degrees Exams & Assessment Office so that they are aware.
- (ii) the 'Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division's on-line Graduate Handbook (<https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-for-postgraduate-research-students>). This contains useful sections on the preparation and submission of theses, the appointment of examiners and examination arrangements, and the notification of the results of the viva and the conferring of the degree.
- (iii) the on-line University Examination Regulations, look at chapters on General Regulations Governing Research Degrees, General Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy or General Regulations for the Degree of Master of Science by Research, and Research Degrees in the MPLSD – see <https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk> .

It suffices to note here that for the award of a DPhil you will need not only to have demonstrated a good general knowledge of your research discipline but also **to have made, and presented in a lucid and scholarly manner, a significant and substantial contribution in the particular field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls of a kind which might reasonably be expected of a capable and diligent student after 3 or at most 4 years of full-time study.**

Typically, external examiners will in part interpret as: The D.Phil. thesis exhibits substantial evidence of original scholarship and contains material worthy of publication [in a peer- reviewed international journal].

For the award of an MSc the standard required is that the candidate **should have made, and presented in a lucid and scholarly manner, a worthwhile contribution to knowledge or**

understanding in the field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls of a kind which might reasonably be expected of a capable and diligent student after 2 years of full-time study.

Note the word limits for Materials Science theses (<https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk>) :

- (i) MSc (by Research) 25,000 words;
- (ii) DPhil 40,000 words.

Materials research students are required to state on their GSO.3 form the number of **words** in their thesis. If you leave this entry blank or enter the number of pages instead of the number of words your GSO.3 will be returned to you, thus delaying the appointment of your examiners.

Normally you will submit your GSO.3 application six weeks ahead of the date you submit your thesis and as a consequence may be uncertain of what will be the final word count. In this circumstance you may enter on your GSO.3 form the upper limit for the word count (40,000 words for the DPhil in Materials); this is acceptable because the submitted version of your thesis is not permitted to exceed this word limit unless the DGS has, exceptionally, granted permission in advance to do so.

Only in exceptional circumstances will your supervisor be able to make a case to the Director of Graduate Studies for an increased word limit. There is however no limit on references, diagrams, tables, photographs, computer programmes, etc.

The exact wording in the Exam Regs is:

“Theses submitted by candidates in Materials shall not exceed 25,000 words for the M.Sc. and 40,000 words for the D.Phil., A4 size, double-spaced, but there is no limit on references, diagrams, tables, photographs, computer programmes, etc.”

This means that text in references, diagrams, tables, photographs, computer programmes, etc is excluded from the word count. A caption* forms part of a figure (graph, diagram, photograph, etc) or a table - hence under the above Regulation (which makes no explicit mention of captions) the text in the caption too is excluded from the word count.

*Note: There is no specific restriction on the word count of captions, thus a caption may be whatever length is appropriate for the particular figure or table to which it belongs; however captions should not be excessively long as a result of including detail which normally would be included only in the main text of a thesis or other publication. If in doubt on this last point your supervisor(s) will be able to advise you.

Essentially, the word limit is applied to the ‘main body’ of the thesis - hence the declaration, title page, acknowledgements, and table of contents may be excluded from the word count; it being reasonable to take these as falling within the ‘etc’ of the Regulation.

The abstract too may be excluded from the word count, and has its own approximate word limit:

“The abstract of the thesis should concisely summarize its scope and principal arguments, in about 300 words.”

Materials Science theses must be A4 size and formatted with double line spacing. Further details can be found in document GSO.20a. You are advised to use a font size of Calibri 11, Arial 11 or Times Roman 12.

Some subjects at Oxford permit the submission of a so-called ‘integrated thesis’. This option is **not** permitted for Materials theses.

For the purpose of the examination, you must submit a **digital copy** of your thesis via the ‘Research Thesis Digital Submission’ (RTDS) portal (in addition you are advised to make a soft-bound paper copy of this digital submission for yourself). Normally the thesis is submitted a few weeks after the form GSO.3 for Application for Appointment of Examiners, and no later than the date you indicated in your GSO.3 form. Your soft-bound copy can be printed and bound in the Department. Materials IT Support can offer guidance on the most appropriate way to do this.

Once appointed and given access to your thesis, the internal examiner (usually a senior member of the Department) will contact you to arrange a date for the viva. This date is usually 2-3 months after submission of your thesis, but special arrangements can be made for an early examination if you have good reason to need this. In this case, you should contact the Department’s Graduate Studies Office well in advance of submission to ensure all the paperwork is handled quickly. If you have not heard from your internal examiner four weeks after you were notified of their formal acceptance of the role (or four weeks after you submitted your thesis if it was submitted after said formal acceptance) then you may contact the University’s Research Degrees team (researchdegrees@admin.ox.ac.uk) to seek further information and tracking of progress.

If all goes well at the viva you will be granted ‘leave to supplicate’, a quaint Oxford term dating back to 1691.

In order to have your degree conferred at a graduation ceremony, either in person or in absence, you must submit a digital copy of your thesis to the Oxford University Research Archive (ORA) at <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/> . Information regarding this process can be found at <https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/digitaltheses> and will be sent with your result letter. This rule is adhered to rigorously since the availability of your thesis for consultation is an indispensable element in the University’s contribution to scholarship.

Information on arrangements for submitting a hardbound copy, for the small minority of students who have been granted dispensation from consultation of their entire thesis on a permanent basis, or

whose thesis (or part of the thesis) is in a non-standard format which cannot be submitted electronically is available at <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/research> .

Useful Books:

W E Russey, H F Ebel and C Bliefert, How to Write a Successful Science Thesis (Wiley, 2006);

R Arshady, Science and Medical Style Guide, Volume 1 (Kentuo, 2006);

H Kirkham, R C Dumas, The Right Graph: A Manual for Technical and Scientific Authors (Wiley, 2009).

FINALLY, JUST BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE DEPARTMENT FOR PASTURES NEW (OR START ON A POST-DOC CONTRACT WITH US) IT IS A COMPULSORY REQUIREMENT THAT YOU SUBMIT A HARD COPY THESIS TO THE MATERIALS GRADUATE STUDIES OFFICE (OR GRACE IN THE MATERIALS LIBRARY) FOR DEPOSIT IN THE DEPARTMENT LIBRARY. AT THE SAME TIME WE REQUEST THAT YOU COMPLETE A LEAVER'S FORM: THE INFORMATION IN THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT TO US, INCLUDING INFORMATION ON YOUR ROLE NOW THAT YOU HAVE FINISHED YOUR DOCTORATE.

14. EXTENSIONS OF TIME

Students undertaking a DPhil in Materials are expected to submit their thesis within 3 to 3.5 years of full-time study [2 years for MSc(Res), 4 years for an EPSRC CDT DPhil, and 4 years for projects under the EPSRC Industrial CASE scheme]. As indicated in Section 2 and 3 of this Handbook, if you do not think you will meet this expectation you should arrange to meet with the DGS to discuss your progress. If you are unable to complete your research within the maximum period normally allowed by the University (9 terms for MSc by Research, 12 terms for the DPhil), then you may apply for an extension of time. Approval for extensions will be granted only if you and your supervisor can justify the request. The maximum total periods of extension are up to 6 terms for DPhil candidates and 3 terms for MSc by Research candidates. Students are allowed to apply for a maximum of three terms at any one time. However, it is MPLS policy that where a request for an extension is approved normally this be only one term at a time, so that your progress can be kept under close review.

To make a request to extend you need to complete an on-line form GSO.15, which can be found on the Graduate Progression Forms webpage

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/progression/exceptional?wssl=1> .

You must give full reasons for your request, and these must also be supported in writing by your supervisor and College. On the form you need to indicate the present state of your thesis, ie how much has been completed and how much remains to be done, include a new Gantt Chart which

should contain a timetable for completion and also when you expect to apply for confirmation of status (if this is yet to be done), and the expected submission date for your thesis. Your application must be submitted before your status lapses. See also [Section 20](#) (Continuation Bursaries & Continuation Charges).

15. SUPPORT STRUCTURE

The Department of Materials is a medium-sized, cohesive unit in which you will find support as a graduate student from many quarters, not only from your own immediate research group and supervisor(s). Some of this Departmental support has been outlined already in Sections 2 and 3 of the present Handbook.

In addition you have a second line of support from your College, not only for personal and academic matters, but also often for help with travel, conference attendance and hardship.

In [Appendix VII](#) you will find a list of people in the Department you might need to approach for personal, financial, technical or academic advice; you should have been given access to a corresponding list for your College.

16. FACILITIES

The Department and University provide a range of general facilities to which you will have access during the course of your research:

- Libraries (books, journals, literature searching, study space)
- Mechanical workshop (shared with Engineering) (tools, construction of components)
- 3D Printing
- Heat treatment workshop (furnaces for a variety of needs)
- Specimen preparation (cutting, grinding, polishing)
- Electron microscopes (SEMs, TEMs, microprobes) (<https://www-em.materials.ox.ac.uk>)
- Optical microscopes
- X-ray diffraction facilities
- Stores (supply of chemicals, components, stationery etc.)
- IT Support (hardware, software, modelling, advice and help)
- Digital Print Room (A4/A3 colour printing, scanning, laminating)
- Binding can be carried out via Reception and plastic covers can be obtained from Stores
- A wide range of analytical instruments (see <http://www-omcs.materials.ox.ac.uk>)

- Where appropriate for your research project you may be given access to the University's Advanced Research Computing facilities (<https://www.arc.ox.ac.uk>)

You will find full details of the facilities and how to obtain access and training via the on-line [Materials Information Centre](#) (MIC) and at <http://www-omcs.materials.ox.ac.uk> .

The MIC provides a portal to guidance about the many facilities within the Department such as the library, mechanical workshops, computing facilities, sample preparation facilities, electron/optical microscopes, and other instruments that are available to all graduates – see the MIC entry for “**Research & Equipment**”.

Also covered in the MIC are the procedures needed, for example, in ordering consumables and equipment both from the main stores and from external suppliers, getting logged onto the University Computing network and arranging for work to be carried out in the mechanical workshops. Information and links on how to claim re-imburement for expenses and payment for casual employment such as teaching are included too.

Research students may request access to the facilities in the teaching laboratory. Access should always be arranged in advance with the Teaching Laboratory Technician. Users must provide their own consumables, and supervisors should endorse the request having judged whether or not the researcher is competent in using the necessary equipment. Pre-arranged and planned access should negate the need for out-of-hours access, and access during afternoon undergraduate practicals is actively discouraged. All usage is subject to having satisfied the Teaching Laboratory Technician that adequate training has been received. A well-equipped metallographic outfit, including resources, is available at Begbroke and when access to the teaching laboratory is not possible or convenient suitably trained researchers should use the equipment there.

The provision of appropriate COMPUTING FACILITIES for your particular research project is the responsibility of the individual research group. It is very important that you discuss this provision with your supervisor soon after induction (**in this respect see [Section 25.5](#) of the present Handbook**). Research students may also use the computers in the teaching laboratory computer room, but undergraduates have priority use of this resource. Outline guidance on software (recommendations and availability) can be found on the Departmental website at <http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/local/it/itssoftware.html>, and excellent support and guidance is available on hardware and software both from the Departmental IT Support team (<http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/local/it>) located on the ground floor of the Hume-Rothery Building and also from Oxford University IT Services (<http://www.it.ox.ac.uk>) located beside our 21 Banbury Road laboratories.

17. GAINING TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Some experience of teaching, whether as a Junior Demonstrator in our Teaching Laboratory, as a tutor, or assisting with activities provided for school pupils, is a very useful transferable skill. Also, such teaching is paid work. As part of your skills training you are encouraged to volunteer for teaching and/or outreach duties. Unless your sponsor forbids it, the Department expects its graduate research students to participate in a minimum of 30 hours per annum teaching **if so requested** by the Department. This teaching is paid at standard University rates and is subject to 'right-to-work' checks.

UK students: please note that earnings from sources such as teaching and demonstrating may be taxable and should be aggregated with income from any other employment when assessing income tax liability for a given tax year (your EPSRC maintenance grant is counted as a training award and not normally regarded as income for UK income tax purposes; a small number of exceptions include certain European Commission-funded studentships, where you are paid a salary).

Overseas students: please note that whether or not we are able to employ you will depend on the terms of your visa. In some cases your visa may still permit you to take a teaching role but unpaid.

17.1 JUNIOR DEMONSTRATING IN THE TEACHING LABORATORY

An essential part of the undergraduate courses is practical work which is undertaken in the Teaching Laboratories. This provides an opportunity for graduate students to gain experience of teaching by acting as Teaching Assistants (TA) and at the same time earn a useful supplement to their subsistence grant.

Each year the Department requires about 15 TAs to help with the Undergraduate Practical Classes. The TA appointments are for one year, with the expectation of renewal for a second and perhaps a third year subject to satisfactory performance, and provided the Department continues with the scheme. Students will be remunerated at the appropriate rate **for work done**.

Normally **all** new research students are required to attend our Junior Demonstrating Training Workshop (usually held in MT). This means that you all become eligible to apply for a Practical Course Teaching Assistantship.

Each Teaching Assistant on Practical Class duty will be in the teaching laboratory for, typically, 4-6 afternoons (2.00 - 5.00 pm) for each of two terms. Second year students should ensure that any commitments they agree to do not clash with the 2nd Year Talks in Hilary Term. There will also be

some training time, including a requirement to assist with setting up equipment and a requirement to attend experiment specific training, and to carry out the full experiment and to produce a set of model results. Each TA will be expert in one particular undergraduate practical being carried out during the term. The contract is for up to 120 hours per year, but in most years for most TA's the actual requirement is much less. As ever, good verbal communication skills and a reasonable amount of practical expertise will be essential requirements. You should also have the agreement of your supervisor from whom we will seek a reference. Further details on junior demonstrating can be obtained from the Practical Courses Organiser (in 2025/25 this is Professor Pete Nellist).

17.2 TUTORING

A special feature of undergraduate courses at Oxford is the college tutorial. Every week students prepare work for 1 or 2 tutorials, which they then discuss (usually in pairs or groups of three) with a college tutor. Tutoring undergraduates is valuable experience and an excellent way of consolidating your knowledge. It also provides extra income. If opportunities arise, in an area where you feel confident, you are encouraged to take on a moderate amount of teaching (discuss it with your supervisor). You should be aware though that the ratio of staff and postdoctoral researchers to undergraduates is high in the Materials Department and relatively few postgraduate students actually have the opportunity to act as tutors. If you attend the 'Tutoring Materials Science' Workshop your name will be added to the list of potential tutors that we make available to the Materials Tutorial Fellows at the Colleges.

Some demonstrators are needed for Y1 UG crystallography classes, Y1 UG computing for materials science classes, Y3 UG materials modelling and materials characterisation modules, and some tutors for Y1 & Y2 UG mathematics classes.

Further details (i) on tutoring materials science can be obtained from the Chair of the Tutors' Committee, Professor Robert Weatherup, and (ii) on tutoring Maths Classes from Professor Simon Benjamin.

17.3 TRAINING TO TEACH

A number of training workshops are organized for those new to teaching. Details are announced by e-mail and appear in the termly lecture lists, <http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/teaching/lecturelists.html> .

17.4 SCHOOLS OUTREACH WORK

There are a wide range of opportunities to help with the Department's substantial outreach work to schools: giving short talks, assisting with laboratory-based workshops for school pupils, helping with open days, visiting schools, acting as a student mentor for residential courses held at Oxford, and

acting as a MMM, DM, or STEM Ambassador (see Section 8 of this booklet). We offer training and support to those interested in developing and delivering outreach activities and we are always looking for enthusiastic volunteers. For more details, please contact our Access & Outreach Manager (schools.liaison@materials.ox.ac.uk) at any time in the year and also look out for emails seeking help with specific outreach events.

18. THE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE FOR GRADUATES (JCCG)

The Department of Materials is very interested in receiving feedback and suggestions from its students on everything that impacts their time here. For this reason we have the JCCG, a body through which the postgraduate students have an official voice in the decision making of the Department. The JCCG consists of 2 to 4 student representatives from each year together with a small number of members of staff. Meetings are held once a term (and one in the Long Vacation) and student representatives act as Chair and Deputy Chair. The minutes of the JCCG are then brought to the attention of the senior committees in the Department. The JCCG Chair is a member of and reports each term to our Materials Graduate Studies Committee. It is the aim of the JCCG to provide the Director of Graduate Studies and the hierarchy of the Department with a sounding board to gauge postgraduate opinion as well as to provide postgraduates with a forum to bring up issues concerning the running of our research degree programmes and the many other issues concerning them and the Department.

A similar committee exists for the undergraduate course (JCCU), and both JCCU and JCCG have influenced many decisions of the Department on the course structure and teaching provision, and helped to introduce new initiatives.

One of the roles of the JCCG is to collate feedback on graduate lectures and report this to the lecturers concerned. All the lecturers are asked to circulate questionnaires at the end of their course. The JCCG is keen to obtain your feedback on the courses, and sees the questionnaires as very important, so please make sure you receive, complete and return your forms. Apart from student feedback on graduate lectures, the JCCG organizes an annual questionnaire covering a broad range of subjects such as facilities, course structure and colloquia. However, it is also the intention that the student representatives will raise at the termly meetings any matters or suggestions brought to their attention by other postgraduates. Therefore, your feedback on any aspect of the course is welcome at all times throughout your stay in the Department. Any comments will be brought up at the next JCCG meeting, so feel free to contact any of the representatives. (A full list is given in Appendix VII of this booklet.)

To provide a forum at which (i) your views can be sought and (ii) you can meet and network with research students from other groups, once a week, on Wednesdays at 11.00 am in the Holder Café, and at the same time in the Hirsch Building common area (next to the NanoSIMS) for those at Begbroke, the JCCG organise free coffee and biscuits for all research students.

19. CONFERENCES AND STUDY TRAVEL

(It is **essential** that you refer also to the paragraph on Travel and External Working in [Section 2](#) of this Handbook.)

During the course of your postgraduate studies, it is likely that you will have to travel to a conference or to visit other laboratories as part of a collaborative research programme. The Department is keen that every student should have the opportunity to attend at least one conference in their field of study during the course of their project. We do not expect students to cover the cost of such travel, this being funded instead from grants or other sources. However, this means it is essential that students organise themselves to secure sources of funding **well in advance** of the date of registration and travel, and before any expenditure has been incurred. This of course does not apply to routine travel, such as visits to an industrial sponsor, the costs of which should be included within the grant allocation for the project and are claimed by means of a standard Finance Office travel claim or are covered directly by the sponsor. For pre-authorised expenditure that you pay from personal funds and will then claim reimbursement it is essential that you obtain paper receipts (credit card slips are not accepted by the University Finance Office) and follow exactly the latest procedure required by the University Finance Office.

If you are considering travelling to attend a conference or for a study visit, first consult your supervisor and consider possible sources of funding **several months before you plan to travel**. There are a number of sources to which you can apply for travel funds, including your College, the Institute of Materials (all students are encouraged to join), the Institute of Mechanical Engineers (if you are a member) and the Institute of Physics (if you are a member). Some sources are available for travel to given locations, such as the Sasakawa Fund for study visits to Japan. Your supervisor will be able to advise you on suitable sources of funding.

There are sources of funding, both internal and external (such as the Worshipful Company of Armourers and Brasiers), which are available to graduate students to fund conference and study travel. In 2024/25 grants from the Department will typically be to the value of up to £1,200, and would normally be awarded only once during the period of a programme of study. However, it is also possible to apply more frequently for smaller amounts of money (say, £200) to 'pump-prime' applications to other sources who would be paying the majority of the cost (such as the Sasakawa Fund). **Note that students with earmarked research funding (such as a CASE studentship, project studentship or a government or industrial research grant) are expected to use these sources to cover the cost of travel and conferences and are NOT eligible to apply to the Department.**

Applications for Departmental conference/travel funds should be made at least **SIX WEEKS in advance**, using the specific Department form, a specimen of which is attached as an appendix to this Handbook. The form can be downloaded via the 'Materials: PGR Progression' site. Students will need to obtain the support of their supervisor for the application, and also indicate the other sources of funding they have approached to cover at least some of the cost of travel.

Information on support for members of the Institute of Materials can be found at <http://www.iom3.org/scholarships-grants-and-bursaries>.

Information on support for members of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers can be found at <http://www.imeche.org/membership-registration/become-a-member/associate-member>.

Requests for support from the Armourers and Brasiers' company should be made to The Clerk, Armourers & Brasiers' Company, Armourers Hall, 81 Coleman Street, London, EC2R 5BJ.

Also available at <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding/international> is information on opportunities to study, work and travel abroad.

You might wish to consider attending the "Junior Euromat" conference at some point during your DPhil (<https://www.fems.org>).

You may also be interested in taking a look at the University's online [research funding opportunities database](#) where you will find information about <https://www.researchprofessional.com/0/rr/home>. Much of the information on this site is aimed at post-docs and academics, but some funding for research students is covered too.

Finally, in addition to all of the funding described above, any EPSRC-sponsored students who attended the first-year Presentation Skills Workshop may in their second year apply to the Director of Graduate Studies for a grant of up to £500 from the 'Roberts Skills Training Fund', in order to attend a conference at which they are presenting their work as an oral or poster contribution. Applications should be made using the abovementioned Department form.

20. CONTINUATION BURSARIES, HARDSHIP FUNDS, AND CONTINUATION CHARGES

(a) Materials Continuation Bursaries

As indicated in [Section 2](#) of this handbook, the normal period for completion of a DPhil is 3 or 3½ years, and one of the purposes of the regular project management reviews is to assist in achieving the relevant target. However it sometimes happens that unavoidable or unpredictable delays or problems prevent completion in the allotted time. For this reason the Department has provision to fund a small number of continuation bursaries to assist with living costs during a few months over-run. Note however that the award of such a bursary is an exception: the funds for any one year are sufficient to help only a small fraction of the total number of DPhil students. Normally, a student must have achieved Confirmation of DPhil Status prior to being awarded a Materials Continuation Bursary. **Normally, a student who has been funded for a 3½-year or 4-year project or a 4-year CDT programme will not be eligible for consideration for a continuation bursary (an exception to this rule is where substantial and extended delays, beyond those delays which are a common feature of any research project, have occurred that were outside the control of student and supervisor and could not be mitigated by careful project management).**

If you think that you are likely to over-run you should discuss this with your supervisor, and if necessary the Director of Graduate Studies, **before** your three-year period has ended. The procedure for application for a continuation bursary is as follows:

- (i) The student/supervisor to make best efforts to source matching funds (normal continuation bursaries will be awarded only in exceptional circumstances if matching funds are not offered).
- (ii) A **realistic** timetable for completion, including thesis writing, must be agreed with your supervisor and submitted as a Gantt chart with your application.
- (iii) A formal written letter of application should then be made to the Director of Graduate Studies, emailed as an attachment to the Materials Graduate Studies Office, to include an outline of the reasons your project is over-running, its planned timescale, your agreed completion plan and evidence of the matching funding.
- (iv) Your supervisor should e-mail to the Materials Graduate Studies Office a brief statement for the attention of the DGS to support your application and, in particular, to confirm **explicitly** that your completion plan is realistic. This e-mail should also identify the grant code for any matching funds.

Please note that normally the DGS and Materials GS Office will take no action at all on receipt of an incomplete application for a continuation bursary, so please ensure you address ALL

the requirements outlined above and CHECK with your supervisor that he or she has sent the supporting e-mail.

The rate for a continuation bursary is pro-rata to approximately the lower value of the guidance on living costs range published annually on the University of Oxford Graduate Admissions website, for 2024/25 the figure we use is £16,140 pa and the Department will normally fund up to 3 months (£4,035). Thus with the matching funding a period of **up to** 6 months funded continuation is possible. Regardless of this funding cap your completion plan is expected to be a genuine assessment of the time required for completion - which rarely will be exactly six months.

(b) Oxford Financial Assistance (includes 'Hardship Funds')

In total there is only a relatively small amount of money available within the Collegiate University to help with hardship. See [Oxford Financial Assistance](#) for further information. Your College Office is a key source of advice on some of the sources of hardship funds. Enquiries can also be made to student.funding@admin.ox.ac.uk. The two websites below outline various sources for hardship funds and how to apply.

Oxford Assistance Fund <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding/assistance/oxford/oaf>

College Financial Assistance <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding/assistance/review/colleges>

(c) Continuation Charges

The period of standard course fee liability is six terms for the MSc (by research), nine terms for a standard DPhil programme and twelve terms for an EPSRC CDT 4-year DPhil programme.

If you have not submitted your thesis within the period of standard course fee liability then, subject to the exceptions described in the next two paragraphs, you **will** be liable for both college and University Continuation Charges for each subsequent term.

For MPLS research students the University Continuation Charge for the first three terms after the period of standard fee liability is covered by the Department.

For Materials DPhil students following a programme with a 3-year course fee liability and who are supported by a 3½-year EPSRC-funded studentship the Department will cover your **college** continuation charge for the first two terms (where for this purpose the Long Vacation is counted as a separate 'term' and not as part of Trinity Term) after the period of standard course fee liability.

For those following a programme with a 3-year course fee liability and who are supported by a 4-year EPSRC-funded studentship the Department will cover your **college** continuation charge for the first three terms after the period of standard course fee liability.

Continuation charge rates can be found at

<http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding/fees/liability/graduate-continuation-charge>.

21. PLAGIARISM, REFERENCING AND COPYRIGHT (Including a note from the University's Education Committee)

This information can be applied to all aspects of assessment during the course. You are required to make yourself familiar with, and ensure you understand what is plagiarism during your first year and before you submit your Literature Review.

In their **Disciplinary Regulations for Candidates in Examinations (see below)**, the University's Proctors and Assessor draw attention to three extremely important disciplinary regulations for all students:

"3. No candidate shall cheat or act dishonestly, or attempt to do so, in any way, whether before, during or after an examination, so as to obtain or seek to obtain an unfair advantage in an examination. Examples include unauthorised use of artificial intelligence.

4. Candidates shall submit their own work for examination. No candidate shall plagiarise by presenting work from another source as their own, or by incorporating work or ideas from another source into their own work without full acknowledgement. Examples of this practice include: verbatim quotation, cutting and pasting from the internet, and paraphrasing without clear acknowledgement; collusion; misleading citation; failure to acknowledge assistance; and unacknowledged use of material written by professional agencies or other persons, or material generated by artificial intelligence.

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

Section 7.7 of the University [Student Handbook](#) States:

All students must carefully read the [Proctors' Disciplinary Regulations for University Examinations](#), which make clear that:

- **you must indicate to the examiners when you have drawn on the work of others, using quotation marks and references in accordance with the conventions of your subject area**
- **you must not present as your own work material generated by AI**
- **other people’s original ideas and methods should be clearly distinguished from your own**
- **the use of other people’s words, illustrations, diagrams etc. should be clearly indicated regardless of whether they are copied exactly, paraphrased or adapted**
- **material you have previously submitted for examination, at this University or elsewhere, or published previously examined material cannot be re-used.**

Failure to acknowledge your sources by clear citation and referencing constitutes plagiarism. The University’s description of plagiarism should be read carefully. That description includes a link to the University’s online course about understanding what plagiarism is, and how to avoid it. **You are strongly advised to complete the course*.**

[*DGS Note: The abovementioned description of plagiarism and link to the on-line course are available at <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism>]

The University has the right to use software, and routinely does so, in order to screen submitted work for matches either to published sources or to other submitted work.

Any unauthorised use of AI during assessment constitutes cheating and plagiarism under University rules, penalties for which include failing the exam and, in appropriate cases, expulsion. Any use of AI during assessment is unauthorised unless you are specifically told differently in advance of the assessment by your department (e.g. Computer Science assessments involving use of AI). Work submitted for assessment and open book exam responses may be screened for matches either to published sources or to other submitted work. Any matches might indicate plagiarism, collusion or use of AI.

Although you are permitted to use resources published electronically in academic work, remember that the plagiarism regulations apply to online material and other digital material just as much as they do to printed material.

Guidance about the use of source materials and the preparation of written work is given in departments’ literature and is explained by tutors and supervisors. If you are unsure how to take notes, use web-sourced material or of acceptable practice when writing your work, please ask for advice.

Under UK legislation, providing or using professional essay writing services, or 'essay mills', is now a criminal offence. Students have also been advised that using these services directly contravenes the University's code of conduct. If students are found to be using professional writing services, passing off other people's work as their own, or unauthorised AI, they should expect to face disciplinary action.

Find out more about plagiarism on the Oxford Students website at

<http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism> .

If examiners believe that submitted material may be plagiarised they will refer the matter to the Proctors' Office. The result for the assessment (and any other elements for the same assessment unit) will be pended while an investigation is carried out (which can include an interview with the student). If the Proctors consider that a breach of the disciplinary regulations has occurred, they can determine the penalty themselves in suitable cases or refer the matter to the Student Disciplinary Panel (**which can in the most serious cases expel the student**).

Guidance from the University's Education Committee defines plagiarism as:

"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."

Further guidance from the University's Education Committee can be found at

<http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism> and within its associated resources menu. This webpage includes a link to an on-line training course on how to avoid plagiarism.

Some Brief Guidance on Avoiding Plagiarism and Related Topics

Text

Take great care when referring to the work of others. Not only are published words and computer code subject to plagiarism, but ideas and opinions can be plagiarised too. You should not allow the opinions and conclusions of others to appear to be your own or to be confused with your own criticism.

If a body of text, for example a sentence or paragraph, is recognisably derived from prior work, albeit with some changes made by you, you MUST reference the original work and may also need to use quotation marks for some of the text.

An extract from Stone IC & Tsakiroopoulos P, Materials Science and Engineering A, Vol.189 (1994) 285-290:

“The peak-aging time of Al-4wt.%Cu, aged at 463 K, was not altered by the addition of 20 wt.%SiCp. The particle size of the reinforcement and the matrix to reinforcement particle-size ratio did not affect the peak-aging time. This implies that, on a bulk scale, aging is not affected by the spatial distribution of the reinforcement, although it is likely to be affected locally.”

Here is one example of the use of this extract:

Stone and Tsakiroopoulos studied the aging of metal matrix composites based on Al-4wt%Cu containing 20wt% SiC particles [Stone & Tsakiroopoulos, 1994]. The peak-aging time of Al-4wt.%Cu, aged at 463 K, was not altered by the addition of 20 wt.%SiCp. The particle size of the reinforcement and the matrix to reinforcement particle-size ratio did not affect the peak-aging time. This implies that, on a bulk scale, aging is not affected by the spatial distribution of the reinforcement, although it is likely to be affected locally.

The first sentence is fine and is properly referenced. However the rest is plagiarised because (i) it is **directly copied** from the original without being identified as a quote and (ii) the author has not attributed the opinion in the fourth sentence to the original authors.

A second example:

Stone and Tsakiroopoulos studied the aging of metal matrix composites based on Al-4wt%Cu containing 20wt% SiC particles [Stone & Tsakiroopoulos, 1994]. They showed

that the addition of the reinforcing particles had no effect on the time for peak aging of the matrix at 463K. The implication of this is that whilst aging is likely to be affected locally by the dispersion of the particles, it is not affected macroscopically by the spatial distribution of the reinforcement.

This example is an improvement because the second sentence is now attributed to the original authors. The opinion in the final sentence is still plagiarised. This final sentence could be improved by

The authors concluded that the implication of this is that whilst aging is likely to be affected locally by the dispersion of the particles, it is not affected macroscopically by the spatial distribution of the reinforcement. This is a sensible conclusion.

because whilst the new author agrees with the original opinion/conclusion they have not passed it off as their own. A belt and braces approach might be:

The authors concluded, "This implies that, on a bulk scale, aging is not affected by the spatial distribution of the reinforcement, although it is likely to be affected locally" [Stone & Tsakiroopoulos, 1994]. This is a sensible conclusion.

Quite often you will be not simply referring to a single piece of published work, but comparing & contrasting several reports of relevance to a particular point in your own document and then offering your own considered opinion on this previous work and/or comparing it with your own data and conclusions. The principles illustrated above in respect of Stone & Tsakiroopoulos of course still apply to this more complicated case and in addition it is necessary to separately identify each contribution, for example:

It has been reported by two groups that the time for peak aging of the matrix at aging temperatures in the range 460-475K is not affected by the addition of reinforcing particles [Stone & Tsakiroopoulos (1994), Bloggs & Jones (1997)]. Although a more recent study did observe an apparent influence of the reinforcing particles [Smith (2006)], in the present work we have been unable to reproduce this effect, our data being fully consistent with the original work of Stone & Tsakiroopoulos. It seems likely that the results reported by Smith were an artefact of the analytical method that they adopted, such artefacts having been observed by others in related studies of a series of Al-Cu-Mg alloys [Jones et al (1999)].

Collaborative Work & Published Work

If your thesis includes collaborative work, whether or not this has been published as a co-authored paper and irrespective of whether or not you are the first author of such a paper, you **MUST** make it clear in the thesis which parts of the collaborative work are your own original contributions* and which are those of others. There must be no ambiguity whatsoever in what are **your own original contributions**. It is **not** sufficient to simply mention (i) collaborative work within the acknowledgments page of your thesis and/or (ii) published work for which you are a sole or co-author in a list of such work at the beginning of your thesis; such work must be identified at the places in the thesis where it appears.

*By contributions we mean all aspects of the thesis; including introduction, literature review, methods, data, figures & tables of all kinds, analyses, critical discussion, opinions and conclusions.

The default is simple: other than content (for example a sentence, paragraph or figure) which is clearly and unambiguously identified either as the work of others or as joint work, the content of your thesis is by definition presented by you as being solely* your own work.

*It is of course understood that your responsible supervisor and any formally appointed co-supervisors will have advised you in the development of your original contributions.

If work reported in your thesis has been published or submitted for publication you must reference the publication at all relevant places in your thesis, even if you are the sole author of the publication.

When you apply for the appointment of examiners (on-line form GSO.3) you are required to state either "I confirm that the thesis I am submitting is wholly my own work" or "My thesis contains parts that were completed in collaboration and I have uploaded a document that details the affected areas with this application for examination". In the latter case the document is uploaded as an integral part of your GSO.3 application. This uploaded document is **additional** to the abovementioned proper use of referencing and clear indication of the contributions of collaborators at appropriate places within your thesis.

Figures, Artwork and Computer Code

Figures too are a potential source of plagiarism. Likewise computer code. If you use somebody else's computer code, diagram, graph, photograph or other artwork without acknowledging the original source then you are guilty of plagiarism (and possibly also of breach of copyright). If you use a figure from elsewhere then you should cite the original reference in the figure caption and in the associated body text. Even if you redraw a figure then you should still refer to the original source, e.g. [redrawn from Jones et al, 2006]. If you use a collection of data from other works to create a

completely new figure (eg a graph to show a trend arising from a collection of data from several sources) then you must acknowledge the original data sources.

Copyright

If you wish to use artwork (this includes drawings, images, graphs and other figures etc) in a publication that is “communicated to the public” (including your thesis or material placed on an ‘ox-only’ website) you **MUST** seek permission from the copyright holder(s). A hard-copy thesis that is for examination purposes only is exempt from this rule but, since (i) such theses have to be deposited with the Bodleian and the British Library, who make them available to readers, and in particular (ii) you are required to deposit an e-thesis with the Oxford University Research Archive, you will not normally be able to take advantage of this exemption. For articles in journals the copyright holder is usually the publisher, although it is professional courtesy to ask the lead author too. Seeking permission from most publishers is a fairly painless task these days, usually achieved by completing a simple web-form. See for example <http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/> and <https://www.elsevier.com/about/policies/copyright>. You will then receive a certificate of permission from the publisher. Keep these permissions in a safe place – you will need to provide copies when you make the mandatory deposit of your e-thesis with the Oxford University Research Archive. Where web-based application for permission to use material in a thesis is not available you should e-mail the publisher, or other copyright holder, directly to seek such permission.

Why is referencing important?

Quite apart from the need to avoid plagiarism because of the danger that this may invalidate a piece of assessed work and/or lead to some other penalty, there are a number of other good reasons for the internationally accepted practice of using references in a factual document:

- (i) It is a simple professional courtesy to a fellow scientist who has laboured long & hard to generate the work to which you are referring.
- (ii) It enables the reader to verify the statements that you are making, to make his/her own judgements on both the conclusions that you report from the referenced work and the judgements that you make on this work, and of course to learn more about the detail of the original work.
- (iii) Your work is strengthened by its reference to respected authorities in a given field; as scientists we all build our work ‘on the shoulders of giants’.

- (iv) It enables the reader to identify very clearly what are your own original contributions to the matters discussed. Since these contributions will undoubtedly be erudite and valuable, you will want the world to know that they are yours and to be able to give you credit for them when your work is referenced in the future!

Further information on referencing can be found at

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/referencing>

The two main referencing systems are Harvard (author name, year of publication) and Vancouver (numbered sequentially in order of use). Whichever system you decide to use, good practice dictates that references should include (depending on publication type): authors, title of book or article, title of journal or other work, name of conference, place of publication, date of publication, publisher and page numbers. The conventions for citing internet resources include URL and date accessed. Your responsible supervisor will be able to provide further guidance. Where material available on the internet is taken from prior published work you must always reference the original source(s) and, if appropriate, the internet resource too.

See also <https://odoc.princeton.edu/curriculum/academic-integrity> .

22. UNIVERSITY POLICY ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Intellectual property (IP) is intangible property that is the result of creativity and innovation and which can be owned in a similar way to physical property. Examples of intellectual property rights (IPRs) include copyright, patents, and trademarks. You can find out more about intellectual property via the Research Support webpage <https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/innovation> .

In the University context, IP can be viewed as the results and outcomes of research. As with other property, there may be commercial value in IP, which may be realised via various routes including licensing or selling intellectual property rights. [Oxford University Innovation](#), the University's technology transfer company, are responsible for assisting Oxford University researchers to protect and commercialise their IP.

The University of Oxford has in place arrangements governing the ownership and exploitation of intellectual property generated by students and researchers in the course of, or incidental to, their studies. These arrangements are set out in the University's Statutes 2002 under which the University claims ownership of certain forms of intellectual property which students may create. The main provisions in the Statutes are as follows.

The University does not claim ownership of intellectual property created by student members of the University as defined in Statute II (broadly this refers to students on degree courses who are members of a college), other than in specific circumstances. The most usual of these circumstances are that the University may claim ownership to intellectual property which is made:

- jointly with someone else where the University is entitled to claim ownership of that person's intellectual property
- using University facilities or equipment
- in circumstances where the University's obligation to a third party require it to claim ownership of intellectual property (e.g. under the terms of a contract or a grant)
- using funding from the University
- where the intellectual property is created by a student while they are also acting as an employee or contractor for the University.

For other students (including non-matriculated, visiting, recognised and exchange students) the University may claim ownership of certain forms of intellectual property created during your study or research at the University although this will not usually include copyright.

There are also arrangements in the University's regulations for protecting and exploiting intellectual property and sharing the commercial exploitation revenues with the student

originators. The related regulations for the administration of the policy explain the approved arrangements for revenue-sharing.

The main statute governing intellectual property is Statute XVI, Part B, to which you should refer for full details. The Statutes and Regulations, as they relate to the University's IP policy, together with regulations for the administration of the IP policy, may be found in full on the University website via <https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/innovation/ip/policy>

23. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Oxford University is a world-leading centre of learning, teaching and research and is committed to providing a high quality educational experience, fully supported by academic and administrative services and facilities, to all of our students. However, we recognise that occasionally things can go wrong. Therefore, if you have a concern the following information provides guidance on what steps can be taken and who the best person to approach would be.

MPLS Division Guidance for research students on making a complaint and/or an academic appeal (MPLS GSC Hilary Term 2022, weblinks updated Oct 2024)

The guidance below sets out what students should do if they want to raise a complaint or make an academic appeal, and who would be the best person to approach. The University's [academic appeals and complaints procedure](#) is designed to ensure that complaints are properly investigated and are given careful and fair consideration. This document supplements the institutional policy by setting out the approach taken within MPLS for local resolution at departmental level.

Definitions

- A **complaint** can be made in relation to:
 - University administrative and support services (including departmental facilities and central facilities such as libraries, counselling, etc.)
 - University academic services and support (departmental teaching, supervision etc.)
- An **academic appeal** is an appeal against the decision of an academic body in terms of whether the procedures were followed properly, errors were made, or the process was biased in some way.

For the remainder of this document, it is assumed that a complaint is being raised. The process for academic appeals is similar, although the timeframes are different. See University guidance on [academic appeals](#) for more information.

Process:

When raising concerns to the University please ensure that you have read the [complaints procedure](#) carefully. The University aims to resolve straightforward complaints as quickly as possible using local resolution. The University Student Complaint procedure is divided into three parts:

Stage 1 is a local resolution managed where the complaint has arisen

Stage 2 is consideration by one of the University Proctors

Stage 3 is a review of the Proctor's decision by a Review panel member.

Each stage must be completed before you can move on to the next stage. Both stage 2 and stage 3 are managed by the Proctors' Office.

Stage 1: Local (Departmental) Resolution

1. Where appropriate, often the simplest way to achieve a satisfactory resolution is to have an informal discussion with the person immediately responsible for the issue that you wish to complain about. If you do not feel comfortable raising the matter with this person then you should speak or write to the relevant person below.

I. Who to contact to raise a concern/complaint:

If your concern or complaint relates to:

- a) **teaching, supervision or other provision made by the Department**, then you should raise it with the Department's Director of Graduate Studies for on-course provision (DGS).
 - b) **departmental facilities** it should be made to the Department's Head of Administration & Finance (HAF).
 - c) **general areas of concern about provision affecting the Department's students as a whole** should be raised through the Materials Joint Consultative Committee for Graduate Students (JCCG) or via student representation on an appropriate committee of the Department.
 - d) **teaching or other provision made by your college**, you should raise it with either the Tutor for Graduates or the Senior Tutor. Your college will also be able to explain how to take your complaint further if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of its consideration.
2. If you feel unable to approach one of those individuals, for example, if your complaint is against the person who would be the normal contact, you may contact the Head of Department at head.department@materials.ox.ac.uk (please include the word CONFIDENTIAL in the subject line of your email).
 3. If you are unsure who would be the best person to contact about your complaint, you should contact the Department's Head of Administration & Finance (HAF) at head.administrationandfinance@materials.ox.ac.uk who will be able to advise you (please include the word CONFIDENTIAL in the subject line of your email).
 4. The person dealing with the complaint will attempt to resolve your concern/complaint informally or refer to another member of staff who is better placed to deal with it. If they refer it to another member of staff you will be informed of the person who is dealing with the complaint.
 5. If the designated person who would normally handle the complaint is on annual leave for a long period or on sick leave, please contact the Department's Education Manager (Ms Philippa Moss) for advice on to whom the complaint should be referred.

Complaint Confidentiality:

6. Your complaint will be handled confidentially. This means that people should not be told about your complaint unless there is a good reason, such as those who need to be told for the purposes of investigating or responding to the complaint or academic appeal. No third party should be told any more about the investigation than is strictly necessary.
7. Confidentiality does not imply anonymity. It will usually be the case that the department will need to disclose information to others, including the person (or persons) who are the subject of the complaint. This is likely to include informing them of your identity as the person who made the complaint.
8. You should be informed by the person dealing with the complaint who will be told about your complaint. You are entitled to object to information being shared with certain people, but should be aware that this may limit what action the department can take. E.g. it is not usually possible for a department to take a complaint forwards without giving the person who is the subject of the complaint an opportunity to respond to any allegations made against them.
9. Anonymous complaints will only be considered in very exceptional cases, where there is a compelling reason to do so. Raising a concern anonymously might impede the investigation and communication of the outcome.
10. All parties involved in a Complaint are required to act reasonably and fairly towards each other and to respect the University's procedures. No one investigating a Complaint should have any conflict of interest in the matter.

II. When to raise your complaint:

11. Complaints should normally be raised as soon as possible and no later than three months of the matter arising. It is acknowledged that in some cases there is not always a clear point at which the matter arose, e.g. where a complaint is being made about supervision over a period of time. However, it is still important that complaints are made as soon as possible, as this gives the maximum opportunity for a satisfactory resolution to be reached.
12. For academic appeals these should be made within five working days of when you were notified of the academic decision which you are appealing.
13. It is important to remember that there is a time limit of three months for a complaint to be referred to the [Proctors](#) for consideration.
 - a) If a complaint is raised very close to the three month time limit and there will not be sufficient opportunity for the department to investigate, the department will notify the Proctors' Office of the complaint and seek advice on how to proceed.
14. A complaint that is raised outside of the three month time limit will be 'out of time' for consideration, and will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, e.g. where you are able to demonstrate clearly that you were unable to make the complaint sooner and within the three month time frame.
15. If there has been some delay with your complaint being investigated you are entitled to refer your complaint to the Head of Department. If the Head of Department is the person already dealing with your complaint please contact the Division for advice (graduate.studies@mpls.ox.ac.uk).

III. Timescales and investigation steps

16. Once you have raised your complaint an acknowledgement will be sent to you as soon as possible and within five working days. The acknowledgement will include information on who will be dealing with the complaint and, if possible, provide an indication of preliminary steps and timeframe.
17. Your department should keep a written record of the complaint, but you are advised to keep your own records and to keep a copy of any written information sent to you at every stage of the process.
 - a) If the complaint has been made in writing, the department will clarify any ambiguities in the written complaint with you. It may be appropriate to conduct an initial meeting with you so that all parties are clear what the complaint is about.
 - b) If the complaint has been made orally, the department will **either** summarise the complaint in writing and will send it to you as soon as possible with a request to clarify anything they may have misunderstood **or** ask you to put this complaint into writing.
 - c) If there are any inconsistencies or points that you do not agree with in any written communication you should note this in writing to the person dealing with the complaint as soon as possible.
18. If any meetings are scheduled to discuss the matter you are entitled to be accompanied by someone, e.g. a friend, your college advisor. You should notify the department of anyone who is going to accompany you and their relationship to you.
19. You will be contacted within ten working days of the complaint being made to update you on progress. The information will explain:
 - a) Who is investigating the complaint and why this person is dealing with the complaint, e.g. they are the person responsible for dealing with student complaints of this type.
 - b) What the department is going to do to investigate the complaint.
 - c) How long it is expected to take, including when you should expect the next update.
20. The department will investigate the complaint, and gather any relevant information/evidence.

- a) You may be asked to provide evidence to substantiate the issues raised, where possible. The department will set out the types of evidence that may be required. This may include independent medical evidence, reports by professionals, financial information or witness statements, etc.
 - b) The department will also gather any other relevant evidence from formal records, e.g. eVision, GSR, published information.
 - c) The department may ask other parties to the complaint to give their perspective. However, before doing so, the department will inform you who is going to be made aware of the complaint prior to any information being disclosed. This may be in writing or meeting in person. If meeting in person, they will keep a record of what was said for the purpose of the investigation.
 - i) If you object to information being disclosed to someone who is required for the complaint to proceed, the department may not be able to continue investigating the complaint or it may limit the action that can be taken (see complaint confidentiality section above).
 - ii) All concerns raised are taken seriously and any information provided by yourself and other parties will be treated fairly.
 - iii) Where other parties' accounts have been provided these may conflict with what you have presented but will also be taken seriously and given consideration.
21. Once all investigations have been completed you will be written to setting out how the issue has been considered or how it will be resolved.
22. If you feel that your concerns have not been resolved, you can take the matter to the Proctors' under [stage 2](#) of the University Student Complaints Procedure. As part of this complaint you will need to show what steps you have taken to try and resolve your complaint at a locally level, and include any relevant evidence/documentation.

IV. Sources of Advice and Guidance:

23. Many sources of advice are available from colleges, 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 any of these sources before pursuing your complaint.

<p>Within the Department:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor • Director of Graduate Studies • Head of Department • Graduate Office • Academic Administrator • Harassment Officers • Disability Coordinator 	<p>Within your College:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Tutor • College Advisor • Tutor for Graduate Studies • College Doctor • Chaplain • Dean 	<p>Across the University:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Counselling Service http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling • Oxford University Student Union Student Advice Service https://www.oxfordsu.org/advice-wellbeing/ • Nightline http://oxfordnightline.org/ • University Harassment Advisor network https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/harassment • Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/supportservice?wssl=1 • MPLSD Resolution Service https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/divisional-support-and-services/mpls-resolution-service • Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Contacts https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/networks-and-contacts
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24. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE: MISUSE OF ICT FACILITIES BY RESEARCH STUDENTS

(Further details provided during the IT briefing)

1st Offence: Referral to the DGS for on-course provision following investigation by the Department's IT Manager. If the offence is confirmed a written warning will be issued by the DGS. This will be placed on file and copied to the Supervisor(s) and the Dean/Senior Tutor for Graduate Students at the offender's college (it will include a reminder of the consequences of a 2nd offence). Also the Department's IT Manager will present to the offender a detailed verbal reminder of the University ICTC Regulations. In addition the Department reserves the right to (i) require surrender to the Department's IT staff of the offending PC (for the removal of prohibited software), (ii) to require the student to pay any administration charge imposed by IT Services in relation to the offence, and (iii) in the case of infringements judged to be more serious to report the matter for action by the Proctors and to withdraw access to ICT facilities pending a Proctorial investigation.

2nd Offence: Referral to the Proctors. Pending an investigation, access to ICT facilities may be withdrawn or made subject to such conditions as the Proctors shall think proper in the circumstances. In addition the Department reserves the right to require the student to pay any administration charge imposed by IT Services in relation to the offence. The Supervisor(s) and the Dean/Senior Tutor for Graduate Students at the offender's college will be informed of the referral to the Proctors.

25. GENERAL

25.1 DATES OF TERM

A list of term dates for 2024-25 can be found on the website and also the provisional dates for subsequent academic years. These can be found at <http://www.ox.ac.uk/about/facts-and-figures/dates-of-term>.

25.2 STUDENT HOLIDAYS AND WORKING HOURS

The Department of Materials policy is as follows: You should agree any days off in the working week (Monday-Friday) with your supervisor. As a minimum you are entitled to take six weeks leave per year plus bank holidays (8 days); the six weeks to include periods of fixed closure for the Department (at Christmas and Easter, 6 days in total). You must also inform your College about holiday dates. Keep a record of the days you have taken as holiday.

Standard DPhil working hours, defined by the MPLS Division for all of its full-time research students, are an average of **40 hours of focussed, quality work time per week** (this excludes extended coffee breaks and non-work internet surfing, for example).

Should you voluntarily work for longer hours than this you are strongly advised normally not to exceed the UK Government's Working Hours Directive of a maximum average working week of no more than 48 hours, when averaged over a 17 week period (<https://www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours>).

See also the MPLS website under "Your rights and responsibilities" which can be found at <http://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/study/currentpostgraduates/information-for-postgraduate-research-students/your-rights-and-responsibilities>. At this webpage you will find a link to the [MPLS Division Policy on DPhil working hours and holidays](#).

25.3 PAID WORK (including Consultancy), AD HOC INTERNSHIPS AND INTERNSHIPS THAT ARE INTEGRAL TO YOUR RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMME

For the purpose of this section the terms 'paid work' and 'unpaid work' exclude the time you spend studying and conducting research for your degree.

You should not normally undertake more than about 264* hours of paid work per annum, including teaching and outreach, for each year while you are studying full time for a Materials research degree.

*based on an average of six hours per week for forty-four working weeks per annum.

If you are enrolled on a **part-time** basis the guidance above applies pro-rata to that part of each working week in which you are engaged with your research degree studies. Thus for a 50%fte part-time enrolment, you should not normally undertake more than about 132* hours of paid work per annum, including teaching and outreach, for each year while you are studying part-time for a Materials research degree. Of course, for the 50% (on average) of each working week for which you are **not** engaged with your research degree studies the guidance does not apply.

*based on an average of three hours per week for forty-four 50%fte working weeks per annum.

In addition, if you are a 'visa national' you must ensure any paid or unpaid work you undertake is within the limitations imposed by your visa. See [Working While Studying](#) .

NOTE: If you have a Student Visa to study a course **part-time** you are not allowed to engage in any paid or unpaid work.

In principle paid work could include consultancy. If you wish to engage in consultancy then you should seek your supervisor's permission. Clearly such consultancy must not conflict with the topic(s) of your DPhil or MSc(R) project, and must be acceptable to any sponsor of your full-time DPhil project. You are strongly advised to conduct such consultancy under the auspices, and with the support, of Oxford University Innovation Ltd (<http://innovation.ox.ac.uk>).

On occasion, other than internships which are an integral* part of your DPhil programme (for example EPSRC DTP-CASE-Conversion and iCASE studentships), valuable opportunities may arise to take up an *ad hoc* internship (for example with an industrial company, business organisation or UK Government body).

*For integral internships please see the penultimate paragraph of the present section of the Handbook.

If you are considering such an internship you will need the permission of your Responsible Supervisor and must consult with the DGS and your College at an early stage and before committing to the internship. For a single internship of up to 3 months that is clearly beneficial to your career development or indirectly to your DPhil project, the Department normally will be supportive provided you have transferred status to DPhil and are progressing well with your DPhil project. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Department approve either more than one internship or an internship of duration longer than three months.

Should you choose to take up an *ad hoc* internship it is wholly your responsibility to satisfy yourself that adequate Health & Safety policies & procedures are in place at your host organisation. You are advised too to ensure that all appropriate insurances are in place including those to cover both liability **of** the intern and liability **to** the intern (for example in the case of a work-related injury). If you are a 'visa national' you should also check any implications taking up an internship might have for your visa.

Before accepting an offer of an internship you are strongly advised to seek independent advice from a licensed insurance broker in respect of appropriate (i) liability insurance (including cover for work-place accidents), (ii) health insurance, and (iii) travel insurance.

Before signing an Agreement, Contract or similar document with a Company offering you an internship you are strongly advised to seek independent legal advice from a solicitor or other legal expert.

If a company asks you to sign a document regarding the IP involved in your internship you must first check with your Responsible Supervisor at Oxford that this does not impact on any potential IP associated with your Materials research project.

Normally, the Department will **not** be able to approve an **ad hoc** internship for which the host requires the University (including a member of its staff) to sign an Agreement or equivalent document with the company. The exception to this is an agreement that covers only IP matters.

To avoid disappointment and unnecessary work, please check on any such requirements with a prospective host early on in your discussions with them and definitely **before** you take forward any formal arrangements associated with the internship.

Normally for an *ad hoc* internship it will be a requirement of approval by the Department for you to suspend studies (and suspend any stipend from a studentship) for the period of the internship. The DGS will advise you.

Normally internships must be arranged to commence on or near to the start of an Oxford Term or the start of the 'Long Vacation'.

You will need to check the implications of suspending status (i) with your funding body (or if an EPSRC-funded student with the DGS), (ii) on your visa status, and (iii) on your liability to pay Council Tax.

Once you have considered the guidance given above and discussed with your responsible supervisor your desire to undertake an ad hoc internship you must seek official permission via the MPLS Division to undertake an internship; to do this you complete the on-line [MPLS Internship form](#) (when completing this form you will be prompted to upload a form completed by your supervisor – a copy of this supervisor form can be downloaded via a link on page one of the MLPLS Internship form).

If your internship is an integral part of your research degree programme, for example if you are funded by an EPSRC iCASE studentship or an EPSRC DTP-CASE-Conversion studentship you must seek official permission via the MPLS Division to undertake the internship; to do this you complete the on-line [MPLS Internship form](#) (when completing this form you will be prompted to upload a form completed by your supervisor – a copy of this supervisor form can be downloaded via a link on page one of the MLPLS Internship form).

Note: you must inform your College about the internship and the dates when you will be away from Oxford. It may be that you will be either asked to leave your College accommodation during the internship or to pay for both College accommodation as well as accommodation elsewhere whilst undertaking the internship.

25.4 NATIONAL INSURANCE (NI) and UK INCOME TAX

If you're not working and you intend to live permanently in the UK, you can make voluntary National Insurance contributions. This protects your National Insurance record and ensures you receive a full pension when you retire. However, check with the Inland Revenue whether this is worthwhile in your case. Visit Gov.uk for more information about [voluntary contributions](#) .

Any research student who starts working in the UK while a student (including any form of teaching at Oxford) must apply for a [National Insurance Number](#) (NINo). A NINo is an individual account number used for recording National Insurance and tax contributions from your pay. If you are thinking about starting work you can apply for a NINo before you get a job. To get a NINo you need to [apply online from the government website](#). After you apply, you will receive an email with your application reference number and the email will tell you if you need to provide further proof of your identity. It can take up to 4 weeks to get your NINo after you have proved your identity.

You will be liable for [UK income tax](#) on employment earnings above the specified personal allowance set each year. Your employer will deduct this from your wages and show the amount on your wage slip. If you pay too much tax, you will be able to claim a refund.

If you hold a studentship or scholarship, normally your maintenance grant (stipend) is counted as a training award and is not regarded as income for UK income tax purposes; a small number of exceptions include certain European Commission-funded studentships, where you are paid a salary).

25.5 PERSONAL COMPUTING FACILITIES

It is the policy of the MPLS Division that all departments will ensure PGR students have access to adequate personal computing resources to enable them to work effectively on their projects. The computing facilities provided will necessarily vary from department to department and group to group, dictated by specific needs for that group and the tools required.

You should discuss with your supervisor(s) what computing facilities are available to you. Subject to review by the Department's IT Manager, the Department will provide up to £1,200 for the purchase of a computer and associated hardware (a larger amount may be spent for this purpose if you are engaged on a theory or computational modelling project since your research consumables needs will be lower). The equipment is ordered by the Department's IT Manager after he has reviewed your request. Normally when you have completed your research degree the computer remains the property of the Department. If you are unhappy with your computing provision you should let your

supervisors know and if this issue is not resolved satisfactorily you could either speak to members of the JCCG to compare your provision with other students and/or discuss the issue with the Director of Graduate Studies. You should also discuss with your supervisors the possibility of purchasing appropriate software, BUT ONLY IF THIS IS NOT AVAILABLE FROM OTHER SOURCES – in the first instance you should take a look at the Materials website at

<https://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/local/it/software.html> and then discuss the issue with the Department's IT Manager.

25.6 BASELINE RESEARCH COSTS ALLOWANCE

This allowance is currently £3,000 per research student over the 3 to 4 year period of a DPhil. Expenditure must be authorised by your supervisor. This sum does **not** include the approximately £1,200 conference allowance or the up to £1,200 allowance for the purchase of a personal computer and associated hardware. The baseline research costs allowance is funded from one of three sources depending on your main funding source, namely the EPSRC DTP, the Department, or part of a (often larger) research costs allowance from another sponsor.

25.7 EXTENSION OF VISAS

All new overseas DPhil students will have a visa which is valid for 4.5 years. If your research project is delayed or you have ill health and subsequently your project overruns, you may require a visa extension. Information about visa extensions can be found at <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/during/extend> .

Students who are required to have an ATAS certificate should contact graduate.studies@materials.ox.ac.uk , no later than **three months** before their original visa expires.

Students who are **not** required to have an ATAS certificate should contact graduate.studies@materials.ox.ac.uk , at least six weeks before their original visa expires (eight weeks before if the expiry date falls within the period 1st August to 31st October). Make sure that you request your CAS number in good time before you need to make your visa application. This is because we need to contact both your supervisor and College to seek relevant information for the extension. It may also take Student Immigration several days to issue the CAS. The CAS number will be e-mailed direct to you when it is ready.

Please be aware that renewal applications can be made no more than 3 months in advance from your current visa expiry date.

NOTE: information for the CAS application is taken from the student database (e-Vision system). If you have renewed your passport it is vital to update your passport information. If you have difficulties then let graduate.studies@materials.ox.ac.uk know the new passport number and the new expiry date so that the student database can be updated BEFORE a CAS number is requested. If you have failed to update your address details this could delay the process whilst a new CAS request is prepared. Please ensure that you maintain the correct address and other details on the Student Self-Service system; this is a requirement for overseas students during your stay in the UK under UK Immigration Rules.

25.8 STAYING IN THE UK TO WORK AFTER COMPLETING YOUR RESEARCH DEGREE

If you are interested in staying in the UK to work after your course you will need to apply for the right type of visa permission to do so. The [After your Studies](#) webpage gives an overview of some of the options available. One of these options is the 'Graduate Route', which was introduced in 2021. Note that the timing of a Graduate Route application is critical – make sure that you read the guidance in advance of submitting your thesis.

25.9 RETENTION OF AND ACCESS TO DATA

Please note that your paper and/or digital laboratory notebooks (or equivalent), data and other information gained during your research project, whether in manuscript, typescript, digital, electronic or other form, are the property of your supervisor and should be left with him/her when you complete or withdraw from your degree. You are required to give your supervisor access to files containing any such data which is in electronic or digital format. You may wish to make copies of written data for your own files. Your supervisor will advise you further on statutory or fuller requirements regarding "Open Access" and "Open Data".

25.10 HEALTH, WELLBEING, WELFARE, COUNSELLING, PARENTAL LEAVE, AND DISABILITY)

[WELFARE & WELLBEING](#)

If you become ill during your studentship, whether for one day or for several weeks, where possible please inform your supervisor on the day you go off sick and indicate when you hope to return. If your sickness is serious, you should talk to your supervisor and consider whether it is appropriate to suspend your studies for a term. If you are funded by the EPSRC then we are able to continue your stipend for a limited period of 'sick leave' during each year of your studentship.

Further information on health and welfare can be found in (i) the MPLS Division's on-line Graduate Handbook (see [Resources for Staff & Students](#) , [Other Facilities & Support](#), [Student Welfare & Support Services](#) and [Mental Health & Wellbeing in MPLS](#)) and (ii) on the Student Gateway website at <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare>.

The Collegiate University's [Counselling Service](#) helps students to address personal or emotional problems that can impact their time at Oxford and helps them realise their full academic and personal potential through focussed and brief therapy.

There is also information on the Student Gateway about University policy on student maternity, paternity and adoption leave. The main elements of the policy are that student parents are entitled to take an additional period of suspension of study (up to 1 year) for maternity, extended paternity or adoption leave (consonant with the requirements of their funding bodies). This will be granted automatically and is additional to the 6 terms of leave that their board may allow. Fathers may also take a standard two weeks' of paternity leave, which is not treated as a suspension of study. Further information can be found in the Health and Welfare Section of the University's website at <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/childcare?wssl=1>. There is a helpful summary on the MPLS website at <https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-for-postgraduate-research-students/your-rights-and-responsibilities>.

The University Disability Advisory Service provides information and advice on disability issues and facilitates support for those with, for example, sensory or mobility impairments, long-term health conditions, specific learning difficulties, autistic spectrum conditions or mental health difficulties. Further details may be found at <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability> .

The Department of Materials Disability Contacts are Ms Philippa Moss and Mr Tom Heath. If you have any questions concerning a known or suspected, declared or undeclared disability you are encouraged to speak to any of Philippa, Tom, the DGS (Adrian), your Supervisor, your Department Advisor, your College Advisor, or directly to the Disability Office. At your request any of these people will be happy to speak with you in strict confidence.

If you have a disability for which it is appropriate that reasonable adjustments are made to the oral components of your examinations (transfer of status interview, confirmation of status interview, and research degree viva voce examination) it is important that you raise this at an early stage with the DGS, who will advise you on the submission of a GSO.19 (Application for Adjustments to Assessment Arrangements) form.

25.11 DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT (DSE) SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM

The Department's Safety team will be in touch with you during your first term to provide you with details of the on-line DSE Self-Assessment System.

26. APPENDICES

On the following pages you will find **sample** copies of forms that you will need to complete over the course of your research project and various other documents referred to in the main body of the present Materials Graduate Student Handbook:

- (I) 'New Graduate Student' on-line Questionnaire and a Brief Guide to Supervision
- (II) Project management form 1
- (III) Project management form 2
- (IV) Project management form 3
- (V) Project management form 4
- (VI) Application form for conference/travel/skills training funds
- (VII) Summary of Provision, Support & Oversight for a Materials Research Student
- (VIII) MPLSD Code of Practice on the Supervision of Research Students
- (IX) MSc(Research) programme: Overview and two-year diary
- (X) Sample copy of assessment formS used for the Transfer of Status Examination and the Confirmation of DPhil Status Examination
- (XI) Summary of and rationale for the compulsory requirements for Materials Students
- (XII) Concise timelines for each Materials Research Degree Programme
- (XIII) Research Integrity

The on-line New Graduate Student questionnaire is available via the CANVAS VLE Portal (www.canvas.ox.ac.uk).

You can find Word versions of forms (II) to (VI) and pdf versions of the Concise Timelines (XII) via the Resources page on our '**Materials: PGR Progression**' on-line site, which you access through the CANVAS VLE Portal (www.canvas.ox.ac.uk).

The Project Management forms and Concise Timelines are also available at [Postgraduate Project Management & Concise Timelines](#).

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Department of Materials

26.1 Appendix I: Content for 'New Graduate Student' on-line Questionnaire (2024/25 cohort)

Last Name: (Surname or family name)	First Name:	Preferred Name: Preferred Pronouns:
Oxford Address: Post Code:	Telephone:	Alternative email address: (not your University of Oxford email)
	Name of person to contact in an emergency:	
What is the relationship of this person to you?	Telephone Number:	
<p>A note on disability: If you feel you have a disability, including specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, we encourage you to disclose this to the University Disability Advisory Service https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability so that appropriate help can be offered. If you have declared or intend to declare a disability please tick here: <input type="checkbox"/></p>		
Project Title:		
Responsible (Lead) Oxford Supervisor^a:	*Oxford Co-Supervisor(s)^a (if applicable):	
*Department Advisor^b (must <u>not</u> be one of your supervisors):	*Oxford Associate Supervisor(s) (if applicable): (typically a post-doctoral researcher who has held the role of post-doc for less than 3 years)	
*External Co-Supervisor (if applicable): Full Address: Tel: E-mail:	*Deputy Supervisor^b: (if you have a single supervisor this will be your Department Advisor; if you have co-supervisors it will be one of these other than your Responsible Supervisor)	
	College Advisor: (must not be one of your supervisors; can be your Department Advisor; your College will appoint this person)	

***In consultation with your Responsible Supervisor please name four members of the Faculty of Materials from whom the DGS should select your Lead Assessor^b for Transfer and Confirmation of Status**

(1): (2): (3): (4):

The following are not permitted to act as your Assessors:
Supervisor(s), Deputy Supervisor, Department Advisor or College Advisor

***By submitting this on-line questionnaire you are confirming the entries in the sections identified with an asterisk are exactly as stated to you by your Responsible Supervisor, and that all other entries are accurate.**

Total Period expected to be spent at external premises - name of host organisation and months per year (if none, please state nil):

Professional Body Membership:

IoM3: IoP: RSC: Other:

- Please confirm that you have discussed with your supervisor what transferable 'careers skills' training and research skills training you should undertake in the first few weeks of Michaelmas Term (Delete as necessary) **Yes / No**

- Please confirm that you have :

- (i) considered with your supervisor the outline guidance on [Research Supervision](#) that is available on the Oxford Materials website, and

- (ii) in addition read the [Summary of Provision for Materials Research Students](#) document that is available on the Oxford Materials website **Yes / No**

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR COMPLETED ON-LINE QUESTIONNAIRE BY THE END OF WEEK 4 MT (8/11/2024)

^a **For a Materials PGR student an Oxford supervisor or co-supervisor who is not a Professor or Associate Professor is required to have completed Oxford's online [DPhil Supervision at Oxford](#) course.**

^b **An outline of the roles of Deputy Supervisor, Department Advisor and Lead Assessor can be found in sections 2, 3 and 4 respectively of the Materials Graduate Course Handbook**

Research Supervision: Brief Guide to the roles of research students and supervisors

The primary purpose of a research degree programme in the Department of Materials is to enhance and develop your knowledge in a specific area of research, and to equip you with the research and transferable skills needed to become an independent researcher, or to prepare you to be able to adapt the skills you have learnt to pursue a career in other fields. Our aim is to provide you with an excellent educational experience, which should also be enjoyable as well as requiring diligent and focused work. To achieve this result, both supervisors and students need to be clear about their respective roles and responsibilities. This note provides a brief guide to these roles. If you have any questions about the roles described below, do discuss these with your Responsible Supervisor or the Director of Graduate Studies.

● ***The role of the Responsible Supervisor (and in some cases the supervisory team) is to:***

1. Establish a timetable of regular meetings for detailed discussion of your progress (these meetings should take place at least once every two weeks averaged across the year)
2. Agree a research plan and programme of work, and to establish clear academic expectations and milestones
3. Agree with you a timetable for the submission of any written work and to return your work within a reasonable time
4. Advise you of your department's health and safety regulations. Supervisors are responsible for all aspects of safety under their control, and in particular for the safe conduct of all experiments carried out in the course of their student's research
5. Assess formally your subject-specific and personal and professional skills training needs on a regular basis and ensure you are aware of the opportunities available to meet these needs. A full review of your skills training needs should be carried out each year with your supervisor
6. Write a quarterly report on your progress on the Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) system
7. Ensure you are aware of the formal requirements in relation to transfer and confirmation of status and final submission, and help you to incorporate these into your plan of work
8. Inform the Department's Director of Graduate Studies of any concerns about your progress, attendance or other needs

● ***The role of the Student is to:***

1. Meet with your supervisor regularly and give due weight to any guidance or corrective action proposed, keeping a written record of your discussions where appropriate
2. Draw up a research plan and timetable of work in consultation with your supervisor, and to keep relevant records of all aspects of your work
3. Reflect and report on your progress at the end of each quarter using the Graduate Supervision Reporting system (GSR)

4. Take ultimate responsibility for your research programme, including the development of subject-specific, research, personal and professional skills
5. Carry out research with proper regard to good health and safety practices
6. Be aware of the University's guidance on plagiarism and of any ethical or legal issues, health and safety requirements, or intellectual property issues arising from your research
7. Pursue opportunities to engage with the wider academic community at University, national and international level
8. Inform your supervisor immediately if you need to be away from the Department, for example if you are ill.
9. Inform the Department's Director of Graduate Studies of any concerns about your progress, attendance or other needs

The MPLS Division's detailed Code of Practice on the Supervision of Graduate Research Students is provided as Appendix (VIII) to your Materials Graduate Student Handbook and also is available at

<http://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-for-postgraduate-research-students/supervision>.

Also important is Section 5 of the University Education Committee's Policy on Research Degrees

(Responsibilities of the students) <https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/policies/research-degrees/section-five>.

The Department's statement of provision for a research student is provided as Appendix (VII) to your Materials Graduate Student Handbook.

26.2 Appendix II:

Project Management Form 1

Materials Graduate Studies - Initial Project Description PM Form

After discussion with your supervisor YOU should complete this form and associated Gantt Chart

Upload both PMF1 and Gantt Chart as a single pdf to the 'Materials: PGR Progression' on-line site in Weeks 0-1 of your second term – usually Hilary Term (4-year CDT students: Weeks 0-1 of your third term)

Name:

Title of project:

Supervisor(s):

In general terms describe the overall scientific objectives of your project. (Do not put in much detail at this stage.)

For the **next 6 months** of your project:

What are your major objectives?

What research training will you need (eg. specific experimental equipment, software etc.) and how are you going to obtain that training?

What resources will you need (equipment, materials, technician support etc.) and are they available?

What transferable 'career skills' training have you agreed with your supervisor it is appropriate for you to undertake (the equivalent of approximately 100 hours per year in years 1-3 is expected)?

Now complete a Gantt Chart for your project.

Your signature:

Your supervisor's signature:

Date:

Date:

You may find it helpful to first construct a Work Breakdown Structure

There are also some helpful prompts in the MPLS 'Training Needs Analysis' guidance and the MPLS 'Project Initiation Plan', both available via the '[Career Development & Training](#)' pages of the MPLS website.

26.3 Appendix III:

Project Management Form 2

Materials Graduate Studies - Interim Progress Report PM Form

After discussion with your supervisor complete this form and update your Gantt Chart

Upload both PMF2 and Gantt Chart as a single pdf to 'Materials: PGR Progression' in your tenth month as a Probationer Research Student – usually July (4-year CDT students: Weeks 1-2 of MT of your second year)

Name:

College:

Title of project:

Supervisor(s):

Refer back to your initial Project Description Form. **List your objectives for the previous 6 months** as described on PMF1 and indicate briefly to what extent have you achieved each of them?

For the next 6 months of your project:

What are your major objectives?

What training will you need (eg. specific experimental equipment, software etc.) and how are you going to obtain that training?

What resources will you need (equipment, materials, technician support etc.) and are they available?

What transferable 'career skills' training do you plan to undertake in the next 6 months?

Describe the objectives for the remainder of your project. Include brief details of the science involved and any experiments and/or models that you may need to develop.

Sample

Finally, complete a revised Gantt Chart covering the period from the start of your project up to thesis submission. Show all necessary tasks with their approximate dates. Indicate those tasks and milestones already completed.

Your signature:

Your supervisor's signature:

Date:

Date:

26.4 Appendix IV:

Project Management Form 3

3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 3E (please circle correct number)

Materials Graduate Studies - Regular Project Analysis PM Form

After discussion with your supervisor complete this form and update your Gantt Chart

All projects [(DPhil and MSc(R))]:

Upload a PMF 3A and Gantt Chart to 'Materials: PGR Progression' as a single pdf in weeks 0-1 of your 5th term – usually Hilary Term of Year 2 (4-year CDT students: Weeks 0-1 of TT, year 2)

DPhil projects:

PMF 3B and Gantt Chart: tenth month of year 2 – usually July

(4-year CDT students: Weeks 1-2 of MT, year 3)

DPhil projects:

PMF 3C and Gantt Chart: weeks 0-1 of your 8th term- usually HT of year 3

(4-year CDT students: Weeks 0-1 of TT, year 3)

3.5- and 4-year DPhil projects only:

PMF 3D and Gantt Chart: tenth month of year 3 – usually July

(4-year CDT students: Weeks 1-2 of MT, year 4)

4-year, non-CDT projects only:

PMF 3E and Gantt Chart: weeks 0-1 of HT, year 4

Name:

Title of project:

Supervisor:

Describe the progress you have made in the last six months. To what extent have you achieved your objectives?

For the **next 6 months** of your project:

What are your major objectives?

What resources will you need (training equipment, materials, technician support etc.) and are they available?

Are you satisfied with the progress of your work? If not can you identify how you may improve matters?

What transferable 'career skills' training do you plan to undertake in the next 6 months?
(This Section is optional for PMF 3D and 3E)

Describe the objectives for the remainder of your project. Include brief details of the science involved and any experiments and/or models that you may need to develop.

Sample

Finally, complete a revised Gantt Chart covering the period from the start of your project up to thesis submission. Show all necessary tasks with their approximate dates. Indicate those tasks and milestones already completed.

Your signature:

Your supervisor's signature:

Date:

Date:

26.5 Appendix V:

Project Management Form 4

Materials Graduate Studies - Completion Phase PM Form

After discussion with your supervisor complete this form and update your Gantt Chart

Upload PMF4 and Gantt Chart, as a single pdf, to 'Materials: PGR Progression' by one of:

3-year projects - Friday of 2nd week of your 9th term, usually your final Trinity Term;

3.5-year projects - Friday of 1st week of your 10th term, usually your final Michaelmas Term;

4-year CDT projects – Friday of 1st week of your 12th term, that is your final Trinity Term;

4-year, non-CDT, projects – Friday of 1st week of your 12th term, that is your final Trinity Term;

MSc(Res) projects - Friday of 5th week of your 6th term, usually your final Trinity Term.

Name:

College:

Title of project:

Supervisor:

Outline the progress you have made in the last six months. To what extent have you achieved your objectives?

When do you expect to submit your thesis?

For the **final 5 months** of your funded period (**4 months** for MSc):

1. Outline any remaining experiments/modelling runs that are essential to the completion of your thesis.

Are the resources for the above all available?

2. Give an outline structure for your thesis in the form of a provisional detailed table of contents page.

3. Are you satisfied with the progress of your work? If not can you identify how you may improve matters?

4. Finally, complete a revised Gantt Chart covering the period from the start of your project up to thesis submission. Show all necessary tasks with their approximate dates. Indicate those tasks and milestones already completed.

Your signature:

Your supervisor's signature:

Date:

Date:

DEPARTMENT OF MATERIALS

26.6 Appendix VI: PGR Application for Conference/Travel/Skills-training Funds

The Department has a policy of seeking to support each graduate student to attend a conference approved by their supervisor, during the course of their studies. Students are expected to seek support from other sources as well as approaching the Department. When applying for funds please use the Word version of this form that is available via the CANVAS VLE Portal (www.canvas.ox.ac.uk), indicating in section 4 other sources you have approached. When you have completed sections 1-5, ask your supervisor to complete section 6 and sign it. At least four weeks before the intended expenditure the completed form should be sent by email to the Materials Graduate Studies Office graduate.studies@materials.ox.ac.uk .

<p>1. Your details:</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Research Group:</p> <p>College:</p> <p>Sponsor *:</p> <p>Year started:</p> <p>* if applicable</p>	<p>2. Conference/Other Details:</p> <p>Title:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>Location:</p>
<p>3. Cost:</p> <p>Registration:</p> <p>Travel:</p> <p>Subsistence:</p> <p>Other:</p> <p>Total:</p> <p>Any special feature:</p>	<p>4. Sources approached: (please tick)</p> <p>Please indicate in each case the sum requested and granted</p> <p>Sponsor:</p> <p>College:</p> <p>University:</p> <p>Other:</p> <p>Total:</p>
<p>5. Request to Department</p> <p>Sum requested this time:</p>	<p>Sum(s) previously granted – please include date(s):</p>
<p>6. Statement of support by supervisor and signature of supervisor</p>	
<p><u>Materials Graduate Studies Office use only</u></p> <p>Amount granted</p> <p>Notes/special conditions</p> <p><u>Approval by DGS</u> (Signature & Date)</p>	

26.7 Appendix VII: Summary of Provision, Support and Oversight for Materials Research Students

A. SUMMARY OF PROVISION

The purpose of this statement is to indicate what a graduate research student might expect to be offered in the **Department of Materials**. It is expected that during a graduate's first term at Oxford, each graduate student and their supervisor will discuss the statement of provision, and, by means of the six-monthly Project Management Forms and the quarterly Graduate Supervision Reports, the student and supervisor will confirm any individualised provision as it applies to that student. The provision should be reviewed by the supervisor with the student at least once a year.

As a Materials research student you are also a member of the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division's **Graduate School** (<https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school>) with access to its resources and support.

1. **What arrangements will be put in place for supervising the graduate's work?**

You will have a named supervisor or supervisors, normally as indicated in your offer letter, who will have overall responsibility for the direction of your work on behalf of the Department. Typically, you should expect to have meetings with your supervisor or a member of the supervisory team with a frequency of at least once a fortnight averaged across the year. The regularity of these meetings may be subject to variations according to the time of the year, and the stage you are at in your research programme. Please note that this is a minimum and your supervisors may require more frequent meetings. The MPLS Division publishes a Code of Practice for Research Supervision (<https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-for-postgraduate-research-students/supervision/mpls-division-code-of-practice-on-the-supervision-of-graduate-research-students>). If you are co-supervised one of your Oxford supervisors will be designated by the Department as your **Responsible Supervisor**, this reflects certain responsibilities they have to you and the Department and not necessarily the proportion of time they devote to your supervision compared to your other supervisor(s).

2. **What induction arrangements will be made?**

You will have Departmental Induction at the beginning of your first term. The main induction to the Department is provided at the start of Michaelmas Term. Other arrangements will be made for students starting at other times of the year. Your supervisor(s) will arrange more specialised induction subsequently. The main set of slides from the most recent Departmental Induction event can be found via CANVAS and at <http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/teaching/pg/pginduction>.

3. What workspace will be provided?

Workspace will be related to individual circumstances. If undertaking experimental work, you will be provided with bench space, or its equivalent, in a laboratory and, where possible, with shared office space. If undertaking theory or computational modelling research, you will have shared office space.

4. What IT support/ library facilities/ experimental facilities will be available?

You will have access to the Department of Materials IT Support Team, the Joint Materials and Engineering Student Workshop (after completing workshop induction), the Department of Materials Library (in addition to the University Science Library (RSL) and other University libraries, and centrally provided electronic resources). Experimental and materials modelling facilities are available as appropriate to your research topic. The provision of other resources specific to your project should be agreed with your supervisor as a part of the planning stages of the agreed project. Details of the facilities mentioned above and others are given in the on-line Materials Information Centre (<https://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/mic>), at <https://www-em.materials.ox.ac.uk/> and at <http://www-omcs.materials.ox.ac.uk> . Library resources for Materials Science are outlined at <https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/materials> . Your college has a library too.

5. Which research seminars will be available?

You will have access to Seminars and Colloquia in the Department of Materials, and many of those offered by other departments too. You will also have access to the additional seminars that individual research groups or groups with common areas of interest organise for their own members and others. See <http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/news/colloquia.html> .

6. What access to research funds will be available?

You will find that limited Department funds are available to assist with attendance at conferences, in addition to any allocated funds via individual research groups/supervisors.

In the Department of Materials it is the responsibility of individual research groups to provide appropriate desktop or laptop computing facilities in liaison with the Department's IT Manager. A budget is allocated for this purpose. Your supervisor will have a small budget to cover both day-to-day consumables used in your project and other minor costs.

7. What formal graduate skills training will be provided?

As appropriate to the different stages of your graduate career, you will have the opportunity to attend a variety of skills training sessions and specific research training offered by the Department, as described in the Department's 'Graduate Student Handbook' and 'Postgraduate Lecture & Training Course Synopses and Research Colloquia Details' booklet (<https://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/teaching/pg/pghandbooks.html>). The slides from many of the generic skills training workshops are available at <http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/teaching/pg/pgskills>, although these cannot fully substitute for engaging in discussion & group exercises at the live workshops.

The MPLS Division also organises courses and career planning events. Information about Divisional training and other courses offered across the University is available at <https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training>. This site provides information about academic courses, research-specific skills training, and transferable careers skills development for research students and research staff at Oxford University, and includes a searchable database of all courses, links to articles on subjects such as project management, teaching and career planning, and a skills blog.

8. What opportunities will be available for developing and practising teaching skills?

The Materials Department, the MPLS Division and the [Oxford Centre for Teaching and Learning](#) provide resources to support the development of research students and post-docs who aspire to follow an academic career, including training in teaching skills. Information about teaching skills training and teaching opportunities provided by the Department of Materials, including opportunities to contribute to our Outreach to Schools programme, can be found in the three sources given in (7) above and in the General Scheme of Lectures and the Termly Lecture Lists found at <http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/teaching/lecturelists.html>. These teaching opportunities are NOT restricted to those who declare a wish to follow an academic career. See also <https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training/pgr>.

9. What arrangements for accommodation, meals and social facilities, will be made, on a year round basis?

Department:

Research students can use the Parks View Cafeteria in the Holder Building and the Café at the Begbroke Science Park. The former facility is shared by all staff and students of the Departments of Materials and of Engineering Science and facilitates interaction between different research groups and with support staff. Departmental seminars, colloquia, training workshops and the annual DPhil Poster Competition bring research students together with academic and other research staff in the Department to hear about on-going research and to develop new skills and provide an opportunity for networking and socialising. In addition to many ad hoc social events that take place, the Department's graduate student-staff liaison committee (the JCCG) organises a number of social events including free coffee once a week for all graduate students and final year undergraduates, a subsidised evening social event in Michaelmas Term and a subsidised summer picnic.

College:

Many colleges will be able to provide you with at least one year's accommodation. Generally speaking your college will provide meals throughout the year, but provision will vary from college to college, especially during vacations, and you will need to familiarise yourself with your college's detailed arrangements. In addition there are usually self-catering facilities available in graduate accommodation. You will be a member of the Middle Common Room, or equivalent, of your college, which is the main social centre for

graduates. The MCR provides a common room and usually organises a programme of social events throughout the year. The college will also provide a bar, some computing facilities and a library, and often may have dedicated funds for research (conference and field grants). It also represents the interests of its members to the college through an elected Committee or through elected representatives to College Committees. Again, details will vary from college to college. Graduates are also welcome to participate in all other social and sporting activities of the college. Please see individual college websites for further details about all aspects of college provision.

Central:

Graduate Research Students may become members of the University Club in Mansfield Road, and participate in the range of sporting activities provided by the University.

10. What arrangements are in place for pastoral and welfare support?

Department:

Within the Department, your Supervisor(s), Director of Graduate Studies (on-course provision), Staff of the Materials Education Support team and your Department Advisor are all available to offer support. Through its weekly coffee event the Joint Consultative Committee for Graduates (JCCG) provides an informal forum for discussion and guidance. The JCCG also provides a channel through which graduate students' views and concerns can be brought to the attention of the Materials Graduate Studies Committee.

College:

There is an extensive framework of support for graduates within each college. Your college will allocate to you a College Advisor from among its Senior Members, usually in a cognate subject, who normally will arrange to see you from time to time and whom you may contact for additional advice and support on academic and other matters. In college you may also approach the Tutor for Graduates and/or the Senior Tutor for advice. The Tutor for Graduates is a fellow of the college with particular responsibility for the interests and welfare of graduate students. In some colleges, the Senior Tutor will also have the role of Tutor for Graduates. Each college will also have other named individuals who can offer individual advice.

Central:

The University provides a wide range of [Wellbeing](#) support and resources, including:

1. Wellbeing resources at the Bodleian Libraries <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/wellbeing>
2. A professionally staffed confidential Student Counselling Service which offers assistance with personal, emotional, social and academic problems (<http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling>)
3. A Disability Advisory Service (<http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability>)
4. A Careers Service (<http://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/>)

5. A Student Visa & Immigration Office (<http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa>)
6. Student-led peer support (together with the Oxford University Students Union) (<http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/peer>).

B. SUMMARY OF CORE SUPPORT & OVERSIGHT FOR MATERIALS PGR STUDENTS (2024/25)

The Department of Materials is a medium-sized, cohesive unit in which you will find support as a graduate student from many quarters, not only from your own immediate research group and supervisor(s). In addition you have a second line of support from your College, not only for personal and academic matters, but also often for help with travel, conference attendance and hardship. Below we identify some of the key Oxford Materials people involved in support and/or oversight of our research students and degree programmes. There are many other Oxford Materials staff who will support you and they can be identified via the on-line [Materials Information Centre](#).

Director of Graduate Studies (DGS): Dr Adrian Taylor adrian.taylor@materials.ox.ac.uk

Materials Graduate Studies and Undergraduate Studies Support Staff:

Materials Education Manager: Ms. Philippa Moss philippa.moss@materials.ox.ac.uk

Materials Education Support Team:

Mrs. Safa Najjar	graduate.admissions@materials.ox.ac.uk	
Ms Sharmaine Ijada	graduate.studies@materials.ox.ac.uk	
Mr Tom Heath	undergraduate.studies@materials.ox.ac.uk	
Ms Olivia Walker	undergraduate.studies@materials.ox.ac.uk	

Materials Librarian: Mrs Grace Sewell library@materials.ox.ac.uk

Materials IT Support: itsupport@materials.ox.ac.uk

Materials Department Safety Officer (DSO): From 10th November 2024 - Dr Jennifer Scott
Currently Ms Fernanda Haswell-Martin head.administrationandfinance@materials.ox.ac.uk

For all other Materials support staff and key post-holders:

Please see the relevant sections within the on-line [Materials Information Centre](#) (SSO needed)

Materials Graduate Studies Committee (MGSC):

Chair (DGS for on-course provision) :	Dr Adrian Taylor	
Members of Academic Staff:	Prof Dave Armstrong	Prof Chris Grovenor
	tbc	Prof Keyna O'Reilly
PGR Student Representative:	Rajat Nama	

Joint Consultative Committee for Graduate Students (JCCG):

Chair:	Rajat Nama
Deputy Chair:	Oliver Thomas
Secretary:	Sharmaine Ijada graduate.studies@materials.ox.ac.uk
First-year representatives:	Greg McGlothlen Clint Grohmann Margo Okhrymenko Arun Ramanathan
Second-year representatives:	Yagmur Bekler Yiming Xu Zirui Song Sharon Morgan
Third-year representatives:	Oliver Thomas Michael Staines Rajat Nama Soumyajit Maitra
Fourth-year representatives:	Emily Milan Sophia Ungermann Shivansh Nauriyal Ping-Yuan Lee
Part II UG representative:	Nirali Jain
Begbroke representative:	tbc
Department Representatives:	Director of Graduate Studies: Adrian Taylor Member of Graduate Studies Committee: tbc Part II Organiser: Jan Czernuszka Head of Admin & Finance: Fernanda Haswell-Martin

**Mathematical
Physical and
Life Sciences
Division**

Code of Practice on the Supervision of Graduate Research Students

Revised September 2019

MPLS Code of Practice on the Supervision of Graduate Research Students

The supervisory structure and sources of support

Patterns of supervision differ in the MPLS Division according to the nature of the subject. In some subjects there is typically a sole supervisor; others may typically have two or more supervisors, with one designated as the responsible supervisor; and others may have supervisory teams.

Where more than one supervisor is appointed, one of the supervisors shall clearly be designated the responsible supervisor.

In all cases, the department shall ensure that each graduate student has access to one or more named persons in addition to the supervisor to whom he/she can turn for support, such as the head of the research group, the Director of Graduate Studies, or where appropriate the Head of Department. Where there is a sole supervisor, these other sources of support, and the arrangements for providing cover during the absence of the supervisor (under 3 below), are especially crucial.

In all cases students should also expect to be able to approach a college advisor. The student's college will appoint a college advisor; receive termly supervision reports, and Transfer and Confirmation of Status reports. The Division asks colleges not to appoint a student's departmental supervisor as a college advisor. The college may also have procedures in place to monitor the overall well-being of the graduate research student, including a discussion of academic reports. If the college identifies any concerns which might impact on the academic progress of the student concerned, and which may not already have been recognised in departmental reports, it may refer these in confidence to the Director of Graduate Studies in the department concerned, who will initiate such action in the department as seems to him/her to be necessary in the individual circumstances.

Who can supervise?

1. Someone of sufficient standing to be able to operate with credibility on behalf of the responsible body.
2. Someone who has sufficient experience to be able to provide appropriate guidance to the student about the necessary procedures and, in particular, the academic expectations associated with an Oxford doctorate in their subject area.
3. Someone who is able to undertake the tasks assigned to the supervisor in the Policy on Research Degrees¹ including integrating them into the national and international network in their subject.
4. Someone who has sufficient security of tenure to make it likely that they will see the student's research through to successful conclusion.

The responsible supervisor

A student may have one, two or more supervisors, but there must be one who is responsible overall for academic progress and pastoral needs, and who is responsible for signing progression forms.

The responsible supervisor shall normally be:

- A member of staff of the department on a permanent contract and who is an associate professor, reader, professor or senior researcher (grade 8 or above, or RSIV), OR

¹ <https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/research-degrees>

- A member of staff who is also a researcher with an independent fellowship that lasts for the duration of the student's degree.

The responsible supervisor will currently be engaged in research in the relevant discipline(s) so as to ensure that the direction and monitoring of the student's progress is informed by up to date subject knowledge and research developments.

Nobody should be appointed as responsible supervisor if it is known at the time of the appointment that he or she will not be in post at the time the student is due to complete the programme in question.

A person appointed to supervise alongside the responsible supervisor shall normally be:

- An associate professor, reader or professor;
- A member of research staff who is grade 8 or above;
- An independent research fellow affiliated with the University, which is taken to be those with fellowships secured from an external learned society, research council or equivalent. The fellow should have at least three years' experience as a post-doctoral researcher before becoming a supervisor, and should be based at Oxford;
- A postdoctoral researcher with at least three years of experience of research at postdoctoral level or equivalent;
- A Department Lecturer at grade 8 or above who is research-active and has at least three years of experience of research';
- An employee of an external organisation such as a commercial company or national laboratory who has both a relevant doctorate and expertise in the subject of the student's DPhil, and who has at least three years of experience of working in research and development.

A postdoctoral researcher who has done less than three years' postdoctoral research should not normally be appointed as a supervisor; however he/she may be appointed as an associate supervisor.

It is important that independent research fellows or members of research staff who do supervise are formally recorded as a supervisor on the student record and the Graduate Supervision System to ensure that their contribution is recognised (as supervision experience is important on fellowship applications) and to record lines of accountability for the progression of the student in question.

Where specialist supervision is needed that is not available from a member of academic staff or college fellow, a senior member of research staff (Grade 8 or above) may be appointed as a subject specialist supervisor, OR, in appropriate cases, a supervisor may be appointed who is external to the University of Oxford. A person in the department holding a substantial external fellowship, e.g. a Royal Society Fellowship or equivalent on a fixed-term contract also may be appointed to act as a student's responsible supervisor. In these circumstances, an experienced member of academic staff shall always be appointed as joint supervisor. This must be a member of staff responsible to the Head of Department or Head of the Division.

In the case of a student following an interdisciplinary DPhil who has two equally senior supervisors in two different departments, there should still be a single 'responsible' supervisor, who would normally be in the department where the student is registered for administrative purposes. For the purposes for signing off Transfer, Confirmation and submission forms, the responsible supervisor should liaise with his/her counterpart in the other department, and where there is any disagreement between the two, the DGS in the department where the student is registered would make the final decision.

New supervisors

Appropriate support and training will be given to new supervisors².

For supervisors undertaking their first graduate student supervision, an experienced co-supervisor will be appointed to support the student and the supervisor.

For members of academic staff in their first period of office, the Divisional Board will appoint a mentor who will, amongst his/her other duties, provide confidential advice, support, and guidance on teaching, and supervision of research students. The supervision record of a new member of academic staff is included in the review prior to appointment to retiring age.

The Centre for Teaching and Learning offer a range of resources to support teaching at Oxford, available here: <https://www.ctl.ox.ac.uk/teaching-resources>

When a supervisor is not a member of academic staff at the University, or a fellow of an Oxford college, or a person with previous supervisory experience,

- An experienced member of academic staff will be appointed by the department either as joint supervisor or as an advisor to the supervisor, and will be expected to act as mentor to the new supervisor;
- When the supervisor is a member of contract research staff, s/he will be expected to complete the online [DPhil Supervision at Oxford](#) course.

For the avoidance of doubt, a candidate should not be admitted if there is no suitable specialist supervision available in the University or its colleges.

Ensuring the quality of supervision

Departments should put in place mechanisms to ensure that the quality of supervision is not put at risk as a result of the excessive volume and range of burdens assigned to individual supervisors. Although for an individual supervisor with a normal academic load, a supervisory load equivalent to six full-time students would be regarded as the normal maximum, it is recognised that there is a range of supervisory practice, in terms of supervisory teams, and the Division emphasizes the importance of adhering to the Quality Assurance Agency's indicators of sound practice in the provision of supervision, which state that higher education providers will:

- appoint supervisors with the appropriate skills and subject knowledge to support and encourage research students, and to monitor their progress effectively;
- ensure each research student has a supervisory team containing a main supervisor who is the clearly identified point of contact;
- ensure that the responsibilities of research student supervisors are readily available and clearly communicated to supervisors and students;
- ensure that individual supervisors have sufficient time to carry out their responsibilities effectively.³

² <https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-and-resources-for-supervisors>

³ UK Quality Code for Higher Education, <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/advice-and-guidance/research-degrees>

Frequency of meetings

Typically, a student should expect to have meetings with his/her supervisor or a member of the supervisory team with a frequency of at least once every two weeks averaged across the year. The regularity of these meetings may be subject to variations according to the time of the year, and the stage the student is at in his or her research programme. It follows that, alongside his/her other duties, a supervisor should be able to provide this typical level of support for each of his/her research students.

Departments should ensure that students are not disadvantaged by the appointment as a supervisor of someone who is about to go on leave, and shall make appropriate arrangements to cover for a supervisor's absence on leave or for other reasons.

Responsibilities of the Research Student

(an extract from the University of Oxford's Education Committee's "Policy on Research Degrees")

Section 5: Responsibilities of the student

5.1 Overriding responsibility

The University expects students to accept their obligation to act as responsible members of the University's academic community. Students are also expected to take ultimate responsibility for their research programme and to develop an appropriate working relationship with their supervisor(s).

5.2 The research programme

In relation to the research programme, it is important for the student:

- to programme and undertake work according to an agreed timetable, and to keep relevant records of all aspects of the work in such a way that they can be accessed and understood by anyone with a legitimate need to see them;
- to take responsibility for the development of subject-specific research training and personal and professional skills, and to make positive use of the University's teaching and learning facilities, and opportunities for this development;
- to seek out and follow the regulations applying to the research programme, and to seek clarification, where necessary; and to be familiar with other relevant regulations and policies, including health and safety, intellectual property, data handling, research integrity and conflicts of interest;
- to raise problems or difficulties with the relevant authority so that appropriate guidance may be offered;
- to carry out research with proper regard to good health and safety practices, and to be aware of the need for adequate health insurance and health precautions when travelling abroad;

- to understand the demands of a research degree and to devote sufficient time to study to make satisfactory progress and to complete each stage of the degree by the deadlines set out in the Examination Regulations;
- to work towards a suitable standard of written and spoken English for transfer and confirmation and for the final submission of the thesis. It is for the student to ensure that competing demands on their time are minimised and to ensure that their supervisor is aware of, and approves, commitments (e.g. paid work, conferences) or time away that might impinge on the student's work.

5.3 Working with the supervisor

In order to make the most effective use of supervision, the student should endeavour to develop an appropriate working pattern, including an agreed and professional relationship with the supervisor(s). To facilitate this, the student should discuss with the supervisor the type of guidance and comment which they find most helpful, and agree a schedule of meetings. The student should also be aware of their joint responsibility with the supervisor to Policy and guidance on research degrees ensure that regular and frequent contact is maintained, and be encouraged to take the initiative to maintain contact when necessary.

In working with supervisors or other academic staff, students should also:

- recognise the demands made on a supervisor's time and the need to prepare adequately for meetings and to observe deadlines;
- accept the importance of constructive criticism within the supervisory relationship, and seek a full assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of any work;
- give full weight to any suggested guidance and corrective action proposed by the supervisor in the event of problems;
- co-operate with the supervisor to produce detailed parallel reports on progress at the end of each term via [Graduate Supervision Reporting](#);
- discuss their skills training needs with the supervisor, both informally during regular supervisory contacts and formally at particular times as detailed in subject handbooks;
- make appropriate use of any guidance available relating to the student's career after successful completion of a research degree, for example, via the [Careers Service](#);
- inform the supervisor as soon as possible of any circumstance which might lead to interruption of study;
- where the student feels that there are good grounds for contemplating a change of supervision arrangements, discuss this with the existing supervisor, or, if this presents a difficulty, discuss this with the DGS or other appropriate officer or adviser, or with a college adviser.

5.4 Submission and completion

The requirements in relation to submission are set out in full in the Examination Regulations; however in particular it is essential for the student:

- to ensure that their written English is of the necessary standard for the submission of a thesis;
- to be prepared to defend the subject of the thesis in fluent English at the viva;
- to allow sufficient time for writing up and to pay particular attention to final proof reading;
- to decide when they wish to submit the thesis for examination, having provided the supervisor with sufficient time to comment on the final draft and having taken account of the supervisor's opinion;
- to be aware of the necessary steps in the examination process and the timescales required.

26.9 Appendix IX: Overview of MSc by Research Course Structure

(More detail is given in [section 5](#) onwards of the present Handbook)

See also [Section 4.1](#) on the 'Materials: PGR Progression' on-line site and [Section 4.2](#) on Graduate Studies Office Forms.

The University rules stipulate that you must be resident within a 25 mile radius of the city centre for at least 3 terms (1 academic year) before you can submit your MSc thesis. The rules also stipulate that the maximum time normally allowed for a student to complete the research and write the thesis is 9 terms (3 academic years). The Department, however, aims for MSc students to submit their thesis within 2 years. A schedule for keeping to this 2-year timetable is illustrated overleaf under the title A Two-Year MSc by Research Diary. We will now consider very briefly each of the two years in turn.

THE FIRST YEAR

(The specific timings given are for a student who commenced the programme in Michaelmas Term)

You have arrived at the start of your postgraduate degree as a Probationer Research Student (PRS). The University rules allow you to hold this status normally for up to 4 terms. PRS students who arrive intending to pursue a Materials MSc (by research) degree, are expected to transfer to MSc (by research) status near to the end of their first year. Permission to apply to transfer is subject to the approval of your Supervisor, College and Director of Graduate Studies, normally following the completion of **four threshold requirements**:

- (i) passes in two assessed courses (see [Section 6](#));
- (ii) attendance at a minimum of seven Colloquia during the first two terms (see [Section 9](#));
- (iii) completion of the University's mandatory on-line course on 'Research Integrity Training' (see [Appendix XIII](#))
- (iv) submission of your literature review (see below)

Two members of staff, other than your Supervisor(s), College Advisor or Departmental Advisor, will be appointed as the Assessors for your Transfer of Status application, which is normally submitted in your tenth month as a PRS.

In the period of weeks two to four of your third term you will meet with your Lead Assessor for an independent, informal discussion of your progress to date. Further information on this meeting, which **you** must arrange, is given in [Section 10](#).

By the end of Trinity full-term of your first year or its equivalent if you started in HT or TT, you are required to have completed a substantial Literature Review ([Section 10.3](#)). This should ensure that you are familiar with the prior work in your area of study before you progress too far with your research. Your Literature Review must be submitted by Friday of week 8 of Trinity Term. After your Transfer of Status interview you will receive written feedback on this Review from your Lead Assessor.

Having attended the Writing Skills workshop, completed your literature review, **ensured that you understand what is the new science and/or technology it is anticipated your project will reveal**, engaged appropriately with your project management and held regular discussions with your supervisor, you should be beginning to have some sense of what are the requirements for a thesis (see also [Section 13](#)) and what might be the content of your thesis.

Once you have met the four threshold criteria:

In your tenth month, and normally no later than the end of that month (usually 31 July), you should complete and submit to the Materials Graduate Studies Office by email an 'Application Form for Transfer of a Graduate Student from One Status to Another' (form GSO.2), following the procedure set out in [Section 10](#) of the present Handbook. In considering your application your Supervisor, College and Director of Graduate Studies will take into account your progress over the whole of your first year to date.

Noting that many students, academic staff and support staff take their main annual leave during the summer, it really is important that you submit the on-line GSO.2 by 31 July in order that everything is in place for your transfer interview in mid-September to early October. If your GSO.2 is not submitted by 31 July do not be surprised if there are delays in your Transfer of Status process. Other than in exceptional circumstances your transfer interview cannot take place until the DGS has approved your GSO.2 application.

[Section 10](#) of this Handbook provides more detail on the transfer of status process and examination.

The purpose of the transfer of status process is to ensure that you have a convincing research proposal, that you are making satisfactory progress in its development, and to satisfy the assessors that the work is potentially of MSc by Research quality. Satisfactory progress in this context includes not only your ability to generate an appropriate amount of good quality data, but also your ability to understand both these data and the broader project and your ability to begin to take ownership of the project.

Submission of the GSO.2 form will, if approved, initiate arrangements for your **transfer of status examination**, which will be conducted by two assessors (neither of whom may be your Supervisor,

your Department Advisor or your College Advisor). This examination will include a 15 to 30 minute interview with the assessors, normally to be held within the period of weeks -3 to +1 of your 4th term. Please see [Section 10.4](#) for information on who is responsible for arranging the date for this interview.

Further information about transfer of status and other 'progression' matters can be found in sections five to thirteen of the present Handbook and on the MPLS Graduate School webpages at <http://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-for-postgraduate-research-students/progression>.

During your first year you are required to ensure that you have a clear understanding of what is plagiarism, and when and how to reference prior work (including that published by you). Please read [Section 21](#) of the present Handbook very carefully, and consult your Responsible Supervisor if you need any clarification. In addition we advise you to complete the University's on-line course on [Plagiarism](#).

THE SECOND YEAR

Your MSc project should now be coming together nicely and you will be asked to give a short talk on your research during Week 7 of Hilary Term ([see Section 11](#)). By Tuesday of week 6 you should upload to the 'Materials: PGR Progression' site an abstract of your talk. A senior member of the Department will Chair the talk and will judge whether or not your progress as demonstrated by the talk is satisfactory. Thus you and your supervisor are provided with an informal, independent opinion on your progress.

Allow yourself three months to write-up and finish the final version of your thesis ([see Section 13](#)).

Four to six weeks BEFORE you are ready to submit your thesis, you should apply for the 'Appointment of Examiners' (on-line form GSO.3). This form requires certification by you that the thesis is your own work except where otherwise indicated, by your supervisor that you have satisfied residency requirements, and by your college. This form can be accessed from the website <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/progression>. Once copies of your thesis and abstract have been submitted via the on-line RTDS portal to the Examination Schools, your Internal Examiner will arrange the date for your oral examination (*viva voce*) (see [Section 13](#)). When you complete the form you will be asked to enter the **Word Count** of your thesis.


CAVEAT

A hard and fast timetable for the successful completion of a MSc by Research project is, of course, not possible, given the unpredictability of creative research. The 'Two-Year MSc by Research Diary' shown below should be seen as a guide illustrating what is required in order to submit within two years. Part of the purpose of the Project Management structure is to enable students themselves to monitor their own progress and to flag-up to their supervisor the Department a warning signal as soon as possible if they feel that their two year MSc schedule is slipping ([see Section 5](#)). **If you are not devoting most of your effort to thesis writing at the 21 month milestone, you should arrange to meet with the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss your progress.**

A Two-Year MSc by Research Diary

1st Year	
Michaelmas Term, October - January	
Week 0	First year Induction Course, including meeting with Responsible Supervisor, Assignment of Deputy Supervisor, Department Advisor and propose Lead Assessor
Week 1	Safety Lecture MPLS Grad School 'Your Successful DPhil' Workshop (repeated in Wk 2 & later in MT)
Week 2	Information Skills Workshop
Week 3	Latest date for submission of Personal Registration and Risk Assessment Form and DSE Form Institute of Materials, Minerals & Mining Talk
Week 4	Deadline for completion of on-line 'New Graduate Student' Questionnaire Project Management Workshop
Week 5	Looking to the Future Workshop
Week 6	Training Workshop for prospective Teaching Assistants on 'Junior Demonstrating' in the UG Teaching Lab
Week 7	Informal meeting with your Department Advisor
Weeks 7-9	GSR Report
MT	Attend Workshop Induction
MT tbc	JCCG's Owing a Successful DPhil Workshop tbc
MT tbc	LabVIEW Training tbc
MT or HT tbc	Patent Information Workshop
Weeks 1-8	Attend graduate lecture courses (including 2 assessed) Thursday Departmental Colloquia
Hilary Term, January - April	
Week 0-1	Upload Project Management Form 1 (with Gantt Chart) to 'Materials: PGR Progression'
HT	Presentation Skills and PowerPoint workshops
HT	Writing Skills, Lab Notebooks, IPR and Patents workshop
Weeks 7-9	GSR Report
HT	Managing your References Workshop
HT	Research Impact and Open Access (Chemistry and Materials)
HT	Intensive one-week Academic Writing Course (for non-UK students)
Weeks 1-8	Attend graduate lecture courses (including 2 assessed) Thursday Departmental Colloquia
Trinity Term (including the Long Vacation), April - October	
Weeks 1-4	Thursday Departmental Colloquia
Weeks 2-4	Arrange informal meeting with your Lead Assessor
Weeks 7-9	Submit GSR Report
Week 8	Upload Literature Review to 'Materials: PGR Progression'
Before July	Complete on-line course on 'Research Integrity Training'
July	Upload Project Management Form 2 (with Gantt Chart) to 'Materials: PGR Progression' Apply for Transfer of Status (by submitting on-line GSO.2 form)
Mid-September	GSR Report



2nd Year	
Michaelmas Term, October - January	
Friday, Week 1	Normal latest date for Transfer of Status Interview
Week 1	Active Job Hunting – Introduction to Oxford University Careers Service Careers and Networking Evening with Alumni
Weeks 1-8	Thursday Departmental Colloquia
Weeks 7-9	GSR Report
Hilary Term, January - April	
Week 0-1	Upload Project Management Form 3a (with Gantt chart) to 'Materials: PGR Progression'
Weeks 7-9	GSR Report
Week 7	2nd Year Talks, Monday to Friday, 9.00 am – 6.00 pm, KEEP ALL DATES FREE! Hetherington Prize
HT	Academic Writing Course (for non-UK students)
Weeks 1-8	Thursday Departmental Colloquia
Trinity Term (including the Long Vacation), April - October	
Weeks 1-4	Thursday Departmental Colloquia
Week 5	^a Upload Project Management Form 4 (with Gantt chart) to 'Materials: PGR Progression' (to include thesis outline)
Weeks 7-9	GSR Report
July-August	^a Application for appointment of examiners (on-line form GSO.3)
September	^a Submission of thesis via on-line RTDS portal
Mid-Sept	GSR Report
	

^aMSc (Research) in Materials students follow the same pattern as years 1 and 2 for DPhil in Materials students, except that (i) in week 5 of Trinity Term in their second year they submit Project Management Form 4 (instead of Project Management Form 3b in July), (ii) in Week 1 of MT of their final year they attend the two careers events, and (iii) they aim to submit their thesis no later than the end of their second year.

Note:

The JCCG (Staff-Student Committee) will meet every term at 12 noon on Wednesday of Week 1.

26.10 Appendix X: Sample copies of : (i) the assessors' report form used for a first attempt at the Transfer of Status Examination and (ii) the assessors' report form used for a first attempt at the Confirmation of DPhil Status Examination.

MATHEMATICAL, PHYSICAL AND LIFE SCIENCES DIVISION

Transfer of status form and guidance for assessors

Transfer of Status from PRS to DPhil Status (1st Attempt)

The assessment panel should complete this report form immediately following the assessment.

Student name:		Start Date:	
Research Title:			
Date report received:		Date Interviewed:	
Funded period:		Max submission:	

Assessors are reminded that this is a formal examination of the University of Oxford. In order for transfer of status to be conferred, assessors must be satisfied that:

1. The student has proposed a viable DPhil project that can be completed within the proposed timeframe and funded period or within 12 terms.
2. The work undertaken to date provides an appropriate background and platform for progress.
3. The student has developed a critical understanding of the relevant literature.
4. The student understands, can justify and defend their research project, its objectives and rationale.
5. The student has a clear plan for the future direction of the project.
6. The student has begun to take intellectual ownership of the project.

In making your assessments (and in judging the level of the viva) it is important that your expectations of the student are moderated by (a) the student's previous academic background and (b) the point they have reached in their DPhil studies as this is still an early stage.

On the basis of the student's transfer report/submitted work and the transfer interview, please indicate your assessment of the following, ticking as appropriate:

Excellent = has excellent knowledge/ work. Has convincing research proposal and is making outstanding progress in its development.

Satisfactory = has sufficient knowledge/work and feasible plans for future work, and is making satisfactory progress in development of research proposal.

Not Satisfactory = has lack of knowledge/work and/or poor or unfeasible plans for future work, and/or is not making satisfactory progress.

Assessment of verbal and written work	Excellent	Satisfactory	Not Satisfactory
Familiarity with and knowledge of background literature			
Amount of work completed			
Quality of work completed			
Potential contribution to field of proposed work			
Coherence and organization of work			
Content of presentation			
Delivery of presentation			
Ability to defend work			

Ideas and plans for future work including a timescale for ongoing work					
Ability to work independently					
Compared to other students at this stage, this student's Research competency appears to be					
Student's competence in written and spoken English					
Likelihood of timely submission	Very likely	Probably	Possible	Unlikely	None
Prospect of the student submitting by their current maximum submission date					
Training and professional development	Yes – very well	Yes – but some areas requiring attention	Yes – but inadequately	No	
Has the student appropriately engaged with academic skills training?					
Has the student appropriately engaged with career focussed and professional development activities?					
Would the student benefit from additional supervision to facilitate his/her studies? Yes / No					
Please tick to confirm that you, the assessors, have received and reviewed the candidates GSO.2 Application for Transfer of Status form and that the DGS has signed to approve the candidate was ready to be assessed: <input type="checkbox"/>					

Assessors are required to provide further comments in the box below on the student's work and interview. If transfer is being recommended and everything is satisfactory only a brief report is required, but sufficient verbal feedback must have been provided to the candidate during the transfer interview.. If transfer is not recommended, it is critical that detailed reasons for this are given along with instructions for any specific work that must be done prior to reassessment. A timescale for a subsequent meeting with the assessment panel (usually 3 months later) should be given. Assessors should also include a comment on the student's acquisition of career skills (and plans to develop such skills) as outlined in the GSO.2/ departmental template form. This information will be reviewed by the DGS, and students and their supervisor(s) will receive a copy of the report once agreed. (Please continue on a separate page if required)

Overall Recommendation:

Pass:

- Transfer to DPhil status without reservations
- Transfer to DPhil status if a satisfactory written response to this report is obtained, signed by both the student and supervisor (to be returned within 2 weeks)*
- Transfer to DPhil status but follow-up action required (Please state clearly in your report above what follow-up action is being requested. The requested action should be completed normally within the next 2 months and submitted to the DGS for review.) **

Fail:

- Student should make a 2nd and final attempt to transfer to DPhil status in 1 term

Signed: (Assessor 1)	Signed: (Assessor 2)
Print Name:	Print Name:
Date:	Date:
DGS Signature:	Date:

* Department to obtain written response and a copy should be attached to the report before it is returned to the MPLS Graduate Office.

** In selecting this recommendation assessors are confirming that the student has just reached the required standard for DPhil status, and that they are happy for the student to be transferred. However, the assessors may feel that the student needs to do some additional work to strengthen and support their on-going research, and this should be clearly set out in the report, which will allow the department to review with the student. **Note:** Any follow-up action being requested will not prevent the transfer from being processed.

MATHEMATICAL, PHYSICAL AND LIFE SCIENCES DIVISION

Confirmation of DPhil Status (1st Attempt) – Joint Report of the Assessors

The purpose of confirmation of status is to enable research students to receive an assessment of their work by two assessors other than their supervisor(s). It is intended to provide an important independent indication that if work on the DPhil project continues to develop satisfactorily, then submission of the thesis within either the student's funded period or at most four years would appear to be reasonable. **It should be noted that successful completion of confirmation of status provides an indicator only of potential readiness in due course for submission, not for the final outcome of the DPhil examination.**

The University's guidelines state :

"The purpose of confirmation is to confirm that you are continuing to work at the appropriate doctoral level and to provide assurance that if the work on the thesis continues to develop satisfactorily, then consideration of submission within the course of three further terms would appear to be reasonable."

In liaison with the 2nd Assessor, the Lead Assessor is asked to complete this report form immediately following the assessment interview and normally upload it to eVision within two weeks of the assessment interview.

Confirmation of DPhil Status (1st Attempt)

Student name:		Start Date:	
Research Title:			
Lead Assessor:		2 nd Assessor:	
Date Application Released to Assessors:		Date on which interview conducted:	
Planned Thesis Submission Date:		Maximum Submission Date:	

Assessors are reminded that this is a formal assessment of the University of Oxford. In order for confirmation of status to be conferred, assessors must be satisfied that:

1. The student's DPhil project is following a trajectory that will lead to completion and submission within the remaining timeframe (and not exceeding 12 terms).
2. The work undertaken to date provides a sufficient background and a platform for completion/submission.
3. The student's work/research has the potential to make a 'significant and substantial contribution' to their field of study
4. The student has developed critical knowledge and understanding of the relevant literature.
5. The student understands, can justify and defend their research project, its objectives and rationale.
6. The student has a clear plan for the future direction of the project.
7. The student has taken intellectual ownership of the project.

In making your assessments (and in judging the level of the presentation/interview) it is important that your expectations of the student are moderated by the nature of the project on which the student is engaged, for example if the work is interdisciplinary. The primary focus should be on the quality of the work completed, that it is at the right level, and that a sufficient volume has been completed to be confident in your confirmation that the student is following the correct trajectory.

On the basis of the student's confirmation report/supporting evidence and the confirmation interview/presentation, please indicate your evaluation of the following, ticking as appropriate:

Exceeds Expectations = progress in the development of the thesis is outstanding, and definitely on track to submit within funded period/four years.

Meets Expectations = making appropriate amount of progress in the development of the thesis, and on track to submit within funded period/four years.

Needs Improvement = not making satisfactory progress in the development of the thesis, and submission within funded period/four years unlikely.

Assessment of verbal and written work	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Needs Improvement		
Sufficient familiarity with and in depth knowledge of the relevant background literature					
Amount of work completed					
Quality of work completed					
Potential to make a 'Significant and substantial contribution' to field of work/study					
Coherence and organization of work (proposed structure of the final thesis)					
Content of presentation/interview					
Delivery of presentation/interview					
Ability to defend work, and its significance					
Ideas and plans for future work including a timescale for writing up					
Ability to work independently					
Student's research competency					
Student's competence in written and spoken English					
Likelihood of timely submission					
	Very likely	Probably	Possible	Unlikely	None
Prospect of the student submitting a satisfactory thesis by their current maximum submission date					
Training and professional development *					
	Yes – very well	Yes – but some areas requiring attention	Yes – but inadequately	No	
Has the student appropriately engaged with academic skills training?					
Has the student considered their career post DPhil, and undertaken any activities in support of them e.g. professional development?					
Has the student undertaken or do they have well-developed plans to undertake an internship or placement, if this is required by their funder or training programme? <i>This box will expand as you type text.</i>					
Would the student benefit from additional supervision to facilitate their studies? Yes / No					
Has the student applied to submit their thesis as an integrated thesis (if permitted)? N/A					

Assessors are required to provide further comments in the box below on the student's work and assessment. If confirmation is being recommended and everything is satisfactory only a brief report is required, but sufficient verbal feedback must have been provided to the candidate during the confirmation interview. If confirmation is not recommended, then it is critical that detailed reasons for this are given along with instructions for any specific work that must be done prior to reassessment. A timescale for a subsequent meeting with the assessment panel (usually 3 months later) should also be given. Assessors should also include a comment on the student's acquisition of career skills (and plans to develop such skills) as outlined in the GSO.14 Application. This report will be reviewed by the DGS. Students and their supervisor(s) will receive a copy of the report once it has been endorsed by the DGS.

The box below will expand as you type text.

Overall Recommendation (✓) :

Pass:

- Confirmation of DPhil status without reservations**
- Confirmation of DPhil status if a satisfactory written response to this report is obtained, signed by both the student and supervisor (to be returned within 2 weeks) ***
- Confirmation of DPhil status but follow-up action required (Please state clearly in your report above what follow-up action is being requested. The requested action should be completed normally within the next 2 months and submitted to the DGS for review) ****

Fail:

- Student should make a 2nd and final attempt to confirm DPhil status in 1 term**

Name of Lead Assessor:	By signing below the Lead Assessor affirms the content of the report has been jointly agreed by the Lead Assessor and the 2nd Assessor.
Date:	Signature of Lead Assessor:

* Department to obtain written response and a copy should be added to the assessors' report before it is sent to the DGS for approval.

** If some additional work is required e.g. further results, but the evaluation of statements is satisfactory, confirmation can be recommended with follow-up action being required, which will allow the department to review with the student. **Note:** Any follow-up action being requested will not prevent the confirmation from being processed.

26.11 Appendix XI: Summary of and brief rationale for the compulsory requirements for Materials Research Students

A. Introductory Note

The Oxford Materials 'DPhil in Materials' programme includes a small number of compulsory programme requirements, which are summarised below and included in the checklist on the very first page of this Handbook. More details are given in the main body of the Handbook.

It may be helpful to understand that some of these compulsory requirements serve more than one purpose, and to be aware of the rationale behind their inclusion. For this reason the summary below is provided. In particular, certain items are designed to meet some of the University & MPLS Division's requirements for **transfer** and **confirmation** of status – in the 'concise timelines' (see Appendix XII of Materials Graduate Student Handbook or the 'Materials: PGR Progression' site) these requirements are identified by the green and blue colour coding indicated here. The assessed lecture courses and the items directly associated with transfer and confirmation of status are normally independently assessed/judged/reviewed by one or more members of staff other than your supervisor(s). Transfer and Confirmation of status are formal points of examination and assessment respectively of your fitness to continue on the research programme, normally occurring at the end of your first year and towards the end of your third year respectively. The independent input is an important part of these assessment processes, complementing that of your supervisor(s). Most students find it very helpful to receive this complementary, independent feedback on their progress.

In addition to the Materials requirement of a student-led six-monthly project management exercise, there is a University requirement of four formal progress reports each year, written by the supervisor(s) and with which the student is expected to engage. The purpose of these 'GSR' reports is self-evident: clearly it is important that you, your college and the Department have a regular brief update on your progress, not least so that steps can be taken to remedy any problems as soon as possible. It is compulsory for you to record your own entry as part of your quarterly report; you will be prompted each term and in the Long Vacation to do this, the time window being weeks seven to nine of term and mid-September in the Long Vacation. If you have major or severe concerns it is essential that you raise these through the quarterly report, but prior to this you should have raised these concerns verbally with your Responsible Supervisor. If you wish to raise concerns in confidence you may do so directly with the Director of Graduate Studies for on-course provision (DGS) and/or with your college or Department Advisor and/or with the JCCG (the Department's Staff-Student Committee).

Project Management is itself a useful transferable skill, but our purpose in making it a compulsory requirement is to enable and encourage you to take responsibility for the progress of your research, providing a tool for regular, but not too onerous, review of progress, identification of potential major bottlenecks and appropriate action to mitigate these, planning for the next six months and, in less

detail, planning beyond the next six months right up to thesis submission. The ultimate aim is to maximize your chances of submitting a good thesis within your funded period.

You take the lead on the project management, but it is essential that your supervisor engages with you in this exercise. If you raise any serious concerns in your project management forms it is expected that you flag these by e-mail to the DGS. You upload your Project Management Forms to our 'Materials: Progression' on-line site.

Finally, as part of the six-monthly project management process you and your supervisor are asked to review your training needs at least annually (academic training, research-specific skills training, generic transferable skills training & development). There is a Divisional expectation of a regular 'Training Needs Analysis'.

The University, and some sponsors, including the EPSRC, also expect each student to engage with roughly 100 hours per year of transferable 'career skills' training and the University requires you to report on this in your formal applications for transfer of status and confirmation of status.

B. Observations by DGS (AOT)

1. Why require the informal meeting with your Lead Transfer of Status Assessor early in Trinity full term of Year one?

So that any problems can be identified in good time for remedial action to be taken prior to the formal assessment for transfer of status. Please note that not all projects are expected to have delivered substantial results by this stage.

2. What about giving a presentation in year one?

*A short presentation to your assessors **is** incorporated in your Year One Transfer of Status interview - indeed, it is a Divisional requirement that a presentation be given at some point during your period as a Probationer Research student.*

3. Why not ask for the Literature Review earlier in year one?

*The Lit Review is a substantial piece of work, and requires the completion of a comprehensive consideration of all relevant publications on your research topic. Given the other course requirements that **have** to be timetabled in MT & HT, plus the technical training that many are engaged with, it would be very onerous to **require** the Lit Review sooner than the end of TT full term. Of course you are not prohibited from completing your review in advance of Week 8 of TT if this suits you and your supervisor! It is also helpful for supervisors to have had the*

opportunity to identify in mid TT, during the drafting of this substantial literature review, any student who needs additional support and/or training in writing a scientific report and/or in writing in English.

4. Why not schedule the poster session in year two and the research talk in year three?

It is quite common for a student to give an oral presentation and or offer a poster at a conference by the two-year point in their DPhil project. We offer guidance on poster presentation via a slide set, but there is limited value in practising actually showing a poster in advance of a conference. In contrast, for an oral presentation it is really helpful to have had an opportunity to practise in front of an audience other than your own research group before you speak at a conference, and to receive feedback on your oral presentation skills in good time for you to work on improving these if this is necessary.

The Senior member of staff who chairs the session in which you give your talk and the Convenor of the 'Y2 talks theme' in which your talk takes place will give collective written feedback to all speakers within a week of the talks and in a case where significant improvement is needed will write individually to the student concerned. These staff are also able to take an informal view of your progress to date and if they have concerns to raise these with your supervisor in good time for remedial action to be taken in advance of your formal application for Confirmation of Status. For most students, at this eighteen-month stage a short individual research talk followed by some questions is a better means by which to gauge your progress than a poster.

[If a poster session were used for this purpose we would need single author posters and a senior member of staff would have to ask you questions about your poster. Furthermore including an, albeit informal, assessment of progress would detract from the convivial social event that forms part of the Year 3 poster session.]

You are better placed to write a proper A0 research poster when you have a project that is well on the way to completion, with plenty of results and analysis, and having to do so is a good way to focus you and your supervisor's minds on what will be the key results in your thesis.

5. Why do confirmation of status interviews normally take place during the period Weeks 0 to 10 of Trinity Term of the third year?

So that you receive the constructive feedback from your assessors approximately eight to nine months ahead of your intended date for thesis submission, such that this feedback has the potential to influence decisions on your final three or so months of carrying out experiments (or

the equivalent for modelling or theory projects) and on your thesis content. Remember that you are advised to allow six-months to write your thesis.

26.12 Appendix XII: Concise Timelines for Materials Research Degrees

In the Resources section of our 'Materials: PGR Progression' on-line site, in the folder entitled "Concise Timelines for Materials PGR Progression Requirements", you will find timelines for the following:

3.5y DPhil in Materials

4y DPhil in Materials (includes EPSRC iCASE studentships)

3y DPhil in Materials

4y Fusion Power and Materials 4.0 EPSRC CDT programme DPhil

2y MSc (Research) in Materials

These Timelines are also available on the Department website at [Postgraduate Project Management & Concise Timelines](#) .

The majority of our research students follow the 3.5y DPhil in Materials programme, for which the timeline is reproduced overleaf.

Materials PGR Student Requirements and Concise Timeline for **Transfer & Confirmation** of Status

For completeness also showing:

Project management form (PMF) submissions. **Mandatory GSR submissions.** Whole-cohort events.

Illustrated for a Michaelmas Term starter, on the **DPhil in Materials** programme, with a **3.5-year** studentship

* Indicates Mandatory Divisional Requirement or University Requirement by Regulation

Y1	MT+HT	Pass two assessed lecture courses, complete the University's on-line Research Integrity course and attend a minimum of seven colloquia plus the three compulsory workshops
	MT Wk0	Induction
	Wk4	SUBMIT 'NEW GRADUATE STUDENT' ON-LINE QUESTIONNAIRE
	Wk7	Informal introductory meeting with your Department Advisor
	Wk7-9	*Student report to GSR
	HT Wk0-1	PMF1 to the 'Materials: PGR Progression' on-line site
	Wk7-9	*Student report to GSR
	TT Wk2-4	Informal meeting with Lead Assessor (arranged by student) [In advance upload to 'Materials: PGR Progression' a single pdf comprising: project title, Gantt chart, and a 100-word summary of the new science and/or technology to which it is anticipated the project will lead]
	Wk7-9	*Student report to GSR
	Wk8	Lit Review to 'Materials: PGR Progression' (5,000 to 6,000 words) [* Assessors are required to judge a candidate's understanding of the literature]
	LV July	PMF2 to 'Materials: PGR Progression'
	July	*Apply to be considered for Transfer of Status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit an on-line GSO.2 application^{a,b} within which you have uploaded a copy of your Certificate of Completion for the University's on-line Research Integrity course. • When subsequently prompted by our Education Support (ES) team, upload the two 'milestone' documents - namely your 2,500 word summary of progress to date and the full version of your up-to-date Gantt Chart. • Soon after this your assessors will be alerted that your application is ready for review and our ES team will prompt you to contact your assessors in order to arrange the date for your transfer interview. <p>^aBefore you submit your GSO.2 you must have (i) submitted your literature review (see above), (ii) submitted to our ES team your colloquia attendance record (see our Graduate Student Handbook), and (iii) informed our ES team of the titles of the two lecture courses for which you have submitted work for assessment.</p> <p>^bBefore you complete this form read the guidance in Section 10 of our current Graduate Student Handbook.</p>
	mid-Sept	*Student report to GSR
Y2	MT Wks -3 to +1	*Transfer of Status Interview with Assessors
	Wk7-9	*Student report to GSR

	HT	Wk0-1	PMF3a to 'Materials: PGR Progression'
		Wk7-9	*Student report to GSR
		Wk7	Research Talk (Upload abstract & slides to 'Materials: PGR Progression')
	TT	Wk7-9	*Student report to GSR
	LV	July	PMF3b to 'Materials: PGR Progression'
		mid-Sept	*Student report to GSR
Y3		Wk6HT to Wk6TT	*Apply to be considered for Confirmation of DPhil Status
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit an on-line GSO.14 application^b within which you have uploaded a copy of your Certificate of Completion for the University's on-line Research Integrity course (you will recall you completed this course during your first year). • When subsequently prompted by our Education Support (ES) team, upload the 'milestone' document - namely the full version of your up-to-date Gantt Chart. • Soon after this your assessors will be alerted that your application is ready for review and our ES team will prompt you to contact your assessors in order to arrange the date for your Confirmation interview.
			^b <u>Before you complete this form read the guidance in Section 12 of our Graduate Student Handbook.</u>
	MT	Wk7-9	*Student report to GSR
	HT	Wk0-1	PMF3c to 'Materials: PGR Progression'
		Wk3	Submit A3 version of Poster <u>if</u> entering competition
		Wk6	Poster Session (Upload A3 version to 'Materials: PGR Progression')
		Wk7-9	*Student report to GSR
	TT	Wks 0 to 10	*Confirmation of Status Interview with Assessors
		Wk7-9	*Student report to GSR
	LV	July	PMF3d to 'Materials: PGR Progression'
		mid-Sept	*Student report to GSR
Y4	MT	Wk0-1	PMF4 to 'Materials: PGR Progression' (includes thesis outline)
		Wk7-9	*Student report to GSR
	HT	Jan-Feb	Apply for appointment of examiners – on-line GSO.3 form
		Wk7-9	*Student report to GSR
		March	SUBMIT THESIS VIA ON-LINE RTDS PORTAL

PTO for a note on the [Project Management Scheme](#) and the [quarterly GSR Reports](#)

A note on the Project Management Scheme and the quarterly Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) Reports

The quarterly GSR Reports by student and supervisor(s) are a mandatory requirement of the University.

The project management scheme is intended as a tool to enable and encourage the student to take ownership of their project and to maximise their chances of submission within their funded period. It also enables the development of a valuable 'career skill'.

Other than requiring a project management review by student and supervisor at six-monthly intervals the Department is not prescriptive in exactly how student and supervisor make best use of the project management scheme.

However, one model that can be effective and efficient is:

Student inputs their quarterly GSR report to the on-line GSR system in weeks 7-9 of each term and by mid-September in the Long Vac.

Following this submission, and **prior** to submission of the **supervisor's**** GSR report, it is best practice for the supervisor(s) to meet with the student to discuss the student's progress and GSR report. We shall call this the 'GSR Meeting'.

** From 2018/19 onwards the University has set a **strict four-week window** for this supervisor's submission; for example, week 10 of MT to week -1 of HT.

At the two such GSR meetings in each of years one to three that will **precede** a PMF submission[#] it is logical to review the student's project management and Gantt chart (that is, in advance of the next formal PMF update by the student).

By means of a single sentence in their GSR report the supervisor can confirm that this project management review has taken place. Since our PMF includes a section on training needs, this will meet the Divisional steer that the GSR process includes 'Training Needs Analysis'.

Having read the supervisor's formal GSR report, and in the light of the discussion at the most recent GSR meeting with their supervisor(s), the student is well-placed to capture by means of the PMF a review of their project management (including training needs) and revision of their Gantt chart ready for the imminent PMF submission[#] to the 'Materials: PGR Progression' on-line site.

For the two quarterly GSR reports per year that do **not** precede a Materials six-monthly project management review the Department will **not** expect a training needs analysis to take place. Unless student or supervisor(s) need to raise concerns, typically these two quarterly GSR reports will be very light-touch and even may not involve a GSR meeting.

[#] For a student following the 3.5 year DPhil in Materials programme, the two occasions in each of years one to three when the GSR meeting will precede a PMF submission are the Weeks 0-1 HT and July PMF submissions. The same approach could be taken for the PMF4 submission in Weeks 0-1 of MT Y4.

26.13 Appendix XIII: Research Integrity

[Research integrity](#) is a commitment to creating an environment that promotes responsible conduct by embracing standards of excellence, trustworthiness and lawfulness. The University expects that everyone engaged in research will observe the highest standards of conduct in respect of research integrity.

For individual researchers, research integrity entails a commitment to a range of practices including but not limited to:

- intellectual honesty in proposing, performing, and reporting research;
- accuracy in representing contributions to research proposals and reports;
- fairness in peer review; collegiality in scientific interactions, including communications and sharing of resources;
- transparency in conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest;
- protection of human participants in the conduct of research;
- humane care of animals in the conduct of research;
- adherence to the mutual responsibilities between investigators and their research teams¹

¹ Description of research integrity is adapted from the US National Academies report *Integrity in Scientific Research: Creating an Environment That Promotes Responsible Conduct* (2002).

There are no universally correct ways to do research. There are, however, standards of practice which apply generally. Researchers should:

- be aware of the legislation, codes of practice and University policies relevant to their field;
- have the necessary skills and training for their field;
- be aware of the publication rules for the journals they want to publish in;
- ask if they feel something isn't quite right;
- not ignore problems;
- be accountable to the University and their peers for the conduct of their research.

All researchers are expected to be committed to ethical principles and professional standards. Not upholding such standards, either intentionally or through lack of knowledge, damages the scientific process and may harm research participants, colleagues, the University and society as a whole. Misconduct or poor practice in research should therefore be challenged.

Policies and resources

All those involved with research at Oxford are expected to read and abide by the University's [Code of Practice and Procedure for Academic Integrity in Research](#) .

Students in the MPLS Division are required to complete the [online Research Integrity](#) course by the time they apply for Transfer of Status.

The University's [Research Integrity webpages](#) contain a number of additional resources, including links to information on authorship, conflicts of interest, research data management, health and safety, human participations in research, intellectual property, research involving animals, and research misconduct.

Your supervisor will play an important role in helping you to develop skills for good practice in research, and is the first person you should ask if you have queries about any aspect of research integrity. Other sources of support and advice include your Director of Graduate Studies, other academics in your department, and the ethics advisors in University [Research Services](#) .

PTO for The Oxford Week numbering system for Michaelmas, Hilary and Trinity Terms

The Oxford Week numbering system for Michaelmas, Hilary and Trinity Terms

2024

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
S	. 7 14 21 28	. 4 11 18 25	. 3 10 17 24 31	. 7 14 21 28	. 5 12 19 26	. 2 9 16 23 30
M	1 8 15 22 29	. 5 12 19 26	. 4 11 18 25 .	1 8 15 22 29	. 6 13 20 27	. 3 10 17 24 .
T	2 9 16 23 30	. 6 13 20 27	. 5 12 19 26 .	2 9 16 23 30	. 7 14 21 28	. 4 11 18 25 .
W	3 10 17 24 31	. 7 14 21 28	. 6 13 20 27 .	3 10 17 24 .	1 8 15 22 29	. 5 12 19 26 .
T	4 11 18 25 .	1 8 15 22 29	. 7 14 21 28 .	4 11 18 25 .	2 9 16 23 30	. 6 13 20 27 .
F	5 12 19 26 .	2 9 16 23 .	1 8 15 22 29 .	5 12 19 26 .	3 10 17 24 31	. 7 14 21 28 .
S	6 13 20 27 .	3 10 17 24 .	2 9 16 23 30 .	6 13 20 27 .	4 11 18 25 .	1 8 15 22 29 .
	0 1 2 3	3 4 5 6 7	7 8 9	0 1 2	2 3 4 5 6	6 7 8 9

	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
S	. 7 14 21 28	. 4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	. 6 13 20 27	. 3 10 17 24 .	1 8 15 22 29
M	1 8 15 22 29	. 5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	. 7 14 21 28	. 4 11 18 25 .	2 9 16 23 30
T	2 9 16 23 30	. 6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24 .	1 8 15 22 29	. 5 12 19 26 .	3 10 17 24 31
W	3 10 17 24 31	. 7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25 .	2 9 16 23 30	. 6 13 20 27 .	4 11 18 25 .
T	4 11 18 25 .	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26 .	3 10 17 24 31	. 7 14 21 28 .	5 12 19 26 .
F	5 12 19 26 .	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27 .	4 11 18 25 .	1 8 15 22 29 .	6 13 20 27 .
S	6 13 20 27 .	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28 .	5 12 19 26 .	2 9 16 23 30 .	7 14 21 28 .
				0 1 2 3	3 4 5 6 7	8 9

2025

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
S	. 5 12 19 26	. 2 9 16 23	. 2 9 16 23 30	. 6 13 20 27	. 4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29
M	. 6 13 20 27	. 3 10 17 24	. 3 10 17 24 31	. 7 14 21 28	. 5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30
T	. 7 14 21 28	. 4 11 18 25	. 4 11 18 25 .	1 8 15 22 29	. 6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24 .
W	1 8 15 22 29	. 5 12 19 26	. 5 12 19 26 .	2 9 16 23 30	. 7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25 .
T	2 9 16 23 30	. 6 13 20 27	. 6 13 20 27 .	3 10 17 24 .	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26 .
F	3 10 17 24 31	. 7 14 21 28	. 7 14 21 28 .	4 11 18 25 .	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27 .
S	4 11 18 25 .	1 8 15 22 .	1 8 15 22 29 .	5 12 19 26 .	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28 .
	0 1 2	2 3 4 5 6	6 7 8 9	0 1	1 2 3 4 5	6 7 8 9

	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
S	. 6 13 20 27	. 3 10 17 24 31	. 7 14 21 28	. 5 12 19 26	. 2 9 16 23 30	. 7 14 21 28
M	. 7 14 21 28	. 4 11 18 25 .	1 8 15 22 29	. 6 13 20 27	. 3 10 17 24 .	1 8 15 22 29
T	1 8 15 22 29	. 5 12 19 26 .	2 9 16 23 30	. 7 14 21 28	. 4 11 18 25 .	2 9 16 23 30
W	2 9 16 23 30	. 6 13 20 27 .	3 10 17 24 .	1 8 15 22 29	. 5 12 19 26 .	3 10 17 24 31
T	3 10 17 24 31	. 7 14 21 28 .	4 11 18 25 .	2 9 16 23 30	. 6 13 20 27 .	4 11 18 25 .
F	4 11 18 25 .	1 8 15 22 29 .	5 12 19 26 .	3 10 17 24 31	. 7 14 21 28 .	5 12 19 26 .
S	5 12 19 26 .	2 9 16 23 30 .	6 13 20 27 .	4 11 18 25 .	1 8 15 22 29 .	6 13 20 27 .
				0 1 2 3	3 4 5 6 7 8	8 9

2026

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
S	. 4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22	1 8 15 22 29	. 5 12 19 26	. 3 10 17 24 31	. 7 14 21 28
M	. 5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23	2 9 16 23 30	. 6 13 20 27	. 4 11 18 25 .	1 8 15 22 29
T	. 6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	3 10 17 24 31	. 7 14 21 28	. 5 12 19 26 .	2 9 16 23 30
W	. 7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	4 11 18 25 .	1 8 15 22 29	. 6 13 20 27 .	3 10 17 24 .
T	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	5 12 19 26 .	2 9 16 23 30	. 7 14 21 28 .	4 11 18 25 .
F	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	6 13 20 27 .	3 10 17 24 .	1 8 15 22 29 .	5 12 19 26 .
S	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	7 14 21 28 .	4 11 18 25 .	2 9 16 23 30 .	6 13 20 27 .
	0 1 2	3 4 5 6	7 8 9	0 1	1 2 3 4 5 6	6 7 8 9

	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
S	. 5 12 19 26	. 2 9 16 23 30	. 6 13 20 27	. 4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	. 6 13 20 27
M	. 6 13 20 27	. 3 10 17 24 31	. 7 14 21 28	. 5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	. 7 14 21 28
T	. 7 14 21 28	. 4 11 18 25 .	1 8 15 22 29	. 6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24 .	1 8 15 22 29
W	1 8 15 22 29	. 5 12 19 26 .	2 9 16 23 30	. 7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25 .	2 9 16 23 30
T	2 9 16 23 30	. 6 13 20 27 .	3 10 17 24 .	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26 .	3 10 17 24 31
F	3 10 17 24 31	. 7 14 21 28 .	4 11 18 25 .	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27 .	4 11 18 25 .
S	4 11 18 25 .	1 8 15 22 29 .	5 12 19 26 .	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28 .	5 12 19 26 .
				0 1 2 3	4 5 6 7 8	8 9

