# DEPARTMENT OF EARTH SCIENCES
# GRADUATE HANDBOOK
# 2025-26

## Version 1.2

**Changes Since v1.1**

All sections and links, names, and email addresses have been updated throughout.

Addition of references to SRF policy (p.89) and Appendix N (p.90).

Information on printing (p.44) updated.

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For up-to-date lists and information about researchers and staff in the department, please see the website (www.earth.ox.ac.uk/people).

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# Introduction

Welcome to the Department of Earth Sciences, which is part of the Division of Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS). The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with information about the way the department operates key stages in your progress towards a graduate degree, research-related financial matters and pastoral care support. The Academic Office staff are here to help you, but anyone in the department - other research students, postdocs and members of staff - will be happy to answer questions about the department and university. Never suffer in silence!

Throughout this document there will be references to information being on 'Canvas', in most cases this will refer to the Graduate Studies in Earth Sciences Canvas site (https://canvas.ox.ac.uk).

## Master of Science by Research

The Master of Science by Research (MSc(R)) requires a thesis not normally exceeding 125 pages, and usually takes two to three years to complete. It is open to direct entry, but occasionally students who originally applied for the DPhil in Earth Sciences change to this path for personal or logistical reasons.

## Doctoral Programmes

Most postgraduate students in the department are working towards a DPhil, which usually takes three to four years to complete; we encourage students to aim to complete by the end of their funding period rather than their maximum submission date. There are several paths towards the DPhil, as outlined in the sections below.

### *DPhil in Earth Sciences*

Each year the department admits several students who are funded by various means. This might include University scholarships, government scholarships, industrial sponsorship, research grants or self-funding.

The Earth Sciences are the focus of scientific understanding about this and other planets, embracing a large range of fundamental topics including the evolution of life, how climate has changed in the past and will change in the future, the nature of planetary surfaces and interiors and the processes underlying natural hazards like earthquakes and volcanoes.

The DPhil is an advanced degree by research that will take between three to four years to complete; we encourage students to aim to complete by the end of their funding period rather than their maximum submission date.

Students will typically join a research group and work alongside other research students, postdoctoral researchers and academics all of whom can provide additional support and advice. Students will work alongside each other in the same general research area, although academic activity across research groups is also strongly encouraged. Research themes in the department include:

- Geophysics and Geodynamics
- Planetary Evolution and Materials
- Oceanography, Climate and Palaeoenvironment
- Palaeobiology and Evolution

- Geodesy, Tectonics, Volcanology and Related Hazards
- Earth Resources

While the focus of the DPhil is on the students' development to conduct independent research, there are formal courses available both within the Department of Earth Sciences and other departments in the Maths, Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS) Division. Formal courses are organised through the MPLS Graduate Academic Programme and include generic skills such as advice on science writing, as well as subject specific specialist courses. These enable the structured course components to be tailored to your individual research project needs.

There are also paid opportunities for students to gain teaching experience by demonstrating laboratory classes to undergraduates, assisting on undergraduate field courses, or in tutorial teaching.

Students will be encouraged to present their research at national and international meetings and to publish in internationally recognised science journals. Students may also choose to take part in outreach activities, presenting the exciting science conducted in the department to schoolchildren and the wider public. Within the department students will be part of a community of over seventy research students including students enrolled on other related courses.

***STFC***

Every few years the department has one or two students funded by the Science and Technology Facilities Council, working in the general area of Solar and Planetary Science (e.g., planetary formation). These students are admitted into the department via the DPhil in Earth Sciences.

***Intelligent Earth (UKRI CDT in AI for the Environment)***

The Intelligent Earth CDT is a four-year doctoral programme designed to equip a new generation of students with advanced AI skills to tackle some of the most pressing environmental issues.

In year one, students will take core courses and computational skills training courses, followed by advanced cross-cohort courses, responsible AI training, and professional skills training modules, culminating in a three-month mini research project* followed by the annual hackathon and conference. Course-free periods will be used for consolidation, supervisor matching, and DPhil proposal development.

In year two, students will transition to their primary department and supervisors and start their DPhil research. Students will take advanced cross-cohort courses and professional/computational skill training modules. A secondment with non-academic partners may also take place at this stage, but may alternatively take place in year three.

In year three, the focus will be on DPhil research with optional advanced courses and professional/computational skill training modules based on individual training needs. A secondment with non-academic partners may also take place at this stage if it was not undertaken in year two.

In year four, students will finalise their DPhil research and complete their thesis writing. Professional training will focus on career development, job/fellowship applications and interviews.

Further information about the course can be found on their website (https://intelligent-earth.ox.ac.uk).

*Approximate timeline for mini project (subject to change)*

| Mini Project proposal | Mini Project | Transfer to Department |
|---|---|---|
| • Before **14 February (Friday Week 4, Hilary Term)**<br>• Submit a **mini-project proposal** (using the IECDT proposal template)<br>• Identify the lead supervisor (and potentially partner) | • Flexible start date after 3rd March<br>• At least **4 months, possible for split into two 2-months**<br>• **15 -minute Presentation** at the student conference (**June 23 -24**)<br>• **Research report(s)** (<5000 words) **due 29th Aug**<br>• Include supervisor feedback and reviewed by a member of the IECDT MC. | • a 2-page **DPhil proposal** for DPhil plus a 1-page proposed **budget** and **timeline**<br>• Submit the proposal before end of Aug/mid Sept (TBD)<br>• Include supervisor feedback and reviewed by a member of the IECDT MC |

***Interdisciplinary Life and Environmental Science Landscape Award DTP (ILESLA)***

The ILESLA DTP is funded by a BBSRC and NERC Landscape Award. It provides students with the opportunity to undertake research across the full breadth of biological and environmental science, from cellular mechanisms and crop science through to climate change and dynamic earth processes.

In the first term students will be based at the Doctoral Training Centre (DTC) and undertake an individually tailored training programme that includes training in research skills such as:

- mathematics and statistics
- programming
- imaging and image analysis
- data science
- modelling biological or environmental processes and systems.

Students can also access a wide variety of additional training provided across the partnership throughout their doctoral studies.

During Hilary and Trinity terms of the first year, students will undertake two rotation projects with different supervisory teams, and a long format team-based project with other members of the cohort before deciding on their substantive three-year doctoral project.

A distinctive feature of the course is that students are required to undertake a 12-week internship to gain experience of work in a professional environment and develop transferable skills that will be beneficial in their future career. Internships can be full- or part-time. Areas that may be explored during internships include (but are not limited to):

- industrial research and development
- science policy
- teaching
- science communication
- publishing

- entrepreneurship
- project management

If students are working on a project co-supervised by a non-academic partner organisation, they will normally undertake a placement with that organisation instead of a 12-week internship. These placements may range from 12 weeks to 18 months. If students are working on a project that has translational potential, they can choose to use their internship to focus on translational aspects of their project, such as market research or business plan development.

If students are studying full-time, they will normally submit a research proposal for their substantive doctoral project during the first year (usually halfway through the third term).

Further information about the course can be found on their website (https://www.ilesla.ox.ac.uk).

***NERC DTP in Environmental Research***

Although applications are now closed, the department has participated in the Natural Environment Research Council's Doctoral Training Programme in Environmental Research. This 4-year programme provided a multidisciplinary training environment for the next generation of researchers working at the frontiers of Environmental Science.

The annual cohort comprised approximately 30 students, 24 of whom were Research Council funded, with the remainder supported by university and college scholarships and non-academic Partners. Each year around 8 DTP students joined the Department of Earth Sciences.

Students were admitted to one of the three streams of the DTP and would develop their research project in any relevant area during their first 2-3 months of study. During this period, they received intensive, cohort-wide training, which included a 3-day residential field course, development of a common skills toolkit through a series of core cross-cohort courses, training in research and transferable skills, seminar and discussion groups and a termly public lecture programme.

Students received support as they developed their research proposal during the first term. During months 4-12, students embarked on their research projects. By the end of year one, students would have completed a review of the state-of-the-art in their chosen research area and presented their research and a research plan at the end of year conference. Students carried out their research projects in a chosen department. They gain their DPhil from the department, although the DTP will continue to provide support, training, career development and networking opportunities.

Further information about the DTP can be found on programme's website (www.environmental-research.ox.ac.uk).

## Calendar of Events

The dates of term, and downloads for incorporation into your calendar, can be found on the University website (Dates of Term).

| **Date**<br>(subject to confirmation) | **Event** |
|---|---|
| Michaelmas Term Week 0, Tuesday | Graduate induction and reception |
| Michaelmas Term Week 1 | Burdett Coutts application deadline; Joint Consultative Committee for Graduates (JCCG) |
| Michaelmas Term Week 7 | Student reporting window open on GSR |
| Date tbc | Department Christmas party–1st year postgrads to organise |
| Hilary Term Week 0, Monday-Tuesday | Graduate Conference Presentations (Transfer and Confirmation of Status) |
| Hilary Term Week 0, Wednesday-Friday | Transfer and Confirmation of Status interviews |
| Hilary Term Week 1 | Burdett Coutts application deadline; JCCG |
| Hilary Term Week 7 | Student reporting window open on GSR |
| Trinity Term Week 1 | JCCG |
| Trinity Term Week 7 | Student reporting window open on GSR |
| August | Student reporting window open on GSR |

# Training

## Harassment Training

The department expects all students to complete the Harassment in Higher Education for staff (e-learning) course (Harassment Training).

## MPLS Divisional Training

A range of courses on basic skills (e.g., communication and presentation skills, time management, assertiveness, managing relationships) is provided by the Division of Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences. Information about the courses available can be found at: www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training. Please do take advantage of these courses.

The department expects all students to complete the 'Being an Effective Bystander' course: MPLS ED&I Training Programme.

Further information about Divisional training can be found on Canvas (https://canvas.ox.ac.uk).

## Doctoral Training Centre (DTC)

The DTC runs a variety of training courses students may find useful. For graduate students not on a DTC programme, if you are interested in attending, or want more information about any of the lectures or training courses, please contact the relevant course administrator (https://www.dtc.ox.ac.uk).

## Departmental Training

The department offers a range of activities open to graduate students and postdocs. Training opportunities open include a Department-run Preparing for Teaching and Learning at Oxford (PLTO) course (mandatory for anyone wishing to provide teaching in the Department) and Scientific Writing.

In addition, when demand is sufficient, we run in-house field work first aid training for graduate students, postdocs and faculty. First aid qualifications are essential for those demonstrating undergraduate field classes and for all those undertaking research in the field (whether in the mountains, at sea, or even somewhere relatively safe, like the fields around Oxford!). First aid qualifications can also be obtained through courses offered by the University Safety Office or external providers. Please discuss with your supervisor about what sort of training you require.

The department asks students to participate and contribute towards the department's research and academic activities, such as organizing the graduate conference, group seminars etc. This an integral part of researcher training and prepares students for a research career where they will be expected to voluntarily undertake peer reviews, organise and chair conferences and contribute towards similar activities.

You will also receive any training necessary to carry out your research, which will be organised in consultation with your supervisor.

The department is always working towards improving in-house training for graduate students, including training on teaching and demonstrating to undergraduates and scientific writing. We have a list containing details of current graduate students' interest and teaching experience on the department's SharePoint site (Sharepoint - Graduate Studies). We are also open to suggestions to fill training gaps, so please don't hesitate to contact the Academic Office (graduate.studies@earth.ox.ac.uk) with suggestions.

Departmental seminars take place in the department during term time. Attending these seminars can be a very good way of keeping up with aspects of Earth Science research across the subject. There are often opportunities to meet up with the visiting speakers before their talks, and to join the speakers for dinner afterwards – look out for announcements from the member of staff who is hosting the speaker.

The URL for the timetable software will be notified to you by email. You will be able to find the undergraduate lecture lists on the undergraduate Canvas pages.

Further information about training can be found on Canvas (https://canvas.ox.ac.uk).

**Library Training**

There is an introduction to the Departmental Library and other Oxford libraries in Hilary term. It introduces SOLO (the library catalogue) and various bibliographic databases, how to access theses, Open Access content, geospatial information and saving/managing references. It is worth attending even if you have been an undergraduate at Oxford.

The Bodleian libraries offer training throughout the year on number of topics. More information can be found at Bodleian iSkills workshops.

**IT Services**

IT Services runs many training courses on computers, common systems and packages. You will find a listing of currently available courses at https://cosy.ox.ac.uk.

They will help you to set up your basic IT services such as email and internet access. The IT Services website also provides information and guidance on getting started.

Please seek advice from your supervisor about courses that will be useful for you. Further details about courses on offer can be found at: www.it.ox.ac.uk.

**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 its students to maintain the highest standards of integrity in 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.

The University hosts subject-specific online courses on research integrity (Research integrity and practice), and students are expected to have completed this training before they apply for Transfer of Status.

Further information can be found in the handbook appendices.

***Policies and Resources***

All those involved with research at Oxford are expected to read and abide by the University's Academic Integrity in Research: Code of Practice and Procedure (https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/integrity).

Students in the MPLS Division are required to complete the online Research Integrity course by the time they apply for Transfer of Status (Research Integrity Online Courses).

The University's Research integrity and practice webpages contain 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 advising you on all aspects of research integrity. Other sources of support and advice include your DGS, other academics in your department and the ethics advisors in University Research Services (https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/about).

**Information Security**

The University's Information Security team have courses designed specifically for students, and the department encourages all students to complete this training:

1. How to keep safe online (https://infosec.ox.ac.uk/students).
2. If you are handling University data: Information Security and Data Protection training course for students. This training is equivalent to the staff course. Once completed and passed, you will be awarded a certificate.

**Language Courses**

These are available to all members of the University at: www.lang.ox.ac.uk.

**Internships**

If you wish to undertake an internship during your studies, you should discuss this with your supervisors. Supervisors have overall responsibility for a student's progression and hence supervisory support is needed to undertake an internship.

There have been instances where students have been asked to sign agreements during their internships, which subsequently had a negative effect on their thesis or future career, particularly where agreements have included clauses claiming rights to intellectual property (IP) which may otherwise have been freely available for the student to use. It is therefore important that you are equipped to make your own assessment of IP risk before deciding to take up an internship. There may also be potential risks to the University in terms of compliance with our obligations to external organisations, particularly in relation to visa or ATAS requirements. It is anticipated that compliance will rarely be an issue with internships, but it is important that the University has a means by which to oversee internships to ensure that we remain compliant and/or can take steps where compliance may be an issue. This form aims to assist both you, in making a self-assessment of threat to your IP, and the University, in meeting its obligations: MPLS Internship form.

You must discuss your internship with your supervisor prior to submitting the MPLS Internship Monitoring Form. Within the form there is a link to the supervisor form that the supervisor must complete and return to you, which you will then upload with your form. The supervisor form can also be found here: Internships, work experience and volunteering.

If the internship is related to your research, a suspension of status application is not appropriate.

**Vitae and the GRAD Schools Programme**

The Research Councils UK (RCUK) and the Career Development Organisation (CRAC) have a website giving valuable personal and career development advice for postgraduate researchers: Developing as a researcher.

Periodically they run residential graduate schools designed to help you reflect upon and develop the skills you have as a postgraduate researcher. These are well worth considering: feedback from students who have done these in the past has been extremely positive.

# Supervision

It is department policy that each graduate student must have at least two Faculty members as named supervisors; the primary from Earth Sciences, the second could be from another Oxford department. External or postdoctoral supervisors can be added to the supervision team in addition to the two Faculty members. The full details of eligibility and responsibility for the full supervision team can be found in the MPLS Division's Code of Practice on the Supervision of Graduate Research Students webpage (Essentials of Supervision).

Further details about the responsibilities of supervisors and students are explained on the MPLS website (Supervision and Termly Reporting) and in the University's policy on Research Degrees.

All supervisors in MPLS departments who are new to graduate supervision, or new to supervising graduate students at Oxford, are required to take the DPhil Supervision in the Sciences online course (this is the same course for those undertaking MScR supervision): Training for Supervisors.

Students should expect to meet with their lead supervisor at least once a term. They should also have meetings with a member of the supervisory team at least once every two weeks (averaged across the year).

**Graduate Supervision Reporting**

At the end of every term, and again in the Long Vacation, students are required to report on their progress in training and research by completing an online form in the Graduate Supervision Reporting system (GSR).

Access to GSR for students will be via Student Self Service (www.evision.ox.ac.uk). You will be sent an automated email notification with details of how to log in at the start of each reporting window, and who to contact with queries. We strongly encourage you to make full use of this reporting system.

GSR reports do not need to be long or polished, but they are an important way of ensuring that students are getting the support that they need as they progress. It is recommended by the Transfer and Confirmation of Status process that a preparation form is completed and added to a termly report as part of the process. You will also be able to complete the Divisional Training Needs Analysis (TNA) form in Student Self Service and add this to your GSR reports.

Your supervisors should also submit a report via the same system. These reports are accessible to you, your supervisors, your College Advisor and the DGS.

***Suggestions of what to include on GSR***

- General description of progress, including indicators of success but also issues of concern
- Attendance at scientific meetings and conferences
- Attendance at Departmental Seminars
- Organisation of events, both within and outside the Department, social and academic
- Any worries about resources (for example, computing or in the lab; inability to attend conferences, etc.) or a need for any additional training requirements

- Any concerns about EEDI can be raised here (or separately in confidence with the DGS)
- Any concerns about well-being can be raised here (or separately in confidence with the DGS)

**Note:** Recording any difficulties or concerns about your progress in GSR is important as the reports may be referred to later for context, for example, if you later need to apply for a retrospective Suspension of Status or an Extension of Time.

***Flagging concerns***

It is important to remember that flags of minor or major concerns are not indicative of ability to complete a doctorate. They should be used to indicate issues and concerns about a range of factors including resources, data, skills and so on. It is worse to indicate 'no concerns' when a simple issue could be resolved (for example, by attending a training course; more disk space of HPC resources, etc.). It is envisioned that most students will have a reporting period with concerns at some point during their graduate studies.

Student concerns should primarily relate to academic progress. If you are dissatisfied with any other aspects of provision, e.g., your supervisory relationship or working environment, you should raise these with the DGS in the first instance and, if necessary, pursue them through the department's complaints procedure.

Supervisors should discuss any concerns about academic progress with the student before flagging a concern in GSR.

The DGS should review all flagged concerns and take any appropriate action. A severe concern should result in a meeting with the DGS without delay. The DGS should briefly note any action being taken to resolve the matter and all concerns raised will be treated in a confidential manner.

**Minor concerns** – Satisfactory progress is being made, but minor issues have been identified where further action may be required to keep progress on track.

**Major concerns** – One or more factors are significantly affecting progress, and further action is required to keep progress on track.

**Severe concerns** – Progress is being seriously affected by one or more factors, and a meeting with the DGS should be held as soon as possible to discuss further action and to get progress back on track.

# Adjustments to Assessment Arrangements

If you wish to bring to the attention of your assessors or examiners any circumstances that you feel should be taken into consideration, it is important that you let us know. If you would like to discuss your circumstances before making a formal application for adjustments, please feel free to approach any staff you feel comfortable talking to; we will always do our best to help you.

You should always notify the Academic Office (graduate.studies@earth.ox.ac.uk) if you are ill. They will do all they can to help and initiate any formal procedures that may be necessary.

Students can request adjustment to their assessment on the Application for Adjustments to Assessment Arrangements (GSO.19) form (Graduate forms). The form must be reviewed and signed by the DGS, but unlike most graduate forms it does not need to be seen or signed by the student's supervisor or college, as the student may have good reason for wishing to keep their information restricted to those involved in the assessment process. The people with whom the student's information is likely to be shared is detailed on the form. This form can be used to initiate the development of a Student Support Plan, if required due to physical or mental illness.

# Course Progression

Your progress as a research student is monitored through a number of formal mechanisms.

University progression forms (Transfer of Status, Confirmation of Status, Appointment of Examiners, etc.) are available via the University website at Graduate forms. In addition to the forms, the steps of the Transfer and Confirmation of Status process are outlined below.

**Graduate Mini Conference**

This is held in Week 0 of Hilary Term (January). Any students undergoing Transfer or Confirmation of Status will participate by giving talks. We strongly encourage all members of the department to attend.

Smaller conferences may be organised at other points in the year if necessary for students who did not start their course in Michaelmas Term, or who are unable to participate in the main conference for which approval has been given.

One or two students will take responsibility for finding convenors for the presentations and organising the drinks reception in liaison with the Academic Office.

**Suspension of Status**

If you are unable to pursue your course of study or research for a temporary period, you may apply for a suspension of your student status. Relevant circumstances could include illness, accident, domestic crisis, or unforeseeable financial difficulty. Alternatively, it might be essential for you to concentrate temporarily on some other project (e.g., gaining some other qualification) which could not reasonably be deferred until after your thesis is completed; or you might wish to take up temporary work which was likely to be important to your future career, the opportunity for which was unlikely to recur.

If you feel you have experienced difficulties that have slowed, rather than halted, your progress (e.g., an illness where you are able to keep working but with reduced hours for a significant period of time), you are encouraged to note this in your GSR reports, or contact the Academic Office (graduate.studies@earth.ox.ac.uk). Aside from enabling us to keep track of your progress, it will be very helpful if you later need to apply for an Extension of Time or a break from your study.

If you are undertaking an internship that is related to your research, then a suspension of status will not be appropriate (see the section above regarding internships). Students wishing to suspend their status should submit a Suspension of Status application form (GSO.17) as soon as possible. In the case of foreseeable circumstances such as temporary work, the form should be submitted in advance for consideration. Students suspending on medical grounds should provide a doctor's note with their application where possible.

On or prior to your return, you must complete and submit a Return from Suspension of Status application form (GSO.17a). Failure to return the completed form will delay the reactivation of your student status.

Students wishing to suspend their status for Maternity, Paternity, or Adoption Leave, will need to complete a Suspension of Status for Maternity, Extended Paternity and Adoption Leave form (GSO.17b). Further information and guidance can be found later in this handbook.

## Transfer of Status from Probationer Research Student to DPhil or MSc(R)

The purpose of Transfer of Status 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(R) quality. The assessors will also use the process to assess and confirm the likelihood of submission within your funded period or within 12 terms (for DPhil) or 9 terms (for MSc(R)), whichever is the shorter; you should aim to submit your final thesis before your funding runs out.

Students **must** complete the University's online research integrity training (an introduction to good research practice) before applying for Transfer of Status, which is available at Research Integrity online courses. You will need to submit your Research Integrity Training Certificate with your Transfer work.

Students should discuss the budget for their project with their supervisor(s) as early as possible. This should be submitted to the Finance Office (accounts@earth.ox.ac.uk) as soon as possible so they can help to manage your project's finances. You are asked to review and submit an updated budget with your Transfer materials. A budget form template is available on Canvas (https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/).

Although Transfer of Status is a formal milestone in your programme, the whole process should be viewed as a supportive one, ensuring that you are on track to complete a scientifically important thesis that can be completed within the time available to you.

In terms of the amount of time you should spend in preparation for your presentation and interview, this should take no more than one week (you should be progressing the written work as part of your everyday studies). You should ask for advice from your supervisors if you have any concerns.

Further information about the timing, process, and requirements can be found in the appendices.

## Confirmation of DPhil Status

Confirmation of Status is only applicable to those on doctoral programmes; students on the MSc(R) are not required to apply.

Confirmation of a student's DPhil status follows a similar pattern to Transfer of Status. The applications will be reviewed by a panel, which will make a recommendation on the Confirmation of Status.

The purpose of Confirmation of Status is to enable research students to receive an assessment of their work by two assessors, other than your supervisor(s). It is intended to provide an indication that, assuming work on the thesis continues to develop satisfactorily, submission of the thesis by the end of your funded period or by your maximum submission date (whichever is sooner) would appear to be reasonable. It therefore provides a second stage of formal progress review in the 3-4 years of your overall research programme. It should be noted that successful completion of Confirmation of Status provides an indicator only for readiness for submission, not for the final outcome of the examination of the thesis.

The confirmation assessment is different to the transfer assessment. The assessors will be focusing on how the research is progressing, the quality of the work completed, whether it is at the right level, and the plan for completion. The assessors will therefore be looking to ensure that you are making the appropriate amount of progress in the development of your thesis, so that submission will be achieved by the end of your funded period or by your maximum submission date (whichever is sooner). Primarily, they will be looking to see that your research does/will make a 'significant and substantial contribution' to your field of

study. The assessment can also be used as a good opportunity to prepare for the viva voce examination of the thesis.

Although Confirmation of Status is a formal milestone in your programme, it should be seen as a supportive one, ensuring that you are on track to completing a scientifically important thesis that can be completed within the time available to you.

In terms of the amount of time you should spend in preparation for your presentation and interview, this should take no more than one week (you should be progressing the written work as part of your everyday studies). You should ask for advice from your supervisors if you have any concerns.

Further information about the timing, process, and requirements can be found in the appendices.

## Preparing to Submit Your Thesis

The University has produced a document (GSO.20a) containing useful guidance for those submitting their thesis; the document can be found on the University website (http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/progression).

You may submit at any time after you have passed Confirmation of Status (or Transfer of Status for those on the MScR programme), but do not risk over-running your funding period or maximum submission date (whichever is sooner). The thesis is expected to be a report of a piece of work which is of finite duration: most graduate student funding is only for 3 - 3.5 years (depending on the scheme), and there are sanctions imposed on departments (but not on individuals) if on time submission rates are not sufficiently high. So please, do your utmost to plan well ahead, and to aim to complete comfortably before your funding runs out or by your maximum submission date.

If you are going to overrun the maximum submission date stated on your student record (accessible via Student Self Service), you will need to make an application for an extension of time. Where possible, this should be done approximately 6 months in advance of the maximum submission date, and will be considered on a term-by-term basis; you can only do this once your residency requirement in Oxford has been reached (you can check this with your college if necessary), even if you have perfectly good reasons for needing to extend.

### *Thesis Structure*

You can decide to submit either a conventional thesis consisting of chapters, or an integrated thesis.

An integrated thesis may either be a hybrid of conventional chapters and high-quality scientific papers, or be fully paper-based. Regardless of the format, the content of the thesis should reflect the amount, originality and level of work expected for a conventional thesis. There is no minimum, or maximum, number of papers a candidate is expected/allowed to include as part of such a thesis and it will remain a matter for the examiners to conclude whether the contributions are equivalent to that which would be expected for the degree. If you are granted permission to submit an integrated thesis, it should not be assumed that the act of publication (in whatever form) means the work is of suitable academic quality and content for inclusion in a thesis, and you should discuss all papers in detail with your supervisor before including. It would be anticipated that you would be a lead contributor, rather than a minor author, on all the papers in order to consider this format (Guidance for submitting an integrated thesis).

Any papers utilised must concern a common subject, constitute a continuous theme and conform to certain guidelines:

(a) Students who wish to be examined through an integrated thesis, should apply for permission to be examined in this way when they apply for Confirmation of Status (relevant for doctoral students only) or by submitting a written request for the attention of the DGS (graduate.studies@earth.ox.ac.uk). Requests must include the reason(s), and support from supervisor(s). Normally a request for permission to be examined in this way should be submitted no later than six months before submitting the thesis for examination. To revert to being examined by a conventional thesis rather than an integrated thesis, the student must have the support of their supervisors and submit this in writing for the attention of the DGS (graduate.studies@earth.ox.ac.uk).

(b) Work can be included regardless of its acceptance status for publication, but students may be questioned on the publication status of their work by the examiners.

(c) Any submitted/published papers should relate directly to the student's approved field of study, and should have been written whilst holding the status of PRS or a student for the MSc(R), or DPhil.

(d) The collection of papers must include a separate introduction, a full literature review, discussion and a conclusion, so that the integrated thesis can be read as a single, coherent document. The format of the thesis (e.g., style, font, referencing, equations and figure numbering) should be consistent throughout the thesis.

(e) The student must ensure all matters of copyright are addressed before a paper's inclusion. A pre-print version of any published papers should be included as standard.

(f) Joint/multi-authored papers are common in science-based subjects and thus acceptable if the student can both defend the paper in full and provide a written statement of authorship, agreed by all authors, that certifies the extent of the student's own contribution. A standard template is available for this purpose via the MPLS website: Guidance for submitting an integrated thesis.

If some part of the thesis is not solely your work or has been carried out in collaboration with one or more persons, you should also submit a clear statement of the extent of your contribution.

Further information about integrated theses can be found at: Submitting your thesis

***Deadlines***

Make sure you know your maximum submission date by checking Student Self Service.

You may submit at any time after you have passed Confirmation of Status, or Transfer of Status for those on the MScR programme, but do not risk over-running your maximum submission date, aim to complete comfortably by the end of your funded period or by your maximum submission date (whichever is sooner).

If you fail to submit by your maximum submission date without being granted a suspension or extension of time, you may have your status as a student withdrawn. Once your status is withdrawn, you are no longer a registered student of the University, and you will not have access to University facilities. This may also affect funding that is granted to the department for future students.

If your status is withdrawn, you may be able to apply for reinstatement using the Application for Reinstatement (GSO.23) form, available to download on the Graduate Forms page. There are restrictions on when reinstatement can be granted; these restrictions are explained in the University's Policy and Guidance on Research Degrees. In most cases reinstatement would usually only be granted for a single term.

### *Regulations*

Study the regulations that apply to the preparation and submission of theses. These can be found in the Examination Regulations (see https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk), in the sections entitled:

- General Regulations Governing Research Degrees
- General Regulations for the Degree of Master of Science by Research
- General Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
- Research Degrees in the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division
- Research Degrees in Physical Sciences

There is other useful information and advice in the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Graduate Handbook (www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-for-postgraduate-research-students). The notable special regulations for Earth Sciences are:

- Students may, if they wish, submit with their theses, both the abstract required of all candidates (300-words) and a longer abstract of not more than 1,500 words for the MSc(R) and 2,500 for the DPhil. Should such an abstract be submitted, a copy of it must be bound into the copy of the thesis which, if the application for leave to supplicate for the degree is successful, will be deposited in the Bodleian Library.
- The theses submitted for the Degree of DPhil in Earth Sciences must not exceed 250 pages*, but there is no limit on diagrams, tables, etc.; a page is deemed to be a single side of A4. For the MSc(R) the thesis should not normally exceed 125 pages, but may be around 25,000 words.

If you have a large amount of data that is too big to include in your thesis or in the appendix, you should include a link to the material; if it is on ORA it would be preferable to link to that rather than an external source. If you are not sure if the data is on ORA, the Department Librarian (library@earth.ox.ac.uk) will be able to help you check.

* The total number of pages should include all references, diagrams, tables, etc. that are included in the main text of the thesis. Appendices do not count towards the page count. In exceptional cases a request to increase the page count can be submitted to graduate.studies@earth.ox.ac.uk for the attention of the DGS; requests must have the written support of the supervisors.

It is not advisable to use weblinks to an 3rd party provider for your data. It should either be included in the thesis or appendices or deposited with the University's data repository. Data held by a publisher may not be accessible in the future.

### *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 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. Your thesis may be rejected by the examiners if it has not been adequately proof-read.

The University's Use of Third-Party Proof-Readers policy may be found here: https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/policies/third-party-proof-readers.

### *Application for Appointment of Examiners*

The Application for Appointment of Examiners must be completed in Student Self Service.

It is your supervisor's responsibility to suggest the names of potential examiners, but there will generally be consultation between you and your supervisor(s) at this stage. If the proposed examiners have not agreed informally to act by the time you submit your Application for Appointment of Examiners, then alternative names should also be supplied.

If you are planning to submit an integrated thesis, you must have been granted permission from the DGS before submitting your Application for Appointment of Examiners and thesis. Further information about this can be found in the Thesis Structure section.

If some part of the thesis is not solely your work or has been carried out in collaboration with one or more persons, you should also submit a clear statement of the extent of your contribution.

*Early Viva*

It can take 3 months or more for the examining process to run its course (see note below). If you have a valid reason for attempting to speed up the process, you may apply for an early examination as part of the Application for Appointment of Examiners. If this situation is likely to arise, it is more usual to agree an early examination date informally by discussion between your supervisor and the examiners. Students are not allowed to ask for a viva to take place sooner than one calendar month after submission of the thesis.

### *Extension of Time*

In exceptional circumstances students may apply for an extension of one to three terms at a time, up to a maximum of six terms for DPhil students and three terms for MSc(R) students. It is a policy of the MPLS Division that only one term of extension may be applied for at a time so progress of work can be kept under close review. Exceptional circumstances may include, but are not limited to: major technical difficulties experienced with laboratory equipment while preparing or carrying out experiments, or personal circumstances that slowed the progress of work but not to an extent that requires a suspension of status.

Although this is a straightforward procedure, and although we will do everything we can to support you as you complete your research, these forms will need to be signed off by your supervisor, your college and the DGS. You will have a much stronger case if, for example, you have completed your termly self-assessment progress reports in GSR; and if you give the department advanced warning that you expect to need an extension. Please note that we are not routinely able to offer desk space beyond the end of the 4th year even if you are granted an extension of time.

An application for Extension of Time can be completed in Student Self Service.

### *Submit your Thesis*

Research students are required to submit a digital copy of their thesis via the Research Thesis Digital Submission (RTDS) for their examination (https://student.rtds.ox.ac.uk). Your card is linked to your access to RTDS, so you will need to contact your college to arrange for a new card if it is due to expire before you submit your thesis; in most cases this will only be necessary if you have suspended or extended your student status.

Examiners may still request a hard copy of the thesis from the Examination Schools and this will be arranged and paid for centrally by the Submissions and Research Degrees Team.

The minimum time between both examiners receiving the official copy of the thesis via RTDS and a viva date remains at 4 weeks.

*Important Note*

The University will not release your thesis to your examiners until it has received **written confirmation** from them **both** that they are willing to act. This requires the two-way exchange of emails or letters plus any other attendant delays. This cannot begin until the Application for Appointment of Examiners and any other forms, approved and authorised by the DGS, have been processed. Thus, it will minimise delays if you get all the paperwork submitted 4-6 weeks before you submit the thesis itself. So, plan ahead, and you will get examined sooner.

## Viva

The average length of time between submission and a viva is approximately eight weeks. It is the responsibility of the internal examiner to make all the arrangements for the viva examination. Your internal examiner should normally contact you to arrange a date for your viva within a month of receiving your thesis. If the Research Degrees Team do not receive a date for your viva within a month of sending out your thesis, they will contact your examiners. **On no account should you contact the examiners yourself except where you have to agree a date for the viva**.

Normal expectations relating to the length of an oral examination should be a minimum of one hour and a maximum of three hours.

More information about the viva and what you can expect can be found in the GSO.20a (www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/progression?wssl=1).

# Departure

After you have been granted leave to supplicate you will be sent a clearance form to complete. Please return this as soon as possible so that we can update your record.

If you clear your desk and leave before you have been granted leave to supplicate, please inform the Building and Facilities Manager as soon as possible so that your office space can be made available to someone else. You must hand back any keys to Reception, and your deposit will be returned.

Personal property may not be left in the department after you have been granted leave to supplicate, and you must contact the Building and Facilities Manager as soon as possible if you wish to request the use of your desk for longer. Please note that we are not routinely able to offer desk space beyond the end of year four.

**Submitting a Copy of your Thesis to the Library**

Once you have been granted leave to supplicate, and before your degree conferral ceremony, you will be required to submit a copy of your final thesis (which incorporates any corrections required by the examiners) to the Oxford Research Archive (ORA) (https://www2.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ora).

In certain circumstances, you may also be required to submit a hardcopy to the Examination Schools for depositing in the Bodleian Library. Details about these processes will be provided with your leave to supplicate letter, as well as how to apply for an embargo or dispensation from consultation.

You are encouraged to submit a copy of your thesis to the Departmental Library but leave to supplicate is not conditional upon this. The department will meet the cost of binding one copy of the thesis, for both direct and indirect entry research students, for depositing in the Departmental Library (DTP students may be able to use up to £150 of their RTSG for additional copies if wanted, but this should be confirmed with the DTP Administrator). The cost may be claimed by submitting an expenses claim (https://finance.admin.ox.ac.uk/how-to-claim-expenses-staff-and-students). Queries about the expenses process should be directed to the Finance Office (accounts@earth.ox.ac.uk).

**Returning Books to the Earth Sciences Library**

When you are due to leave the department, please make sure you take books you have borrowed back to the library.

Library material will have a spine label similar to that shown in Figure 1, and inside the book, there will be a bookplate similar to ones shown in Figure *2* and Figure 3. If a book is not returned, you will be sent an invoice for its replacement.

*Figure 1*

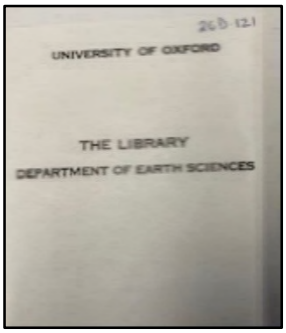



*Figure 2*

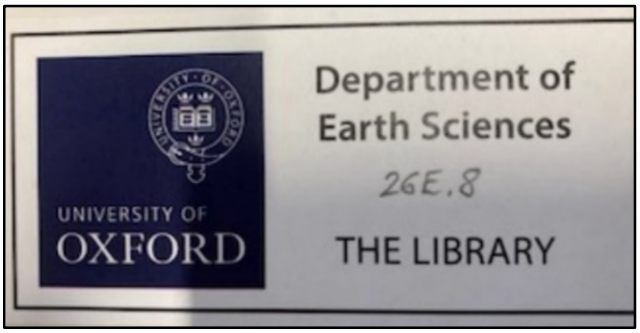



*Figure 3*

## Donating Books to the Library

Donations of library material which support the work of the teaching and research of the Earth Sciences Department are gratefully received.

If you wish to donate, please contact library@earth.ox.ac.uk with a list containing the:

- author
- title
- publisher
- publication date

Due to space constraints, and the staff time involved, donations are taken on a selective basis. Donations will be added to the library's collection (as time and space permit) according to the following criteria:

- relevance to the teaching and research of the department
- condition of the material e.g., unmarked, clean, binding intact
- resources required for selecting, receiving, processing and cataloguing the material
- availability of the material in the Earth Sciences and other Oxford libraries
- availability of the material in electronic format

Donations are accepted on the understanding that the material becomes the property of the department. The material will be integrated with the existing stock and cannot be kept as a discrete collection. The donor will be acknowledged on each item's bookplate.

Material that is not added to the collection, either at the time of receipt or subsequently, may be passed on to other libraries or offered, for free, to members of the department. Where the material is not passed on, it may be sold (e.g., BetterWorldBooks) or sent for disposal. The proceeds of any sales will be used to benefit the department.

## Rock Disposal

When your thesis is complete, you are required to leave a numbered, representative selection of your rocks (with thin sections) to be incorporated into the Departmental Accessions Series, which is administered as part of the Petrological Collections of the Museum. The specimens should be clearly marked with your reference number, and you

should supply a spreadsheet giving at a *minimum*, the reference number, identification, full locality (including grid or map reference), geological context (including any stratigraphic information), and the date of collection for each specimen. Please contact the Collections Manager (https://oumnh.ox.ac.uk/collections-managers) when you are close to completion; they will give you further advice. ***All other rocks must be removed from your office or other departmental storage when you depart*.**

**Requesting references**

Due to the high volume of references required at the end of the calendar year, if you wish to request a reference to be ready in January, you should agree this with individuals concerned before the end of Week 8 of Michaelmas Term.

When requesting a reference at other times of year, we suggest giving a minimum notice period of at least 2 weeks.

Please note that individuals are not required to provide a reference if students do not discuss this with them in advance, do not give enough notice or if the student has gone against career advice.

# Student Representation and Care

**Student Representation**

The department and the University are committed to hearing the views and feedback from all groups in the department, and the best way for these to be heard and translated into appropriate action is via the department's committees. We therefore request postgraduate representatives for the following meetings (dates and times may vary):

| | |
|---|---|
| JCC-G (Joint Consultative Committee for Graduates) | Tuesday of 1st week at 1pm (1 hr) |
| EEDI Committee (Equality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity) | Monday of 2nd week at 2pm (1.5 hrs) |
| Safety Committee | Tuesday of 2nd week at 11.30am (1 hr) |
| Research Committee | Monday of 4th week at 11.30am (1.5 hrs) |
| Teaching Committee | Tuesday of 4th week at 1pm (2 hrs) |
| Management Committee | Tuesday of 5th week at 2pm (1.5 hrs) |
| Departmental Committee | Thursday of 6th Week at 2pm (2 hrs) |

The JCCG is the department's main committee to represent and hear the interests and views of postgraduate students. It consists of the DGS, the Deputy DGS, administrative staff and postgraduates (one representative from each year; one from the DTP; and anyone else who wishes to attend). Graduate students meet at least termly, prior to the JCCG meeting, to discuss any issues. The JCCG meets termly and reports directly to the Teaching Committee.

A representative from the JCCG will usually attend the Teaching Committee meetings to represent the views expressed by the JCCG.

Student representatives on the Outreach and Communications Working Group, the Health and Safety and EEDI committees are expected to represent the interests and concerns of postgraduate students in the department. They will be expected to liaise with appropriate representatives on the departmental JCCG as necessary.

One postgraduate student from each of the constituent departments of the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division is invited to the MPLS Graduate Joint Consultative Forum. Student members are expected to represent the interests and concerns of students on all graduate courses at divisional level and will be expected to liaise with appropriate representatives on the departmental JCCG as necessary.

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

## Oxford Student Union (SU)

Oxford SU Advice offers free, confidential and independent information advice and guidance on navigating the collegiate university, CCAT and OIA processes. They have a wide range of online resources available on their website (https://www.oxfordsu.org/advice/).

If you need further support you can get in touch with them via the Contact Oxford SU Advice Form).

## Disability Advisory Service

The Disability Advisory Service (DAS) 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. Information about how the DSA can help can be found on the University's website (www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability).

## Personal Details

On registration you will be required to complete your personal details, but you can update these via Student Self Service at any point during the academic year. Guidance can be found here: www.ox.ac.uk/students/selfservice/.

On (re)registration, students will be asked to confirm their legal sex and title, and invited to state the gender they identify with and preferred personal pronouns. Students can update this information at any time via Student Self Service. When providing legal sex (in line with legal documents such as birth certificate, Gender Recognition Certificate, or passport), students will be able to choose 'Other' in addition to the existing options of 'Male' or 'Female', if their legal document recognises a sex other than male or female.

## Pastoral Care

The first point of contact for welfare issues in the department is the Head of Administration and Finance.

Though student health and welfare are primarily college responsibilities, and your College Office, Welfare Officer, College Advisor, and other confidential advisors make up a sympathetic and effective network of support for students, you should always feel free to approach staff in the Department with any issues or concerns you may have, especially if any incidents occur in the Department.

Please feel free to approach any member of staff you would feel comfortable talking to about any problem. We will always do our best to support you. You should always notify the Academic Office (graduate.studies@earth.ox.ac.uk) if you are ill. They will do all they can to help and initiate any formal procedures that may be necessary.

### *Mental Health*

Members of Faculty and other departmental staff care about your wellbeing as well as your academic progress and are here to support you. If you are struggling in any way, please do not feel you must suffer in silence. However shocking you think the issue may be, or at the other end of the spectrum, however frivolous you think it may be, we will take you seriously and do whatever we can to support you. If we cannot speak with you there and then, we will make an appointment. If we cannot answer your questions, we will endeavour to seek guidance and answers. If you do not feel comfortable approaching an office, please email one of us. Please do also look out for each other; in Earth Sciences we are a close community, and none more so than when we are in the field, so do please keep an eye on your colleagues and offer your support.

The department also has trained Mental Health First Aiders. Currently, the following members of the department:

- Louisa Bailey (from November 2025) louisa.bailey@earth.ox.ac.uk
- James Bryson james.bryson@earth.ox.ac.uk
- Hamish Hay hamish.hay@earth.ox.ac.uk
- Darren Hillegonds darren.hillegonds@earth.ox.ac.uk
- Bruce Levell bruce.levell@earth.ox.ac.uk
- Claire Nichols claire.nichols@earth.ox.ac.uk
- Stuart Robinson stuart.robinson@earth.ox.ac.uk
- Emma Smith (from January 2026) emma.smith@earth.ox.ac.uk
- Laura Stevens laura.stevens@earth.ox.ac.uk
- Andrew Walker andrew.walker@earth.ox.ac.uk
- David White david.white@earth.ox.ac.uk
- Louise Wright louise.wright@earth.ox.ac.uk

The University has welfare and wellbeing services (www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare?wssl=1) available to help students, and the Student Union (www.oxfordsu.org/wellbeing/student-advice/) has officers working actively to promote student health and welfare. The University Student Handbook (www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/student-handbook?wssl=1) provides general information on welfare, finance, and health, as well as on student conduct and on the running of University examinations.

The University also has a number of self-help resources online here: www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling/self-help?wssl=1. Other online courses are available on LinkedIn Learning, which is a library or video-based courses which are available to use for free by all members of the University through Single Sign On (https://skills.it.ox.ac.uk/linkedin-learning).

***Harassment***

The department and the University do not tolerate harassment in any form. The department currently has several trained harassment advisors:

- Darren Hillegonds darren.hillegonds@earth.ox.ac.uk
- Helen Johnson helen.johnson@earth.ox.ac.uk
- Conall MacNiocaill conall.macniocaill@exeter.ox.ac.uk

If you wish to speak to someone outside the Department you can contact the central University office: harassment.line@admin.ox.ac.uk.

The role of Harassment Advisor is an informal one, intended to be a first point of approach for members of the University. Any discussions are treated in strictest confidence, and the complainant stays in control of the process throughout. Formal action will only be taken if the complainant wishes to pursue it.

The University's Harassment procedures for students are detailed at: https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/harassment-advice.

We also expect members of the community to be responsible bystanders if they witness unacceptable behaviour: https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/bystander.

Sexual harassment and violence are any unwanted sexual behaviour which takes place without consent, whether you know the person or not. It can happen regardless of your gender, sexual orientation, race, religion or age. It can happen online or in person. Oxford is against sexual violence. It is never acceptable. www.ox.ac.uk/againstsexualviolence #OxfordAgainstSexualViolence.

Oxford's Support Service is a safe place for all students to be heard, regardless of age or gender, who have been affected by sexual harassment or violence at any time. You can contact the service by emailing supportservice@admin.ox.ac.uk or visit www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/supportservice #OxfordAgainstSexualViolence.

***Supervisors***

The relationship between you and your supervisor in terms of responsibilities and obligations is described in the Divisional Code of Practice on the Supervision of Graduate Research Students. The current version of this document can be found at: www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/study/graduate-school/information-for-postgraduate-research-students/supervision.

If problems related to project supervision arise, try to discuss them with your supervisor in the first instance. If you are uncomfortable with this, then the DGS can give advice. If necessary, they can speak to your supervisor on your behalf.

***Mentors***

If you would like advice on an appropriate person to act as a mentor during your period of study, other than your supervisor or college advisor, please email graduate.studies@earth.ox.ac.uk.

***University Services***

The University has a Careers Service and a professionally staffed and confidential Student Counselling Service, which offers assistance with personal, emotional, social and academic problems:

- www.careers.ox.ac.uk
- www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling

The University website has a general guide to student health and welfare issues, including online resources:

- www.ox.ac.uk/students/shw
- www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling/self-help.

***External Support***

- Nightline (https://oxfordnightline.org/) is an independent listening, support and information service run for and by students, offering instant messaging, Skype and telephone support.
- Samaritans (https://www.samaritans.org/) is an independent listening service – always available 24/7 by telephone or online chat.
- NHS Mental Health Helpline (https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/) is open 24/7 for people who need mental health care when their situation is not life threatening.
- Togetherall (https://togetherall.com/en-gb/) is an NHS-approved service providing mental health support 24/7 to students, wherever you are in the world. Register free with your Oxford email to talk online to a mental health professional using the 'message a wall guide' feature or connect with other students through online forums.
- Oxford Safe Haven (https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/service_description/oxfordshire-safe-haven/) offers short-term, out-of-hours support for people in Oxfordshire who are experiencing a mental health crisis including suicidal thoughts, via telephone and face-to-face support.
- You also have the option of speaking to your GP who will have access to wider support and resources.

**Staff-Student Relationships Policy**

Positive professional relationships between staff and students are crucial for students' educational development and welfare. However, intimate or close personal relationships between staff and the students they have responsibility for can cause significant problems. Staff found to be in breach of the revised policy should expect to face disciplinary action.

In line with the revised policy, staff who have any responsibility for a current student (including applicants) are:

- Prohibited from entering into an intimate relationship with that student;
- Strongly discouraged from any other close personal relationship with them which transgresses the boundaries of professional conduct.

The policy relates to all University staff, including those on joint appointments, casual paid workers, and those with access to University privileges and facilities (such as visiting academics).

Students should note the requirements of this policy for members of staff.

If an intimate or close personal relationship has developed contrary to this policy, even if it predates the policy commencement date, the student is encouraged to disclose it to their Head of Department or Chair of the Faculty Board and to a senior member of their college welfare team.

Students should also particularly note the guidance and support available in any cases of non-consensual behaviour, and the further sources of support explained in the policy.

Messages or other behaviours towards members of staff that could be interpreted as flirtatious or making advances towards an intimate relationship will usually need to be reported by the member of staff to the Head of Department/Chair of the Faculty Board and/or HR Team. This may result in protective measures to separate affected parties or minimise the possibility of conflicts of interest, complaints or questions over academic integrity or professional behaviour.

Students should note that any behaviour that constitutes harassment (towards a staff member or a fellow student) may be the subject of disciplinary action under Statute XI: University Discipline (https://governance.admin.ox.ac.uk/legislation/statute-xi-university-discipline-0).

## Safety

### *Accidents and Near-misses*

The University uses an online Incident Reporting and Investigation System (IRIS) to record, review and investigate health, safety and environmental accidents or near-misses (incidents) that take place at the University and while staff and/or students are travelling on University business.

The use of this system allows for a swift, managed response to any incidents allowing the University to comply with its legal and moral requirements to its staff, students and visitors.

**YOU must report any health, safety, or environmental incidents that you witness or are involved in as soon as possible to the University** in case there is a need for follow up action to prevent, address and/or solve a problem or concern in a timely manner: https://safety.admin.ox.ac.uk/incident-reporting.

### *First Aid*

Lists of department first aiders, and the location of the nearest first aid kit, are displayed on each floor. There is always a first aid box in reception and the kitchen area. Report any possible hazards to your supervisor, Building Safety Officer, or the Area Safety Officer.

### *Safety Policies*

The current University Safety Policies and department's **Statements of Health and Safety** can be found at the following web addresses:

- https://safety.admin.ox.ac.uk/health-and-safety-policy
- https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/EART-HUB-EarthSciences/SitePages/Health-and-Safety.aspx

These should be read and observed by all working or studying in the department and are regularly updated. Safety legislation is very strict and lays heavy responsibility on both the department and the individual. Use of departmental accommodation and facilities is conditional upon compliance with all safety standards and practices. **Safety legislation is governed by criminal, not civil, law**.

### *Safety in the Field*

All independent graduate fieldwork plans have to be assessed for safety, and approval given by the Department Fieldwork Safety Officer, in advance of any travel arrangements. The department may withhold travel loans if approval has not been given. You must therefore electronically complete a Fieldwork Risk Assessment form in consultation with your

supervisor (Travel and Field Safety) and submit this by email in the first instance to the Department Fieldwork Safety Officer. This must be done a minimum of **3 weeks in advance** of departure. Approval of University Insurance can take up to two weeks and in some instances even longer (for example in the case of especially hazardous activities). You should consult with your supervisor to arrange for a thorough safety briefing and risk assessment before you depart on fieldwork.

You can be provided with a hard hat for use during fieldwork. You must not provide your own unless it has been cleared as acceptable under current Safety Regulations. Hard hats more than five years old may not be worn. Report any damage caused to your hard hat; for safety reasons we may need to replace it.

There are various training courses provided by the University that may be helpful to those planning on undertaking fieldwork, these are listed on the department's SharePoint along with other useful information (Travel and Field Safety).

### *Travel Insurance*

The University has a travel insurance policy, which can be used for all travel overseas that is associated with your degree. For details see: https://finance.admin.ox.ac.uk/travel-insurance.

Important, and in addition: obtain a Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) for travel in Europe. This will cover you for emergency medical treatment only. You can apply for this online here: Apply for GHIC.

### *Fire Safety*

Make sure you know the location of the fire assembly points, fire exits, fire alarms, fire extinguishers, and how to use them. The fire alarm consists of long notes with short breaks between. The fire alarm is tested every Wednesday at around 8am, and there is a termly fire drill. Fire doors **must not** be propped open. When you hear the alarm, close all windows, leave the building, and assemble in the car park area (to the left of the building as you leave through the front doors). If you are in the building, you must participate in any fire drill that is called.

### *Smoking*

The department does not allow smoking or vaping anywhere in the building, including the roof terrace.

### *Safety Officers*

- Stacy Carolin (stacy.carolin@earth.ox.ac.uk) and Chris Day (chris.day@earth.ox.ac.uk) - Radiation
- Hauke Marquardt hauke.marquardt@earth.ox.ac.uk - Laser
- Joe Cartwright joe.cartwright@earth.ox.ac.uk and Richard Palin richard.palin@earth.ox.ac.uk (Fieldwork)
- Ashleigh Hewson ashleigh.hewson@earth.ox.ac.uk - Buildings
- James King james.king@earth.ox.ac.uk - Workshop
- Holly Bratcher holly.bratcher@mpls.ox.ac.uk - Divisional Safety Officer
- Luke Williams luke.williams@earth.ox.ac.uk - Biological
- Zheyu (Jerry) Tian zheyu.tian@earth.ox.ac.uk - Chemical and Department

## Equality and Diversity

The department and the University are committed to equality, diversity and accessibility.

### *LGBTQ+*

The University aims to anticipate and respond positively to the needs of prospective, current and former students and staff in relation to gender identity issues, providing a professional and consistent service so that all trans members of the University feel welcome, safe, valued and supported to achieve their potential and contribute as a member of the University.

The Equality and Diversity Unit provides information and support to students and departments to promote an inclusive environment. Details about the University's Equality Policy, information and support that is available can be found on the Equality and Diversity Unit's website (https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/home).

### *Athena Swan*

The Department of Earth Sciences holds an Athena Swan Bronze Award. Athena Swan is a charter for women in science, recognising commitment to advancing women's careers in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine (STEMM) employment in higher education and research.

The EEDI Lead for the Department is Diane Papworth (diane.papworth@earth.ox.ac.uk) until December 2025 after which it will be Emma Smith (emma.smith@earth.ox.ac.uk).

# Administrative Matters and Facilities

## Holiday and Working Hours

Students are entitled to take six weeks holiday a year, in consultation with their supervisors. You should ensure you do take leave throughout the year, in order to recuperate and be better prepared for your research. A standard DPhil working week should be an average of 40 hours, as advised in the Government's Working Hours Directive (a maximum average working week of no more than 48 hours, averaged over 17 weeks: www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours). No student should be working above this number of hours, unless they have explicitly and freely chosen to do so.

## University Card and Building Access

Your college will issue you with your University Card. The card is widely used for identification, and you will need it for access to the department. You should see reception staff to organise swipe card entry to the building, and your card will need additional authorisation to access to any restricted parts of the building (e.g., particular parts of the lab wings). Your card is also linked to your access to online systems so you will need to contact your college to arrange for a new card if it is due to expire before the end of your programme; in most cases this will only be necessary if you have suspended or extended your student status.

### *Department Closures*

This department usually closes for 10-12 days: at Christmas, over the Easter weekend, and does not open on any bank holidays. Laboratory services and reception do not operate during these times, but there is no reason why you should not work if you wish. However, this must be only low risk and authorised work (following discussion with your supervisor(s)).

## Security

**NEVER** lend your University Card to anyone else or allow an unknown person entry to the department. Ensure that the door closes and locks when you leave. Do not leave your room unlocked or valuable possessions unattended. Please do not leave windows open, especially on the ground floor. Thieves operate in the Science Area. The security alarm has longer breaks between the notes than the fire alarm. Its use indicates the existence of an emergency such as a bomb alert or the escape of toxic gases. On hearing the alarm, you should exit the building safely, and assemble in front of the building.

## Office Space

All graduate students are provided with desk space in the department. This will usually be an assigned desk but at certain times you may be assigned a hot desk (before you are formally registered in the department if you are on a CDT or DTP programme, or if your studies extend beyond 4 years, for example). This is managed by the Building and Facilities Manager. Reception issues keys against a deposit of £30 each. They must not be transferred to any other person. The deposit charge is subject to increase.

You will be charged £30 per key for any lost keys (actual cost). Our keys are on a Master Suite and cannot be cut 'over the counter' without authorization from the Head of Administration and Finance. The replacement charge is subject to increase.

### *DTP and CDT students*

When students begin working on their research projects and will therefore spend more time in the department we will aim to provide desk space, however as this is often very different for each student and depends on the programme of study. We will usually look to find desk space once the form to process the formal transfer to the department has been received by the Academic Office for the attention/signature of the DGS. If space is required earlier please contact the Academic Office with a reason why you are not yet able to provide the form.

### *Telephones*

Emergency calls can be made using the physical telephones located in the corridors of the office spaces. Some specific labs will also have a physical telephone contained within.

### *Inspections*

There will be annual inspections of office spaces, which will take place each summer.

Below is a list of expectations for office safety so users know what will be looked for, and can prepare for the inspection.

- Do not rearrange office furniture without first seeking advice to ensure the change is acceptable to the department and also safe. Similarly, you must not bring in personal items of furniture without department approval.
- Any office furniture should be in good mechanical order and properly assembled. Report any faulty equipment in your office to the Building and Facilities Manager.
- Each office should have a good standard of general cleanliness and housekeeping e.g., no unnecessary debris, trips hazards, loose carpet, excessive accumulation of dust, standing water, other spilled liquids etc. Offices should be free from out of date food or mouldy items.
- Offices should be kept in a reasonable tidy state to avoid basic safety issues such as piles of paperwork on the floor or stacks of material potentially falling off desks or onto equipment or electrical outlets. Materials should be stored properly to avoid falling.
- Any filing cabinets, bookcases etc. taller than 4 feet must be attached to the wall.
- Walkways must be free of trip hazards and obstructions, such as cords, boxes and files etc., so there is a clear pathway to the office door.
- Electrical sockets and cords must be in good working condition and not misused e.g., no multi-way adapters or extension leads plugged in to extension leads, no dangerous wiring or damaged plugs. Report any faulty electrics to the Building and Facilities Manager.
- All lighting in the office is working. Report any faults to the Building and Facilities Manager.
- The temperature in each office is reasonable. Report any issues to the Building and Facilities Manager.
- Any personal items, e.g., coffee makers, must be compliant with building electrics and PAT tested, so you must notify the Building and Facilities Manager if wanting to bring anything in. Any unauthorised personal electric items, e.g., fan heaters, will be removed.

- In shared offices spaces it is expected that each person keeps their things solely within their workspace (i.e. within that desk, drawers and shelf space depending on the space provided).

- Each office must have access to adequate waste disposal - in the room or nearby corridor.

- Chemicals and hazardous waste should not be stored in offices, unless with prior approval from the DSO and stored in an adequate way for health and safety.

If you have any queries, please contact: the appropriate Safety Officer, Head of Administration and Finance, or Building and Facilities Manager.

**Libraries**

Oxford has a wealth of library provision e.g., Bodleian Libraries, college libraries and the departmental library (www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/information-and-data-services/libraries). Your University Card will allow you access to many of these libraries.

When you join the department, the Departmental Librarian will give you an introduction to the libraries in Oxford. This will outline the resources available to you, and other matters you will encounter during your course e.g., ORCiD, Open Access, research data, reference management, electronic repositories.

***Departmental Library***

There is a library within the Department of Earth Sciences (ground floor). It is a pleasant place to study and contains a wealth of resources geared towards the subjects studied and researched here.

*Registering*

Please register, either in person or by emailing library@earth.ox.ac.uk with:

- your university card number
- the expiry date

*Opening hours*

Members of the department have 24-hour swipe access and there is a self-issue machine for borrowing and returning books. The library is staffed in the morning most days , and on occasional afternoons. At other times, Reception may be able to help with access to some library material.

Details of borrowing/returning, loan limits, the library collection and resources, interlibrary loans can be found on the website at: www.earth.ox.ac.uk/about/library.

*Contact*

Departmental Librarian: Elizabeth Crowley (library@earth.ox.ac.uk, 01865 2 72050)

*Library etiquette*

The following guidelines are to ensure the library runs smoothly and remains a useful resource for all.

- Keep noise to a minimum.

- Do not eat, or drink anything but bottled water.

- Use the self-service machine to borrow and return books, even when you are taking them to the Labs, your office or the Common Room.
- Return your loans promptly.
- Leave desks free for others to use – personal belongings may be left in the slots by the outsize books.
- Switch the lights off if you are the last person to leave.

**Teaching and Meeting Rooms**

Space in the department, for teaching and meetings, can be booked via Reception (reception@earth.ox.ac.uk), though priority must be given to teaching and departmental committees.

In all teaching rooms please only use the whiteboard markers supplied by Reception. If you wish to make use of audio-visual equipment please consult IT no later than the day before.

**Working for the Department**

Students should normally have completed (or had waived) their Transfer of Status before participating in substantial teaching activities. It is not appropriate for Probationer Research Students (PRS) to take on substantial teaching commitments such as several weeks of tutorials (although first year doctoral students may act as demonstrators, take translation classes, support academic study skills development etc.).

The University's explicit policy is that no PGR student should be allowed to teach without some form of initial training. At the very minimum, students should undertake the Department's Preparation for learning and teaching at Oxford (PLTO) course. The Associate Head of Teaching (AHoD Teaching) will advertise PLTO sessions at appropriate points in the year.

Before participating in any teaching, students should first seek agreement from their supervisor, and advice as to whether their research is making good progress and they are expected to complete on time. The supervisor's views should be recorded in Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR).

Before doing any work, you must have a signed contract filed with HR. This is a Casual Worker Agreement and is not the same as your student contract. You must also have a right to work check. **Please note that you will not be paid if a right to work check and a contract are not in place before you begin working**. We strongly advise that you contact HR (personnel@earth.ox.ac.uk) as soon as you are invited to undertake work on behalf of the department. Contracts for demonstrating are renewed at the start of each academic year, and you will need to visit HR again before you undertake any work in subsequent years.

If you are on a Student visa and therefore have restrictions on the number of hours you can work per week, you can still demonstrate on undergraduate field courses but your supervisor must submit a letter stating that you are not required to be studying at the time of the field course. HR have a template letter for supervisors to complete, but the letter must be signed and returned to HR before you go on the field course. A letter must be submitted before each field course for which you will be a demonstrator.

***Demonstrating on the Undergraduate programme***

Extra money can be earned by demonstrating for undergraduate classes or on field courses. You may offer your services by completing the PLTO and becoming registered on a

database that faculty can consult. Faculty will either advertise opportunities or approach you directly.

You may wish to look at the undergraduate handbook to see if there are any classes or field courses where you may be able to offer expertise: www.earth.ox.ac.uk/teaching/undergraduates/course-information.

*Demonstrating and Teaching Policy*

There is a job description available on the department's SharePoint site. If you were to be a Demonstrator, we would expect you to be able to fulfil its requirements, including completing the PLTO. Please see HR Resources intranet pages, where you will also find the current Schedule of Additional payments and the Demonstrating and Teaching Policy.

***Outreach and Public Engagement***

A large number of researchers in the Department are involved in outreach – defined as activities which promote Earth Sciences as a subject and encourage potential students to apply to university. Outreach activities relating to the sharing or dissemination of research are referred to as Public and Community Engagement with Research (PCER). Outreach and PCER activities are coordinated by the Outreach and Communications Manager and the Outreach and Communications Assistant.

The types of outreach and PCER activities performed by the Department are wide-ranging, and include:

- Working with local schools and delivering workshops for students
- Developing resources for schools
- Attending science fairs, museum exhibitions and community centre activities
- Widening participation activities, such as the UNIQ Summer School
- Hosting academic taster sessions for prospective applicants
- Recruitment activities, such as the Undergraduate Open Days

If you would like to get involved in outreach or PCER during your time in the Department and would be interested in hearing about upcoming opportunities, please email outreach@earth.ox.ac.uk to join the outreach mailing list (es-outreach-list@maillist.ox.ac.uk). This does not commit you to anything, but ensures you hear about available opportunities (both voluntary and paid).

You can find out more about departmental outreach and PCER on the Intranet, under External Relations > Outreach and PCER. The Outreach and Communications Manager is always happy to discuss potential opportunities with new students and support the development of ideas.

**Communications and Branding**

The Outreach and Communications Manager and the Outreach and Communications Assistant are responsible for managing external communications (website, news articles, press relations, social media), internal communications (intranet, newsletters) and branding.

As you progress through your studies, please notify the Communications Team of any news you want to share, and they will help to select appropriate channels. This might include:

- Publications, which can be disseminated via news articles and with the press

- Awards and prizes, which can be celebrated externally and in newsletters
- Opportunities, updates and events, which can be publicised internally
- Photographs and video from fieldwork, placements and conferences, which can be shared via social media

It is also important that you read any communications which come from the department, including newsletters and Intranet updates, as these contain important information and opportunities. This includes communications sent to mailing lists (which are managed by the IT Team).

You will have a personal profile on the departmental website, which you are responsible for. It is recommended that you keep this up-to-date to ensure that you are visible to potential funders, collaborators and employers.

You can find out more about departmental communications on the Intranet, under External Relations > Communications.

More information on departmental branding (including logo usage and templates) can also be found on the Intranet, under External Relations > Branding.

## Technical Facilities

In the first instance, students should discuss their requests for equipment and facilities with their supervisor. All laboratories are in the charge of a Laboratory Manager, Research Associate, or Technician. None should be used without prior arrangements with your supervisor(s) and the laboratory support staff.

SRF usage should be paid for from a student's RTSG or from a grant of a supervisor. In the exceptional circumstances that these funds are unavailable, each student can request a departmental grant of £2,000 per year to spend between the department SRFs. Departmental funds are usable only in the year of issue and are non-transferable. Note that a certain portion of a student's RTSG will be ring-fenced to allow them to attend a conference or to complete fieldwork near the end of their degree. Cost allocations (RTSG and/or supervisor research-grant funds), should form part of the project budget that students (in consultation with their supervisor) create at the start of their degree. Further information and copies of the SRF Billing Policy and Authorship Culture documents can be found on the department's SharePoint site (https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/EART-HUB-EarthSciences/SitePages/SRF.aspx).

IT Services have guidance to help you get set up with all your basic IT needs, such as email and internet access. Their website also provides information and guidance about other services they offer that can help you make your study easier (www.it.ox.ac.uk/getting-started).

### *IT*

If you have any suggestions, questions, or problems with IT facilities, please email itsupport@earth.ox.ac.uk. Upon joining the department, you will receive an Earth Sciences domain account for use on the local network.

Unlike most universities, Oxford has a decentralised computer network. Most departments have their own, semi-autonomous systems which are tailored directly to their research areas, meaning that although there is some level of duplication, overall research can be done more efficiently. University regulations still apply (www.it.ox.ac.uk/governance-strategy-and-policies).

The department's IT Policy, and other useful information can be found on the department's SharePoint site: https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/EART-EarthSciencesITDepartment.

*Facilities*

The department runs six main facilities which you will generally be using; all accessed using your departmental user account, which is separate and distinct from your central University/college account:

- Email: You will receive a Nexus365 email account run by IT services. You can login using your Oxford SSO in the format abcd1234@ox.ac.uk.

- Printing

  To connect to the printers in the department, please follow the guides below:

  Printing from Windows: https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/EART-EarthSciencesITDepartment/SitePages/Printing-from-Windows.aspx

  Printing from MacOS: https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/EART-EarthSciencesITDepartment/SitePages/Printing-From-MacOS.aspx

  If you need help using the A0 poster printer (Office Level 2) or have any printer problems, please contact itsupport@earth.ox.ac.uk.

- Storage: You will be provided 100GB of cloud storage space provided by Nexus 365. This can be accessed by signing in to your Nexus365 account. Additional SharePoint sites can be requested which provide an extra 1TB of cloud storage space. You can login using your Oxford SSO in the format abcd1234@ox.ac.uk.

- Web services

- Wireless networking (EduRoam): Register for a remote access account from IT Services (https://register.it.ox.ac.uk/self/index to gain access to educational networks around the world.

- Virtual private networking (VPN):

  - The departmental VPN uses your departmental domain credentials and connects you into the department's network. To request access to the departmental VPN service please send an email to itsupport@earth.ox.ac.uk. Please note access is only provided if necessary, so please provide a valid reason on request.

  - The University VPN uses your SSO to authenticate and connects into the central University network (https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/vpn).

In addition to the services centrally supplied by the department your research group may have dedicated computers and/or storage space available for your research project.

More details of these services, and more are available on the department's SharePoint site (https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/EART-EarthSciencesITDepartment).

*Computer Provision*

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

You must take up the offer of computing provision (either of a desktop or the £1000 contribution) before the end of your third term as a graduate student; if you do not take up the offer by the end of your third term, and you change your mind, in exceptional cases a request to take up the offer later can be submitted to graduate.studies@earth.ox.ac.uk for the attention of the HAF for consideration; requests must have the written support of the supervisors and include an explanation as to why the offer was not taken in the initial 3 terms. More information about purchasing a computer can be found on the department's SharePoint site (New link to be inserted).

You should discuss what computing facilities are available to you with your supervisor(s). If you are unhappy with your computing provision, you should let your supervisor(s) know, and if this issue is not resolved satisfactorily, you should raise the issue with the DGS.

Computers lost or accidentally damaged are not covered by the University's insurance and are not covered by a replacement scheme. If a computer is irredeemably damaged, then the student will need to find funds for a replacement. Hardware faults (other than batteries) are covered by manufacturers' extended warranty schemes.

DTP and CDT students must have submitted their research proposal in preparation for formally transferring to the department and listed an Earth Sciences Faculty member as their primary supervisor before IT can order them a computer.

- *Standard Laptop*

It is the policy of the department to provide each graduate student with a laptop computer suitable for normal office applications when they join the department.

The machine will be procured through the department's IT Office (itsupport@earth.ox.ac.uk). They will remain the property of the department and must be returned upon either completion of the degree or withdrawal. For information regarding standard laptop specifications please refer to the IT Equipment Purchasing section on the Earth Sciences IT page.

- *Specialist Machines*

If you require a more advanced machine to undertake your research, you must first discuss this with your supervisors and gain their support before contacting the department's IT Office who can help with the purchase (itsupport@earth.ox.ac.uk).

The department will contribute £1000 towards the cost. You can contribute from your own funds. All students can use part of their RTSG towards a specialist machine.

DPhil students will have access to this offer from the time they enrol, DTP students will gain access once they transfer into the department.

The machine will be procured through the department's IT Office and will remain the property of the department They must be returned upon either completion of the degree or withdrawal. If you contribute towards the initial purchase of your machine, then at the end of your studies you will be given the option of purchasing your machine for a nominal sum, however your contribution for the initial purchase cannot be applied retrospectively.

*Software*

If you require software you may be able to purchase what you need through the department or through the University; information about this can be found on the department's SharePoint site (https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/EART-EarthSciencesITDepartment) and on the University website (www.it.ox.ac.uk/get-software).

If you need to use your own computer for your research, i.e. one not purchased by the department, you may be limited on what software can be installed for you and you may have to purchase what you need yourself.

*Photocopiers, scanners, and printers*

To use these, you will need to register your University Card using the PIN given to you.

Photocopiers are on the ground and third floors. Poster printing is also available in-house.

A3 and A4 scanning to PDF is available on the third floor.

*Data Security*

- *Research Computing and backing up work*

It is your responsibility to make sure that your work is backed up and advised that all important data is cloud based rather than locally stored. Research groups' own file stores are their responsibility and you should check with them what their data security policy is.

Your data is your most valuable and possibly irreplaceable asset; make sure that you know how to back it up safely and in multiple places, preferably with archived older copies just in case of virus infection.

- *Viruses*

Viruses and 'Trojan horse' programs are a real threat, even on Macs.

Anti-virus software is reactive and not a total guard against infection, so it is important to be wary and to **never** download and run a program from an untrusted source. It may look like a good idea at the time but could put all your work at risk.

- *Passwords*

If you use the same password for multiple sites and one is hacked you are vulnerable everywhere.

Beware of cyber cafés as they may have key-loggers installed which will harvest your passwords.

When accessing your bank etc. never store the password in the browser and preferably use a 'private' window and close the browser directly afterwards.

Never give anyone else your password. No one in the University will ask you to e-mail such things to them so report phishing attempts targeting University credentials to phishing@infosec.ox.ac.uk and include the original phishing email as an attachment.

- *Portable storage*

USB thumb drives are very easy to lose (or put through the washing machine), so do not keep anything important or sensitive on them. Just keep them for temporary storage to transfer them between computers.

USB hard disks seem robust but are susceptible to bumps and shocks and often only last a couple of years.

Dropbox, iCloud etc. are convenient but can be a security risk and may store sensitive data outside of the EU, which can breach data laws. Computers fully integrated with department network storage cannot have Dropbox installed upon them for this reason. Purchasing

individual Cloud services can be deemed taxable by HMRC, so the University equivalent that should be used by all is OneDrive by Nexus365.

***Workshop Facilities***

- **Basement Workshop**: For requests for work to be carried out in the Basement Workshop, contact the Workshop Manager. Requests must be accompanied by support from your supervisor and authorisation by the Head of Administration and Finance. You are not permitted to use workshop machinery, borrow tools, etc., under any circumstances.

- **Equipment**: See your supervisor about any equipment needs. **Equipment may not be removed from any area without the permission of the Head of Administration and Finance.** The location of all equipment is recorded in the department inventory, which is subject to irregular inspection by our accountants. You must have permission to use any hazardous machinery or electrical hand tools e.g., in the Workshop.

- **Ionising Radiation**: If your work takes you into laboratories where ionising radiation is used, you **must** be registered as a radiation worker, contact the Radiation Protection Supervisor.

- Students should feel that they can approach the appropriate technicians with requests for use of specific pieces of equipment, but it should be borne in mind that there are many competing demands on the technicians' time and expertise, and that the department runs a relatively lean support service that is sometimes fully stretched. It may not always be possible to provide the services that would be ideal.

***Geological Facilities***

The Geological Facilities Manager should be approached initially with any requests. For specific laboratories and facilities, see contacts listed below.

- **Optics Laboratory**: Contains a range of incident and transmitted light microscopes including epi-fluorescence and cathodo-luminescence and digital imaging equipment. For initial booking and training, contact the Geological Facilities Manager.

- **Electron Beam Laboratories**: The department possesses an FEI Quanta-FEG electron microscope together with and a Cameca SX5-FEG electron microprobe (~January 2016) and a large volume carbon evaporator for sample coating. For initial training and booking please contact the Geochemistry Laboratory Manager or the Geological Facilities Manager.

- **Macropalaeobiology Laboratory**: Contains equipment for the study of computed tomography (CT) datasets, digitisation of three-dimensional landmarks, and optical imaging of palaeontological samples at a variety of scales. For use of equipment and facilities contact the Geological Facilities Manager.

- **Rock Crushing Laboratory**: Contains equipment for splitting, powdering and sieving. For use of the equipment and facilities, contact the Geological Facilities Manager.

- **Rock Preparation Laboratories** (rock cutting, polishing and thin section preparation): Work must be detailed on the appropriate form (available from the laboratory and administration). For use of the equipment and facilities contact the Geological Facilities Manager

***Online Booking***

- There is an online booking facility available for the SEM. Please contact the ICP Laboratory Manager, for technical advice and booking for the ICP-MS and Sector-Field ICP instruments.

A list of the main equipment within the department is detailed in the appendices.

Note: It is important to negotiate scheduling and costs with supervisors and support staff in advance of use of facilities or equipment.

- **Formal training and sign off**: The support staff responsible for the day-to-day running of laboratories require all new users of the equipment and facilities to be trained, irrespective of their past experience. Training and supervision will be specifically tailored to an individual user's needs by the person in charge of that facility. You and your supervisor(s) should liaise with laboratory managers before starting work.

**Rock Acquisition, Storage and Disposal**

Depending on your project, you may need to collect sample material from the field for study in Oxford. This requires thought and advance planning to find the ideal balance between collecting enough of the right material to achieve your scientific objectives, yet not over-collecting, which can lead to excessive transportation costs, wastage of resources, and storage problems in the department.

Discuss your sampling strategy with your supervisor. Samples for geochemical or isotopic study have an ideal size determined largely by the analytical technique. Samples purely for petrographic study and in-situ microanalysis can be kept small. Trim waste and weathered material in the field.

See your supervisor for any matters regarding rock storage. A very limited amount of space is available in the department basement. Any rock specimens placed in storage should be boxed, the box clearly labelled with the owner's name. Different sized boxes are available in the store. Unlabelled material is in ever-present danger of being thrown out.

Please see the Finance Office about importing rocks. **Keep all documents and make the arrangements before** you leave for your fieldwork. Rocks must be imported by the cheapest possible means – but plan this in advance, and work out how you are going to pay for it with your supervisor before you go into the field. Bear in mind that you will probably need special permission (e.g., from DEFRA) to import water, soil and biological materials from abroad. This permission may take some months to put in place, so plan ahead. Equipment that is taken into/out of the country for fieldwork will need to be insured, and may need to be declared for customs purposes. Again, plan ahead.

When your thesis is complete, you are required to leave a numbered, representative selection of your rocks (with thin sections) to be incorporated into the Departmental Accessions Series, which is administered as part of the Petrological Collections of the Museum. The specimens should be clearly marked with your reference number, and you should supply a spreadsheet giving at a *minimum*, the reference number, identification, full locality (including grid or map reference), geological context (including any stratigraphic information), and the date of collection for each specimen. Please contact the Collections Manager (https://oumnh.ox.ac.uk/collections-managers) when you are close to completion; they will give you further advice. ***All other rocks must be removed from your office or other departmental storage when you depart.***

## Supplies

Supplies should be ordered through the finance system by raising a requisition form approved by your supervisor. See details under Financial Matters section.

For general stationery, please see Reception.

## Recycling

There are recycling points around the building that will take paper, cardboard, cans and plastic bottles. Glass (bottle) recycling is available in the Researchers Common Room (RCR, level 05). Confidential papers that need to be shredded can be placed in the grey plastic bin in the post room on the ground floor.

### *Green Impact*

Since the scheme was launched we have been awarded Bronze, Silver, and in 2016 we achieved a Gold award for the building and the laboratories. This was achieved by commitment from all members of the department in various ways, for example, our efforts towards reducing waste, recycling, and other initiatives for saving energy and reducing our carbon footprints.

In 2019 the department formed a new team to be the department's ambassadors for Green Impact and they have been working with everyone in the department to reduce waste and our carbon footprint. If you would like further information regarding the Green Impact Initiative then contact the Building and Facilities Manager.

## Cleaning

Cleaners are employed to undertake normal cleaning, and are not able to move papers, rocks etc., in your room. If you need to dispose of a large amount of rubbish, please contact the Building and Facilities Manager.

## Catering

There is a (self-service) coffee machine in the Researchers Common Room (RCR) on level 05, and a tap for both hot and chilled water. Coffee and tea are available in the RCR from about 11am Monday to Friday. **Those who bring their own meals to prepare and eat in the kitchen area are asked to put crockery and cutlery in the dishwasher, or wash, dry, and put them away, rather than leave anything soaking in the sink**. There is also a vending machine on the ground floor, and a smaller coffee machine on level 02.

## Mail

Incoming post is placed in the pigeonholes on the ground floor.

Internal post is collected from Reception by messenger for delivery to other departments/colleges twice daily (no stamp needed).

Outgoing mail is collected twice a day by the University Mail staff at roughly 11.00am and 2.00pm. Please leave all mail in the trays provided and write your initials in the corner of the envelope. Please see Reception if this needs to be tracked.

We do not wrap your parcels or dispatch them. Business mail, which on occasions is necessary, should be initialled by your supervisor, or in their absence, by the Head of Administration and Finance, or the Academic Administrator.

If you are expecting a parcel, please look out for it in the mail room behind Reception. Please collect parcels promptly, or let Reception (reception@earth.ox.ac.uk) know if you are unable to do so.

## Notices

If you wish to display a departmental notice, see the Reception staff. We do not display notices that might be emotive, political, offensive, etc., and reserve the right to say 'no' or remove. Watch the boards for notices of conferences, special lectures, jobs and courses. Observe especially the Safety noticeboard.

## Parking

### *Cycle Parking*

There is ample **cycle parking** around the department, including a swipe-card accessible bike room which can be reached via the back of the building. Please do not use the bike room to store bikes (e.g., during periods of absence), and keep bikes padlocked. Please do not bring bikes inside the building, other than in the bike room.

We recommend that you should have personal insurance for your bicycles, as these, along with all other personal belongings, are not insured by the University. The University Security Officers can help with secure bike labelling and registration, please contact Reception (reception@earth.ox.ac.uk).

### *Motorbikes*

Please be careful with **motorbikes** and park away from car parking areas, and never in front of Fire Exits.

### *Cars*

Car parking space is not generally available, but departmental spaces may be booked with Reception if they are available.

## Fault Reporting

Report any faults with the building, fixtures or fittings to the Building and Facilities Manager. **Never** attempt repairs yourself - not even rewiring a plug. The Safety at Work Act requires that we test electrical fittings regularly. Do not remove labels attached to any apparatus or plug.

# Financial Matters

## Finance Staff

The Finance Office administers student funds as agreed with sponsors.

David White (david.white@earth.ox.ac.uk) is our Management Accountant and oversees all Earth Sciences accounts.

All procurement questions should be directed to orders@earth.ox.ac.uk. This includes requisition and purchase order queries, conference bookings, travel bookings on credit card or through Key Travel.

All payment questions should be directed to accounts@earth.ox.ac.uk. This includes invoice (supplier payments), expense payments, and accounts receivable, financial reporting and management accounts.

All project and post-award questions should be directed to the Research Finance Manager for Earth Sciences, Gabriela Rotari (project@earth.ox.ac.uk). This includes grant management, Oracle project management, reporting, and forecasting.

## Research Training Support Grant (RTSG)

Students should discuss the budget for their project with their supervisor(s) as early as possible. This should be submitted to the Management Accountant in the Finance Office (see above for contact details) as soon as possible so they can help to manage your project's finances. You will be asked to review and submit an updated budget with your Transfer materials. A template budget form is available on Canvas (https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/).

UKRI students will have an element of their award allocated to cover expenses in relation to their research, known as the Research Training Support Grant (RTSG). Students on the DPhil should discuss the value of their RTSG with their supervisors (students on the DTP should contact their DTP Administrator). RTSGs can usually be used to cover field expenses, analysis, and conferences. Your supervisor will need to approve all expenditure from your RTSG.

Please also refer to the Department's policy on the billing and use of Small Research Facilities (SRF) in Appendix N.

There may be additional strategic funds available for significant purchases, but they will have to be requested by you with support from your supervisor/s (with a reason/plan for the funds). These will be distributed according to availability.

## Funding Administration

For each student funded through a research grant or UKRI scheme, the department will receive funds for research, training and other expenses. Your supervisor should have an idea of how those funds are to be used and any additional sources of funding supporting your research. It is the responsibility of the department and supervisor to ensure that your research is properly supported, but please check with your supervisor before using project funds. Should you experience any difficulties in your research for financial reasons you should bring this to the attention of the Head of Administration and Finance or DGS without delay.

Students are funded via a variety of sponsors, while others are self-funded. For those funded by a research council, the department will directly administer all funds. This means

we will pay the stipend and course fees, and manage the funds allocated for fieldwork and exceptional consumables. Your stipend will be paid in four equal quarterly instalments in advance of each quarter for each year of your scholarship, subject to the terms of the funding offer letter. Payments will be made directly into your UK bank account.

Please note that payments to students require bank details to be supplied in advance on the form supplied. It may take up to 4-6 weeks to reach your account from the date of request.

Students funded by other means should discuss the administration of their funding with the Finance Office.

**Reimbursement**

Should you require reimbursement for costs incurred, you will need to submit an expenses claim (https://finance.admin.ox.ac.uk/how-to-claim-expenses-staff-and-students); queries about the expenses process should be directed to the Finance Office (accounts@earth.ox.ac.uk).

**Travel and Fieldwork**

Any travel and fieldwork associated with your project should have been agreed by your supervisor and budgeted for. In most cases funds are strictly limited, and supervisors will have provided an advance estimate of costs. If in doubt about spending in association with your project, please consult your supervisor(s) or the Finance Office.

If your fieldwork is funded, the department can pay part of the estimated costs in advance, as some arrangements and payments must be made prior to the trip. You must account for the actual costs on your return with all supporting documents such as tickets and receipts. contact the Finance Office (accounts@earth.ox.ac.uk) **at least 2 weeks** before you require travel advances.

However, you undertake travel, it should be by the cheapest possible method. The Academic Office can sign and stamp the form for Rail Cards. Rail costs will be reimbursed at the railcard rate only.

Your research may require you to do some fieldwork which will take you to a variety of terrain and weather conditions; it is therefore essential that you have suitable outdoor clothing for all eventualities. Relatively inexpensive good quality clothing can be purchased from specialist outdoor retailers who can also provide useful advice e.g., Cotswold Outdoors, Blacks, GO Outdoors, or an independent shop, ideally visiting in person to check fit.

**Sick, Parental and other Exceptional Leave Policies**

The MPLS Division's Sick, Parental and other Exceptional Leave policy is published on the MPLS website: www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/funding-for-graduate-students/sick-parental-and-other-exceptional-leave-policy. The Division also has a parental leave funding policy which aims to support women doctoral students in STEM subjects to proactively manage any pause in their studies due to maternity. It is intended to support women to progress through their academic career and improve the representation of women over time in STEM subjects. Further details can be found on the MPLS website: www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/funding-for-graduate-students/funding-for-parental-leave.

The University has a policy on student maternity, extended paternity, adoption and shared parental leave. This policy sets out a framework for student parents' interactions with the University in relation to data collection, defining entitlement to parental leave, arrangements for return to study, and access to University graduate accommodation and childcare

services. Further details can be found on the University website: www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/furtherstudentsupport#content-tab--3.

**Carers Fund**

We recognise that parents with young children, or those with caring responsibilities, can find it very difficult to take opportunities to attend seminars or present work at conferences, yet these are important things to do for research, teaching, and career development, and to foster networking and collaboration opportunities. The Department of Earth Sciences offers discretionary funds of up to £250 (per event) to help towards increased caring costs resulting from such activities.

This is open to all members of staff and postgraduate students, particularly those in the early stages of their career, who are attending conferences, seminars and courses.

More information, including the carers fund application form, can be found on the department's SharePoint site (https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/EART-HUB-EarthSciences/SitePages/Human-Resources.aspx).

**Young Adult Carers**

The university also offers support dedicated to young carers aged 16-25. Please see the Young Adult Carers page for more information.

**Additional Sources of Funding**

Please see the appendices for other potential sources of funding for fieldwork, travel, conferences, etc.

***Demonstrating***

You must contact HR before doing any work on behalf of the department; please see the Working for the Department section of this handbook for further details.

***Tutorials***

You may also give tutorials to undergraduate students. Tutorials are administered and paid for by the colleges, and they should instruct you on how to claim payment. We advise that you contact your College Office if you would be interested in giving tutorials.

***Burdett-Coutts Fund***

The Burdett Coutts Fund provides a possible source of funding for travel (e.g., fieldwork), use of field assistants, or attendance at conferences (students will not receive funds towards attendance at more than one conference during their programme). Funds are limited, but every DPhil student is eligible to apply. Priority will be given to first time applications.

The Committee would expect that applicants also apply for any other available funding e.g., college funds or other funding that their supervisor might be aware of. Applications are invited at the beginning of Michaelmas and Hilary terms, and application forms are available on the department's SharePoint site (https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/EART-HUB-EarthSciences/SitePages/Committees-Burdett-Coutts-Committee.aspx). They include a section to be completed by the supervisor, who then submits the form to the Committee Secretary.

# Field Trip

The trip is organised and led by graduate students (we recommend at least 3) and the department contributes towards the cost. The organiser(s) need to complete a risk assessment and submit it to the Department Fieldwork Safety Officer for approval. Once approved the risk assessment must be sent and explained to everyone one going on the trip.

Everyone going on the trip should have travel insurance; students are eligible to take advantage of the University's travel insurance; for information about what is covered and how to apply please see the University website (www.admin.ox.ac.uk/finance/insurance/travel). It is the traveller's responsibility to ensure they have appropriate travel insurance.

As the department can only contribute to the cost of the trip and not cover the full cost, it is important for the organiser(s) to keep in mind the financial situations of the students and some may not be able to afford the expense of a trip overseas. Students may also prefer several day trips spread throughout the year rather than a single long trip; a single long trip may not be possible for some due to the increased cost or other commitments. It is also important to plan around study and teaching commitments students may have so a trip held in September may receive a better sign up than one in term time.

# Appendix A: Statement of Provision

**Statement of Provision for Graduate Research Students**

The purpose of this statement is to indicate what a graduate research student might expect to be offered in the Department of Earth Sciences. 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 the departmental DGS will confirm to the Division that the statements of provision have been discussed with research students in their departments. The provision should be reviewed by the supervisor with the student at least once a year.

Further information and guidance about research degrees may be found in the University's

**Notes of Guidance for Research Degrees (GSO.20a)**

***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 your 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 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 you are at in your research programme. The Division's Code of Practice on the Supervision of Graduate Research Students is available at www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school.

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

You will have departmental induction which takes place 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.

***What workspace will be provided?***

Workspace will be related to individual circumstances. All students will have shared office space. If undertaking experimental work, you will also be provided with bench space in a laboratory.

***What IT support will be available?***

You will be provided with an Earth Sciences IT account providing services and associated access (e.g., use of a departmental computer, software, systems, printing).

You will be provided with a laptop computer suitable for normal office applications when you join the department. If you require a more advanced machine to undertake your research, the department will make a limited contribution towards the cost and you can make up the remainder out of your own funds. In both instances the machine will be procured through the department's IT team and will remain the property of the department. Desktops should be located in the department.

***What experimental facilities will be available?***

The department has a number of geological facilities and a workshop available as appropriate to the 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.

***What library facilities will be available?***

The Earth Sciences Library (in addition to the RSL and other university libraries, and the centrally provided electronic resources).

***Which research training and seminars will be available?***

Some compulsory training sessions are provided, especially at the beginning of the DPhil, but mostly training in the department will depend on the individual student and project. The department has regular seminars which students are encouraged at attend. These are widely advertised in the department.

The Division is developing further cross-disciplinary provision for key research skills, to share research training expertise and skills across the Division.

The Graduate Academic Programme identifies a need to provide advanced courses in core techniques, e.g., in (non-linear) mathematical modelling, computer programming, and data analysis), in addition to courses introducing the specific area of research. Research seminars are available within individual research groups; department research groups; across the Division and in other Divisions.

You will have access to the seminars that individual research groups or groups with common areas of interest organise for their own members and others. You will also have access to the other departmental seminars and colloquia.

Information about all available research training and seminars can be found at: www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training.

***What access to research funds will be available?***

You will find that limited departmental funds are available to assist with attendance at conferences, in addition to any allocated funds via individual research group/supervisors. Students may apply to the Burdett-Coutts Committee for limited additional funds to assist with conference attendance or unforeseen expenses.

***What formal graduate skills training will be provided?***

The Graduate Academic Programme brings together all the training available to graduate research students in MPLS, which means that you have access to a very large number of courses. These include academic courses, research, teaching, transferable skills and career development training. With Access to all these courses, you and your supervisor are able to tailor a training programme to suit your individual needs and interests.

You will have the opportunity to attend a variety of skills training sessions offered by the department, such as Scientific Writing and Teaching Skills, as appropriate to the different stages of your graduate career. The MPLS Division also organises courses and career planning events, details of which are emailed to students via their departments. These skills are taught in the context of the students' own current interests and needs. GSR allows students to reflect on their development and progress, and to record skills training needs and training attended.

Information about transferable skills training, and courses provided by your department, and the other departments in MPLS can be found at: www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training.

A list of courses is also available in the Division's skills training handbook. These courses are organised by the MPLS Division and make up part of the MPLS Graduate Academic Programme (GAP).

***What opportunities will be available for developing and practising teaching skills (for second- and third-year graduates)?***

The department provides training in teaching skills, and there are opportunities to take part in teaching activities in the department, such as undergraduate classes and laboratory

demonstrating, and tutorial teaching in colleges. Information about the department's training and teaching opportunities is circulated via email.

There may also be opportunities to undertake tutorial teaching in colleges.

You will also be expected to attend the departmental training for Teaching and Lab Demonstrating Skills, and be given the opportunity to attend a course in the field on Field Demonstrating Skills.

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

*Department*

Research students are encouraged to congregate in the Research Common Room, at around 11am, during the week. This encourages interaction between research groups in the department.

Departmental seminars and colloquia bring research students together with academic and other research staff in the department to hear about on-going research, and provide an opportunity for networking and socialising.

*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 may often 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.

***What arrangements are in place for pastoral and welfare support?***

*Department*

Within the department, your supervisor(s), DGS, and Academic Office are all available to offer support. The Joint Consultative Committee (Graduate) provides a channel through which graduate students' views and concerns can be brought to the attention of the departmental Teaching 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 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. The University also has a professionally staffed confidential Student Counselling Service, which offers assistance with personal, emotional, social and academic problems.

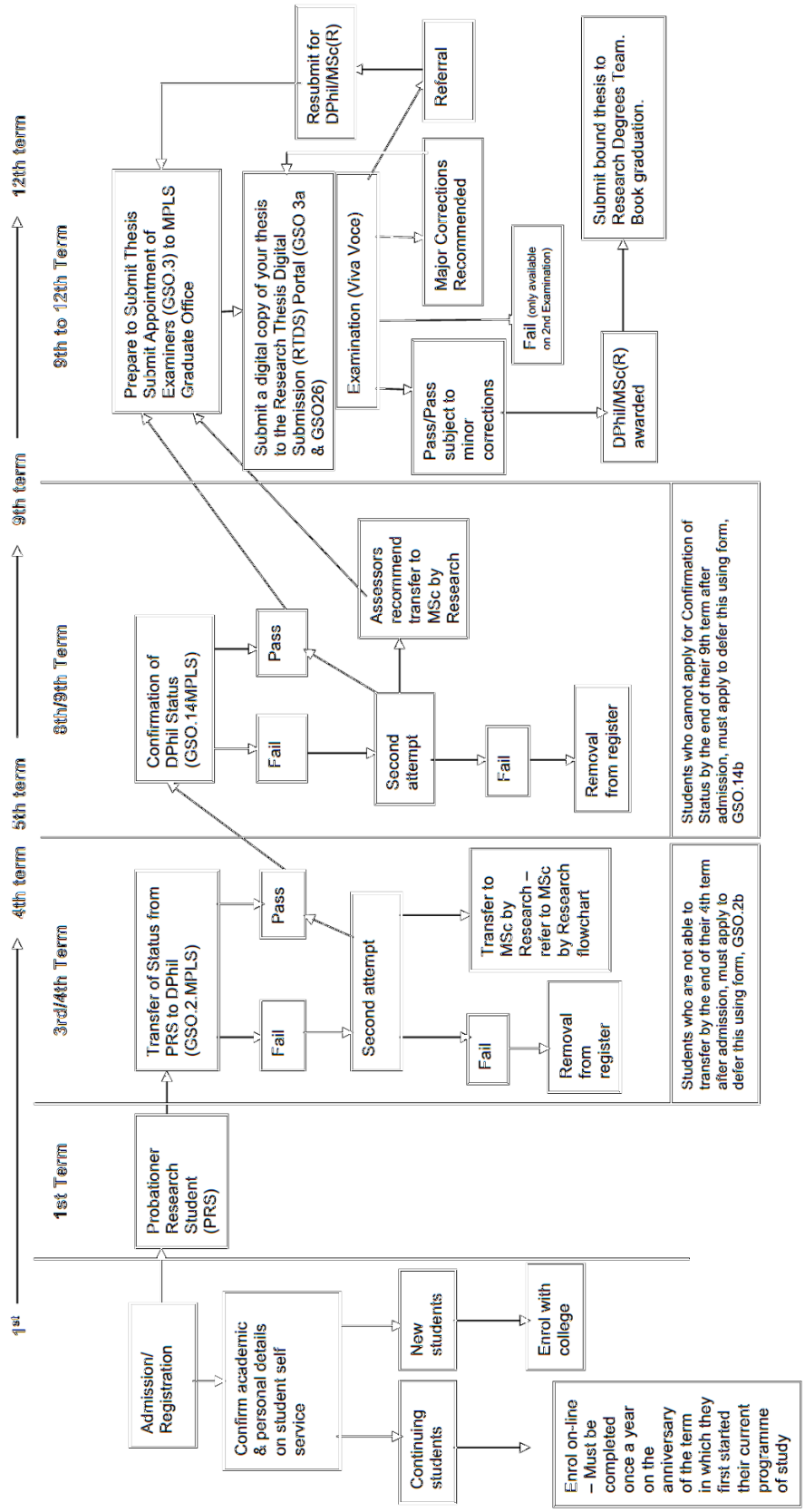
*Central*

The University provides a Student Counselling Service (www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling) and Careers Service (www.careers.ox.ac.uk).

***Contacts***

If you have any queries about your department's statement of provision please contact the DGS, or the Academic Office (graduate.studies@earth.ox.ac.uk).

# Appendix B: Progress Flowchart for DPhil Students




(Please note that only two attempts are permitted at Transfer & Confirmation of Status)
www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-for-postgraduate-research-students/progression

# Appendix C: Transfer of Status

**Transfer of Status from Probationer Research Student to DPhil or MSc(R)**

Every graduate student starting to work for a research degree in Oxford is first given the status of a Probationary Research Student (PRS). Only after an assessment of your progress during the probationary period is your status formally transferred to that of a DPhil or MSc(R) student.

The purpose of Transfer of Status 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(R) quality. The assessors will also use the process to assess and confirm the likelihood of submission within your funded period/within 12 terms (for DPhil) or 9 terms (for MSc(R)).

Transfer of status should not be viewed as an impediment or hurdle, but rather as a process designed to support you in your development as an active researcher. However, the University Regulations do require you to complete your first attempt to transfer within particular time limits. Since these limits refer to the time to complete the process, the department's dates for submission of material are earlier.

Completing Transfer of Status should result in the completion of a substantive piece of work that will form a chapter of your final thesis.

**Timing of the Transfer Process**

The deadline for submission of the material is Friday of week 8 in the Michaelmas Term of the second year (4th term for Michaelmas Term starters, 5th term for Trinity Term starters). Where possible, Hilary Term starters are encouraged to submit by Friday of week 8 in the Michaelmas Term of their first year (3rd term).

In exceptional cases a request to defer the submission of written work, and subsequent interview, can be submitted to graduate.studies@earth.ox.ac.uk for the attention of the DGS; requests must have the written support of the supervisors. In most circumstances you would still be expected to present at the Graduate Conference in Week 0 of Hilary Term (5th term for Michaelmas Term starters, 4th term for Hilary Term starters, 6th term for Trinity Term starters). If a deferral is granted, you will be advised if you need to submit a formal application to defer your Transfer of Status through Student Self Service.

Those who defer their Transfer of Status will be required to submit their application no later than Friday of week 8 in the last term of deferral (e.g., if you are granted a 1 term deferral, you will need to submit your application by Friday of week 8 of Hilary Term of the second year).

We recommend that you start writing your submission no later than the term preceding the deadline, for most this will mean starting to write no later than Trinity Term of the first year (3rd term for Michaelmas Term starters, 2nd term for Hilary Term starters, 4th term for Trinity Term starters).

**How to apply for Transfer of Status**

In terms of the amount of time you should spend in preparation, to write the report and make the presentation should take approximately one week. The report builds on reading and research that you have done, but that research is something that will help form your thesis eventually, and the time taken to undertake that research will of course vary depending on

student and project. You should ask for advice from your supervisors if you have any concerns.

*1. Meeting with your supervisors*

You should arrange a meeting with your supervisors in Trinity Term (3rd term for most) to discuss Transfer of Status. It is recommended that you use the Preparing for Transfer of Status form (available on Canvas) as a guide for this meeting. The questions are based on the criteria your assessors will be considering for your assessment.

*2. Application to Transfer Status*

You should submit the application for Transfer of Status through Student Self Service. You can submit your application without written work attached in the first instance, we recommend no later than Friday of week 6, this will allow for it to proceed through the approvals process before the deadline. Once you have submitted your application it will be sent to your supervisors, College, and the DGS for approval; **NOTE:** your application cannot be passed onto your assessors until it has been approved by your supervisors, College, and the DGS.

Before the deadline you will need to upload your application documents using the following naming conventions for the files:

- Surname_Forename_ToS_Report
- Surname_Forename_ToS_Abstract
- Surname_Forename_ToS_Research Integrity Certificate
- Surname_Forename_ToS_Budget

If your application documents are too large to upload you will need to select the option to 'generate a placeholder document' in On-Course Applications; this ensures that the on-system process can still proceed, and you will need to email your document to graduate.studies@earth.ox.ac.uk (do not share a document with the Graduate Studies inbox as that does not have OneDrive).

*3. Report*

You should upload a PDF copy of your report as a single file through Student Self Service. Please do not email the report to your assessors.

See later in this section for more information about your report.

*4. Abstract*

Prepare a 300-word abstract, this will be incorporated into a booklet for the Graduate Conference (an abstract must still be uploaded as part of your application even if you are not taking part in the conference). A template is available on Canvas (https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/). Your abstract must include the following details:

- Thesis title
- Primary supervisor
- Assessors - you must have at least 2, one of which should be the DGS or DDGS, the other is your proposed internal examiner. The proposed internal examiner should be agreed with your supervisor(s) and contacted before you put their name down to make sure they are able and willing to be part of the assessment process. Your supervisor should also add your assessors' details to your application if the assessors are known.

- Research theme.

*5. Research Integrity Training*

Students **must** complete the University's online Research Integrity Training (an introduction to good research practice) before applying for Transfer of Status, which is available at www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training/mpls-training/our-courses/mpls-research-courses/research-integrity-online-courses. You will need to upload your Research Integrity Training Certificate as part of your Transfer application.

*6. Budget*

Students should discuss the budget for their project with their supervisor(s) as early as possible. This should be submitted to the Finance Office (accounts@earth.ox.ac.uk) as soon as possible after enrolment, so they can help to manage your project's finances.

Your budget should take into account any projected use of Small Research Facilities (SRF). The department's policy on the billing and use of SRF is given in Appendix N.

You will be asked to review and submit an updated budget with your Transfer materials. A template budget form is available on Canvas (https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/).

*7. Presentation*

You will be asked to deliver a 20-minute presentation (15-minute talk, plus 5 minutes for questions) at the Graduate Conference to share information about your project with the rest of the department, with the expectation that the audience will include your two assessors. Your presentation should include a timeline of work still to be completed.

To reduce the amount of delay between presentations at the conference, we recommend uploading any materials to the computer at the start of the day, or before the start of the relevant block of presentations.

*8. Interview*

You will be asked to attend an interview with your two assessors. At the interview, they may ask you to make a brief presentation if they have not heard it before. The interview will typically last around 20 minutes. You should be prepared to spend a proportion of the time discussing your plans for future work. Note that your supervisor will not attend.

Typically, your assessors will consist of at least one faculty member who has suitable expertise in your research area. You are advised to talk this over with your supervisor and approach the faculty member directly prior to submission. In addition, and to ensure consistency of process, the second interviewer will be either the Director or Deputy Director of Graduate Studies. Together, they will consider all aspects of your submission, including a report from your supervisor which forms part of the application for Transfer of Status, and make a recommendation to the Director or Deputy Director of Graduate Studies (whichever was not your assessor; if both were assessing or were supervising the recommendation would be passed onto another member of Faculty holding an administrative position, such as the Head of Department or Head of Teaching), who will consider all the evidence and make a recommendation to the University. You will then hear back formally from the University with the outcome.

**Report**

The report can take two forms: 'paper' mode and 'review' mode. Paper mode presents your work in the form of a scientific paper. This paper does not have to have been submitted for publication but should be in draft form and is particularly suitable for those who have data that will contribute to a peer reviewed paper along with a short research proposal. The

second option, 'review mode' is the submission of a literature review alongside a research proposal as a single report.

You should discuss with your supervisor which option is better for you; there is no inherent advantage in either, but both will hopefully contribute to your final thesis. If you have already drafted a paper, the first option might be better for you; alternatively, if you are awaiting or processing data the second option might be preferable.

In both cases the research proposal should contain details of the work planned for the following year, with well-considered ideas for the remaining period of your studies. You should be planning for submission of a thesis within your funded period, and no later than your maximum submission date.

*'Paper' mode*

For this mode, you need to submit two parts:

- *Part I:*

This should be written in the form of a scientific journal. It should have all the usual elements: a title, abstract, introduction and review of relevant work; several sections describing research output; a conclusions section; and a bibliography.

The paper should be no fewer than 10 A4 pages in length (a page is deemed to be a single side of A4), including all diagrams and bibliography. The page layout, font size, etc should be the same as your final thesis, see the notes of guidance for research examinations for students submitting their thesis (GSO.20a: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/progression).

- *Part II:*

This should comprise a thesis plan, setting out the major objectives of the work, with a realistic timeline. This should not be longer than 2 pages of A4, with typesetting as above.

*'Review' mode*

For this mode, you need to submit two parts that together should provide a clear motivation for your research:

- *Part I:*

The work should be a literature review that comprises a substantive part of your initial thesis chapter, and be no fewer than 10 pages in length (a page is deemed to be a single side of A4), including all diagrams and bibliography, with the aim that it forms a significant part of the initial chapter of your final thesis. It should contain all the usual elements of a thesis introductory chapter, that is: title, introduction and review of the relevant work, a short section detailing the research questions to be addressed, and bibliography. The page layout, font size, etc should be the same as your final thesis, see the notes of guidance for research examinations for students submitting their thesis (GSO.20a: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/progression).

- *Part II:*

This should comprise a thesis plan, setting out the major objectives of the work, with a realistic timeline. This should not be longer than 2 pages of A4, with typesetting as above.

**What assessors will be expecting/looking for from students at Transfer of Status**

The criteria used by assessors for Transfer of Status are that they 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 of study. Periods of suspension do not count.

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.

The assessors are looking for evidence of all-round basic competence as a researcher: someone who is able to read, understand and appreciate the significance of existing literature; to come up with relevant and timely ideas; to pursue them via theory, experiment, and analysis; to draw conclusions about the outcome and 'what next'; and to present their work so that other researchers can understand it.

In many cases, the assessors will recommend Transfer of Status without any concerns. There is then nothing for you to do but continuing to work on your project and await the formal letter from the University confirming your Transfer of Status.

It is possible that the assessors may raise some concerns that you will need to address more formally than simply by discussion in the interview. In such cases, the assessors will ask you to provide a written response within two weeks of the interview, agreed with your supervisor, before recommending transfer.

It is also possible that the assessors will not be able to recommend Transfer of Status. You will receive a formal letter about this from the University, along with a copy of the assessors' report. You will be granted one further term in which to apply for Transfer of Status a second time. You should discuss the situation with your supervisor and with the DGS to explore all options available to you.

The Graduate Handbook of the Mathematical and Physical Sciences Division explains all possible outcomes: www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-for-postgraduate-research-students/progression.

# Appendix D: Confirmation of Status

**Confirmation of DPhil Status**

Every DPhil student who has passed Transfer of Status is required by the University Regulations also to confirm status before submitting a final thesis. As with Transfer of Status, this is designed to support you in your development as a researcher, providing you with an independent assessment of your progress.

Note that, although the process is very similar to that of Transfer of Status, there are some important differences.

The purpose of Confirmation of Status is to enable doctoral students to receive an assessment of their work by two assessors, other than your supervisor(s). It is intended to provide an indication that if work on the thesis continues to develop satisfactorily, then consideration of submission of the thesis within your funded period/four years would appear to be reasonable. It therefore provides a second stage of formal progress review in the research programme. It should be noted that successful completion of Confirmation of Status provides an indicator only for readiness for submission, not for the final outcome of the examination of the thesis.

Although Confirmation of Status is a formal milestone in your programme, the whole process is supposed to be supportive, and to ensure that you are on track to completing a scientifically important theses that can be completed within the time available to you.

Completing Confirmation of Status should result in the completion of a second piece of substantive work that will form a chapter of your final thesis (the first completed at Transfer of Status).

**Timing of the Confirmation Process**

According to University Regulations, you are required to complete your first attempt at confirmation within 9 terms of beginning your DPhil studies (not including suspensions). Since the 9 terms refers to the time to complete the process, it is important to initiate the process in good time; this also gives some time for mitigations to be put in place if you are having any difficulties that may later impact your thesis submission.

The deadline for submission of the material is Friday of week 8 in the Michaelmas Term of the third year (7$^{th}$ term for Michaelmas Term starters, 8$^{th}$ term for Trinity Term starters). Where possible, Hilary Term starters are encouraged to submit by Friday of week 8 in the Michaelmas Term of their second year (6$^{th}$ term).

We recommend that you start writing your report no later than the term preceding the deadline, for most this will mean starting to write no later than Trinity Term of the second year (6$^{th}$ term for Michaelmas Term starters, 5$^{th}$ term for Hilary Term starters, 7$^{th}$ term for Trinity Term starters).

In exceptional cases a request to defer the submission of written work, and subsequent interview, can be submitted to graduate.studies@earth.ox.ac.uk for the attention of the DGS; requests must have the written support of the supervisors. In most circumstances you would still be expected to present at the Graduate Conference in Week 0 of Hilary Term (8$^{th}$ term for Michaelmas Term starters, 7$^{th}$ term for Hilary Term starters, 9$^{th}$ term for Trinity Term starters). If a deferral is granted, you will be advised if you need to submit a formal application to defer your Confirmation of Status through Student Self Service.

Those who defer their Confirmation of Status will be required to submit their application no later than Friday of week 8 in the last term of deferral (e.g., if you are granted a 1 term deferral, you will need to submit your application by Friday of week 8 of Hilary Term of the third year).

Please note that Earth Sciences assesses Confirmation of Status earlier in the programme than most other departments. The rationale for this is that this allows time for action to be taken if things are not going to plan for a particular student or project; other departments use Confirmation of Status as a chance to check that students are ready to write up.

You should note that you are required to pass Confirmation of Status before you may apply for the appointment of examiners and submit your thesis.

**How to apply for Confirmation of Status**

The report builds on reading and research that you have done, but that research is something that will help form your thesis eventually, and the time taken to undertake that research will of course vary depending on student and project. You should ask for advice from your supervisors if you have any concerns.

*1. Meeting with your supervisors*

You should arrange a meeting with your supervisors in Trinity Term (6th term for most) to discuss Confirmation of Status. It is recommended that you use the Preparing for Confirmation of Status form (available on Canvas) to as a guide for this meeting. The questions are based on the criteria your assessors will be considering for your assessment.

*2. Application to Confirm DPhil Status*

You should submit the application for Confirmation of Status through Student Self Service. You can submit your application without written work attached in the first instance, we recommend no later than Friday of week 6, this will allow for it to proceed through the approvals process before the deadline. Once you have submitted your application it will be sent to your supervisors, College, and the DGS for approval; **NOTE:** your application cannot be passed onto your assessors until it has been approved by your supervisors, College, and the DGS.

Before the deadline you will need to upload your application documents using the following naming conventions for the files:

- Surname_Forename_CoS_Report
- Surname_Forename_CoS_Abstract

If your application documents are too large to upload you will need to select the option to 'generate a placeholder document' in On-Course Applications; this ensures that the on-system process can still proceed, and you will need to email your document to graduate.studies@earth.ox.ac.uk (do not share a document with the Graduate Studies inbox as that does not have OneDrive).

*3. Report*

You should upload a PDF copy of your report as a single file through Student Self Service. Please do not email the report to your assessors.

See later in this section for more information about your report.

*4. Abstract*

Prepare a 300-word abstract, this will be incorporated into a booklet for the Graduate Conference (an abstract must still be uploaded as part of your application even if you are

not taking part in the conference). A template is available on Canvas (https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/). Your abstract must include the following details:

- Thesis title
- Primary supervisor
- Assessors - you must have at least 2, one of which should be the DGS or DDGS, the other is your proposed internal examiner. The proposed internal examiner should be agreed with your supervisor(s) and contacted before you put their name down to make sure they are able and willing to be part of the assessment process. Your supervisor should also add your assessors' details to your application if the assessors are known.
- Research theme.

*5. Presentation*

You will be asked to deliver a 20-minute presentation (15-minute talk, plus 5 minutes for questions) at the Graduate Conference to share information about your project with the rest of the department, with the expectation that the audience will include your two assessors. Your presentation should include a timeline of work still to be done.

To reduce the amount of delay between presentations at the conference, if you are taking your presentation on a USB stick, we recommend uploading it to the computer before the start of the block of presentations in which you will be presenting (so in the breaks or at the start of the day). You can delete them after each block, or at the end of each day.

*6. Interview*

As with Transfer of Status, you will be asked to attend an interview with a faculty assessor and either the Deputy or Director of Graduate Studies, at a time and place to be arranged by the assessors. They may ask you to make a presentation, but this is not compulsory. The interview will typically last around 20 minutes to 30 minutes, although it can be shorter or longer. Note that your supervisor will not attend.

Normally, the faculty assessor will be the same as at Transfer of Status, although changes are made in cases where the research topic has changed emphasis, or the previous assessors are unavailable. Together, the panel will consider all aspects of your submission, including a report from your supervisor, and make a recommendation to the University. You will then hear back formally from the University with the outcome, although you should hear back more informally as well from your assessors in the meantime.

**Report**

There is no prescribed form for this report, but remember that the assessors must read it all and hence conciseness is a virtue. You can simply use a PDF from a publisher for item (1) if you wish, rather than re-typeset it. Your plan for completion must be realistic.

The report should comprise two sections:

*1. Written work*

This should be a journal or conference paper, or a research-based thesis chapter (i.e., not an introductory chapter or one based on a review of literature or build of equipment). If this was submitted at the Transfer stage, a literature review that comprises a substantive part of your initial thesis chapter should be submitted. The aim is that by this stage in your DPhil, you will have submitted work that will largely comprise two chapters of your final thesis - an introductory chapter, and a data chapter.

The written work should be no fewer than 10 A4 pages in length (a page is deemed to be a single side of A4), including all diagrams and bibliography. The page layout, font size, etc should be the same as your final thesis, see the notes of guidance for research examinations for students submitting their thesis (GSO.20a: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/progression).

*2. Plan for completion*

This should not be longer than 2 pages of A4, with typesetting as above, and should be a detailed plan for completion and include:

a) Outline of the overall research contribution of your thesis;

b) Description of your research contributions to date;

c) Estimate of the fractions of your thesis chapters that have been completed;

d) Detailed timetable for completion, including any potential risks.

Note that sufficient time must be allocated for writing up and that you must plan to complete within your funded period or by your maximum submission date.

***What assessors will be expecting/looking for from students at Confirmation of Status***

The criteria used by assessors for Confirmation of Status are that they must be satisfied that:

a) The student's DPhil project is following a trajectory that will lead to completion and submission within the proposed timeframe and funded period or within 12 terms of study. Periods of suspension do not count.

b) The work undertaken to date provides a sufficient background and a platform for completion/submission.

c) The student's work/research has the potential to make a 'significant and substantial contribution' to their field of study.

d) The student has developed critical knowledge and understanding of the relevant literature.

e) The student understands, can justify and defend their research project, its objectives and rationale.

f) The student has a clear plan for the future direction of the project.

g) The student has taken intellectual ownership of the project.

In many cases, the assessors will recommend Confirmation of Status without any concerns. There is then nothing for you to do but continuing to work on your project and await the formal letter from the University.

It is possible that the assessors may raise some concerns that will need to be addressed by you more formally than simply by discussion in the interview. In such cases, they will ask you to provide a written response within two weeks of the interview, before recommending confirmation.

In some cases, the assessors will agree to Confirmation of Status, but subject to conditions; they will discuss these with you and explain them to you.

It is also possible that the assessors will not be able to recommend Confirmation of Status; they will then provide a detailed report outlining the rationale for this decision. You will be granted one further term to apply for Confirmation of Status a second time. You should discuss the situation with your supervisor and with the DGS to explore all options available to you.

The Graduate Handbook of the Mathematical and Physical Sciences Division explains all possible outcomes: www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-for-postgraduate-research-students/progression.

# Appendix E: Digital Theses

Please read this information carefully. It provides a brief summary of the main issues surrounding digital theses of which research students should be aware. For further information see https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/digitaltheses.

Further information can be found on the Bodleian Libraries website: www2.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ora/about.

**Oxford Digital Theses**

The University of Oxford is committed to the dissemination of its research, and in support of this commitment provides the Oxford University Research Archive (ORA). ORA was established in 2007 as a permanent and secure online archive of research materials produced by members of the University of Oxford.

It provides a single point of public access to electronic copies of peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings by Oxford authors and Oxford research theses, created in fulfilment of University of Oxford Awards. This also provides a means for institutional compliance with funders' Open Access requirements.

**When to Deposit your e-thesis**

Current students must have been granted leave to supplicate following examination of their thesis to be eligible for deposit.

Theses should be deposited in good time (a minimum of five working days) in advance of graduation so that they can be processed by the ORA team.

**Version**

The deposited digital copy should be the finalised copy of the thesis, as approved by the examiners.

**How to Deposit your Thesis**

Go to https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/digitaltheses/how_to_deposit and follow the instructions.

**Sensitive Content in Digital Theses**

When depositing digital copies of theses into ORA it is crucial to take steps to ensure that sensitive information not intended for public release is not inadvertently made freely available on the open Internet. Errors could result in serious consequences for the University or third parties which could be of a legal, personal or financial nature. Guidelines are available online (https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/digitaltheses/sensitive_content).

**Dispensation from Consultation**

There may be good reasons why your thesis cannot be made publicly available. For example, it might contain confidential, sensitive or commercial information, infringe copyright, or there may be concerns about pre-publication. If this is the case you should compete an Application for Dispensation from Consultation of Thesis available from www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/progression. Your request will be considered by members of your faculty in line with faculty policy. Contact your supervisor or Research Services if you are unsure about these matters. Formal dispensation is required for students following academic programmes requiring deposit of the thesis:

Students should apply for dispensation if their thesis contains sensitive or copyright information or have pre-publication concerns.

Once dispensation from consultation has been granted, the period of restricted access should be indicated on the ORA online deposit form.

**Publication of your Thesis**

Theses are increasingly becoming freely available online. Authors may reach a wider audience by making the thesis electronically available in thesis form than by publishing it subsequently in other ways. The balance of advantage will vary from case to case. However, during this period of transition, authors need to be fully informed of factors that affect the decision as to whether to apply to restrict access to their thesis. Authors can then judge the many advantages of open access to their thesis against implications for the ability to publish all or parts of the work as a monograph, journal article or in some other format at a later date. Publishers differ in respect to their policies on this issue. You are advised to discuss this matter with your supervisor.

**Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights**

Information about copyright can be found on the website (https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/digitaltheses/theses_copyright).

**Plagiarism Concerns**

Information about concerns you may have about plagiarism and the take-down policy is available on the website (https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/digitaltheses/plagiarism).

# Appendix F: Mental Health and Harassment

Click here for a list of Mental Health First Aiders.

Click here for a list of Harassment Advisors.

# Appendix G: Equal Opportunities Statement

Full details may be found on the University website: https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/equality-policy.

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

The University embraces diversity amongst its members and seeks to achieve equity in the experience, progression and achievement of all students and staff through the implementation of transparent policies, practices and procedures and the provision of effective support. It also seeks to ensure that its public engagement work and services benefit diverse audiences and communities.

The University recognises that equality and inclusion should be embedded in all its activities and seeks to promote awareness of equality and foster good practice. The University is committed to a programme of action to support its equality policy, to monitoring its effectiveness, and to publishing information on progress towards its equality aims.

The University seeks to ensure that no member of its community is unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex, or sexual orientation (hereafter referred to as the 'protected characteristics').

In exercising its policies, practices, procedures and other functions, the University will have due regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and to the protected characteristics, as well as other relevant circumstances including parental or caring responsibilities, contract type, and working hours.

The University will seek to make a positive contribution to the advancement of equality through all its activities. In particular, the University will:

- Encourage applications for study and employment from the widest pool of potential candidates, especially where representation is disproportionately low, and take lawful positive action, for example with targeted scholarships, to improve diversity where appropriate.

- Take appropriate steps to meet the particular needs of individuals from protected groups where these are different from the needs of others, and work to eliminate any barriers to their success.

- In respect of students, seek to attract and admit students of outstanding potential whatever their background, and work to ensure that teaching and assessment provide an equal opportunity for all students to achieve and demonstrate their full academic potential. Decisions on the admission of students will be based solely on the individual merits of each candidate and the application of selection criteria appropriate to the course of study.

- In respect of staff, seek to ensure that entry into employment and progression within employment are determined solely by criteria which are related to the duties of a particular post and the relevant grade; and support career development and progression with the aim of ensuring diverse representation and participation at all levels.

The University understands inclusion to mean institutional and individual efforts and actions to foster an environment and institutional culture in which each member feels, and is, valued, listened to and respected, able to be themselves and empowered to participate fully in the life of the University.

The University expects all members of the University community to treat each other with respect, courtesy and consideration and does not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation. It has a Policy on Harassment, which includes examples of unacceptable behaviour, supported by a Harassment Advisory Service.

Freedom of expression and academic freedom, as outlined in the University's Statement on Freedom of Speech, are protected by law, and by the University's statutes and policies, though these rights must be exercised within the law.

# Appendix H: Regulations on the Use of IT Facilities

Full details may be found on the University website: www.it.ox.ac.uk/governance-strategy-and-policies.

Anyone who uses IT facilities provided by the University must comply with the Regulations Relating to the use of Information Technology Facilities (https://governance.admin.ox.ac.uk/legislation/it-regulations-1-of-2002), also known as the IT Regs or the IT Rules, which deal with matters such as who may use University facilities and for what purposes, access to data, and what constitutes misuse of facilities. The policies, guidelines and other documents listed below are directly relevant to IT users. Other legislation, policies and standards with which users must comply are available from the Legal Services Office.

# Appendix I: Geological Facilities List

**Optics Laboratory**

- Nikon Optiphot-Pol: transmitted and incident illumination (polarising and reflectance objectives).
- Nikon Optiphot: CL.
- Nikon Optiphot-2: compound, bright field, epi-fluorescence.
- Nikon Labophot-2: compound, phase contrast.
- Wild M8 Sterozoom binocular microscope: incident and transmitted illumination.
- Q-Imaging camera digital camera with *Syncroscopy* software attachable to any of the above.
- Zeiss Discovery 12 stereozoom microscope with imaging and camera lucida
- Zeiss Ultraphot: transmitted illumination.
- Zeiss Universal: incident illumination with single shot reflectance objectives.
- Leitz Laborlux-Pol: with 4-axis universal stage.
- Leica DMRX: incident, transmitted and epi-fluorescence, with point counter
- JCM-5000 Benchtop SEM with gold sputter coater

A number of 'research quality' microscopes are available for loan to students – contact Krzysztof Sokol (krzysztof.sokol@earth.ox.ac.uk) for current instruments available.

**Electron beam labs**

- FEI Quanta FEG electron microscope equipped with Oxford Aztec EDS, EBSD, CL, SE and BSE detectors.
- Cameca SX5-FEG electron microprobe with 5 WDS spectrometers and fully integrated Bruker EDS, SE & BSE detectors.
- HHV 306 large volume turbo-pumped carbon evaporation coater.

**Rock Crushing Facilities**

- Rock splitter (x2)
- *Fritsch* Jaw crusher
- *Fritsch* automatic pestle and mortar
- Roller Mill
- *Fritsch* Planetary Ball Mill (four station, agate and zirconium oxide grinding balls)

- SS White Airbrasive 6500 (airbrasive and pneumatic tools)
- Rotary and reciprocal diamond and tungsten drills, pins and abrasive wheels
- Tema Swing Mill with agate and tungsten carbide rings

*Sedimentology and Mineral Separation*

- Franz isodynamic magnetic separator
- Wet (stainless steel) and dry (brass) 10 and 20cm diameter sieves
- Macro and Micro sediment sample splitters
- Periosonic descaler

- *Rock Preparation*

- Cutting: diamond rock saws
- Thin section Preparation: Diamond and carborundum slurry wheels
- Polishing: diamond paste and aluminium oxide slurry

A list of other Small Research Facilities and equipment within the University that might be available for use can be viewed at (www.admin.ox.ac.uk/researchsupport/facilities/list).

# Appendix J: Suggestions for Sources of Funding

Members of the department have compiled the following suggestions of sources of funding for fieldwork, travel, conferences, etc. This list will be added to as further suggestions are made. If you know of a source that is not listed, please email graduate.studies@earth.ox.ac.uk. you will need to visit the web pages for further details.

**University of Oxford**

The University administers a small number of scholarship awards and exchange programmes for students wishing to travel or study abroad as part of their Oxford studies: www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding.

**Burdett-Coutts Fund**

https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/EART-HUB-EarthSciences/SitePages/Committees-Burdett-Coutts-Committee.aspx

The Burdett Coutts Fund exists for the promotion of the study of Geology, and of other branches of natural science bearing on Geology, among the junior members of the University of Oxford. It was established by a gift from the noted nineteenth-century philanthropist Angela Burdett-Coutts (21 April 1814 – 30 December 1906) who supported Geology in Oxford in its early days, among many other causes: www.coutts.com/private-banking/coutts-institute/philanthropy-and-social-investment/angela-burdett-coutts.

Graduate students are eligible to apply for grants in support of their research during Michaelmas and Hilary Terms. Eligibility for the Fund is subject to certain restrictions, which are explained on the department's SharePoint site (https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/EART-HUB-EarthSciences/SitePages/Committees-Burdett-Coutts-Committee.aspx).

**Earth and Space Foundation**

www.earthandspace.org

Expeditions can apply by submitting a description of the project by e-mail (info@earthandspace.org). The Foundation requests all submissions electronically. The application should NOT exceed one side of A4/letter and can be submitted as a Word or PDF document.

Most expeditions are eligible. They include university expeditions and other expeditions from private or non-profit organizations and government expeditions.

**European Association of Geochemistry**

www.eag.eu.com/education/student-sponsorship

Each year 12 students are sponsored up to 500 Euros per student to attend geochemistry related short courses, summer schools, workshops or conferences located in Europe, except for the Goldschmidt conference. Students do not need to present any talk or poster at the event.

Deadlines to submit applications are 1 February, 1 May, 1 September, and 1 December.

**Explorers Club**

www.explorers.org

Graduate Students and Immediate Post-Doc grant supports exploration and field research for those who are just beginning their research careers.

**Geochemistry Group - Travel Bursaries**

www.geolsoc.org.uk/geochemistry

The Geochemistry Group offers bursaries to postgraduate researchers registered at UK universities or research institutions to aid travel to a geochemistry meeting either in the UK or internationally. In previous years, students have received bursaries to support travel to conferences such as EGU and Goldschmidt, as well as a number of smaller meetings.

There are three application rounds each year. These deadlines are 15 January, 15 May, and 15 October. Any applications received will be considered after the ensuing deadline, unless explicitly requested otherwise.

**Geological Remote Sensing Group of the Geological Society**

www.grsg.org.uk

GRSG provide funds for specific projects via the GRSG student awards.

**Royal Geographical Society Student Grants**

www.rgs.org/in-the-field/in-the-field-grants/students

Each year, the Society supports over 40 student fieldwork projects, from PhD students collecting data for their dissertation to groups of undergraduates looking to get out into the field for the first time.

**Gilchrist Educational Trust**

www.gilchristgrants.org.uk

Grants to Individuals: Applications are considered from students who have made proper provision to fund a degree, or higher education course but find themselves facing unexpected financial difficulties which may prevent completion of it; also, from students who are required, as part of their course, to spend a short period studying abroad.

Grants to Organisations: Modest grants are made to applications from organisations are considered if it seems likely that the project(s) for which funds are sought will fill educational gaps, or make more widely available a particular aspect of education or learning.

Grants to Expeditions: The Trust supports a number of small or medium-sized British expeditions, with teams of three or more.

Gilchrist Fieldwork Award: The award is given to a team of researchers with an outstanding proposal for research to advance geographical knowledge, that requires significant, challenging overseas fieldwork.

**Sasagawa Foundation**

www.gbsf.org.uk/grants/overview

The Foundation's aim is to develop good relations between the United Kingdom and Japan by advancing the education of the people of both nations in each other's culture, society and achievements. It seeks to promote mutual understanding and cooperation through financial support for activities in the following fields: Arts and Culture; Humanities and Social Issues; Japanese Language; Medicine and Health; Science, Technology and Environment; Sport; Youth and Education.

**The Jeremy Wilson Charitable Trust**

www.jwct.org.uk/apply.html

The JWCT funds the following:

- Young able-bodied and disabled sportspeople and athletes.
- Young geologists.
- Young people or groups to participate in adventurous activities in the UK and overseas.
- Young mountaineers.
- Practical projects to conserve and improve access to natural environments, in particular protected areas, in the UK and overseas.
- Sports equipment for disabled people for sports clubs and other organisations.

The JWCT supports individuals and projects directly rather than contributing to other organisations' general funds.

**Volcanic and Magmatic Studies Group**

www.vmsg.org.uk/students

VMSG awards bursaries for student researchers from the VMSG community. Two bursary schemes are run, one to attend conferences at which the awardees are presenting an oral or poster presentation; and one to support students wishing to attend international technical and field workshops.

The bursary schemes are intended to support students who are active members of the VMSG community.

**The Grey-Milne Travel Bursary**

https://geophysics.org.uk/gray-milne-travel-bursary/

The British Geophysical Association administers this fund. The Gray-Milne travel bursary provides funding to support geophysics-related work and travel.

# Appendix K: Student Conduct

Students at Oxford are subject to two separate (but complementary) sets of disciplinary regulations: the rules and by-laws of your college provided in your college handbook, or equivalent document, and the University's conduct regulations including the Code of Discipline.

Full details may be found on the University website: www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/conduct.

The University regulations covering student conduct are defined in Statute XI on University discipline and come from three main sources:

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

Whether you are a taught-course or a research student, it is your responsibility to consult and be familiar with the Statutes (https://governance.admin.ox.ac.uk/legislation/statutes) and Regulations (https://governance.admin.ox.ac.uk/legislation/regulations), which include rules on non-academic behaviour and academic conduct (including the general regulations and the specific regulations for your course set out in the Examination Regulations (https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk), and subsequent formal amendments published in the Gazette). You should also read information brought to your attention by the University, departments and faculties (e.g., in the Student Handbook, course handbooks or on departmental websites). Students who intentionally or recklessly breach regulations, or incite or conspire with others to do so, may face disciplinary action.

**Plagiarism**

The code of conduct mentions plagiarism, and in this context, it is important for all taught course and research students within the division's subject areas, to be aware of, and to follow, good practice in the use of sources and making appropriate reference. You will need to exercise judgement in determining when reference is required, and when material may be taken to be so much a part of the 'general knowledge' of your subject that formal citation would not be expected. The basis on which such judgements are made is likely to vary slightly between subject areas, as may also the style and format of making references, and your supervisor, or course organiser where appropriate, will be in the best position to advise you on such matters; in addition, these may be covered, along with other aspects of academic writing, in your induction training. Training is available (www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training/mpls-training/our-courses/plagiarism).

By following the citation principles and practices in place in your subject area, you will develop a rigorous approach to academic referencing, and avoid inadvertent plagiarism. Cases of apparently deliberate plagiarism, while happily infrequent in the University, are taken extremely seriously, and where examiners suspect that this has occurred, they bring the matter to the attention of the Proctors. Your attention is drawn to the University Student Handbooks section on plagiarism.

The University employs a series of sophisticated software applications to detect plagiarism in submitted examination work, both in terms of copying and collusion. It regularly monitors on-line essay banks, essay-writing services, and other potential sources of material. It reserves the right to check samples of submitted essays for plagiarism. Although the University strongly encourages the use of electronic resources by students in their academic work, any attempt to draw on third-party material without proper attribution may well attract severe disciplinary sanctions.

**Research Integrity**

The University hosts subject-specific online courses on research integrity (www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training/mpls-training/our-courses/mpls-research-courses/research-integrity-online-courses). This training is compulsory for all University of Oxford research staff and research students and must be completed before you apply for Transfer of Status.

Research integrity is a commitment to creating an environment that promotes responsible conduct by embracing standards of excellence, trustworthiness and lawfulness. The University expects its students to maintain the highest standards of integrity in their research.

For individual researchers, research integrity entails a commitment to a range of practices including:

- intellectual honesty in proposing, performing, and reporting research;
- accuracy in representing contributions to research proposals and reports;
- transparency in handling 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.

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;
- comply with University and funder policies relating to research data management;
- 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.

# Appendix L: Academic Appeals and Complaints

Full details can be found on the University website:
https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/complaints.

**University academic appeals and complaints procedure**

Further information can be found on the University website:
https://academic.web.ox.ac.uk/academic-appeals-complaints-and-conduct.

A student can raise a complaint with the Proctors under the University Student Complaints Procedure
(https://academic.web.ox.ac.uk/files/universitystudentcomplaintsprocedure2020pdf) in relation to the following:

- 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.)

If the concern does not fit into the above, then it is likely that there is a separate procedure that should be followed. The student-facing site provides a list of the different avenues available for students who wish to make a complaint
(www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/complaints).

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 the Proctor's, and stage 3 is a review of the Proctor's decision by a Review panel member. Both stage 2 and stage 3 are managed by the Proctors' Office.

It is expected that each stage of the process should be exhausted before moving on to the next stage; therefore, both staff and students are expected to take every opportunity to resolve a complaint before escalating the matter further.

**MPLS Division guidance for students on making a complaint and academic appeals**

This section sets out what students should do if they want to raise a complaint or make an academic appeal, and who the best person to approach would be. 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 (www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/complaints) for more information.

*Process*

When raising concerns to the University please ensure that you have read the complaints procedure (https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/complaints) 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.

   > 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 Director of Graduate Studies.

b) **departmental facilities** it should be made to the Academic Office (graduate.studies@earth.ox.ac.uk).

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

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

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. If you are unsure who would be the best person to contact about your complaint, you should contact the Academic Office (graduate.studies@earth.ox.ac.uk) who will be able to advise you.

3. 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.

4. 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 Head of Administration and Finance in the department for advice on who the complaint should be referred to.

> Complaint Confidentiality:

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

> When to raise your complaint:

10. 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.

11. For academic appeals these should be made within five working days of when you were notified of the academic decision which you are appealing.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. 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).

> Timescales and investigation steps

15. 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.

16. 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 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.

    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.

17. 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.

18. 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.

19. 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.

20. 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.

21. 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 (https://academic.web.ox.ac.uk/complaints#collapse1054176). 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.

> Sources of Advice and Guidance:

22. 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.

**Within the Department:**

- Supervisor(s)
- DGS
- Deputy DGS
- Head of Department
- Academic Office
- Harassment Officers
- Academic Administrator/Disability Coordinator

**Within your College:**

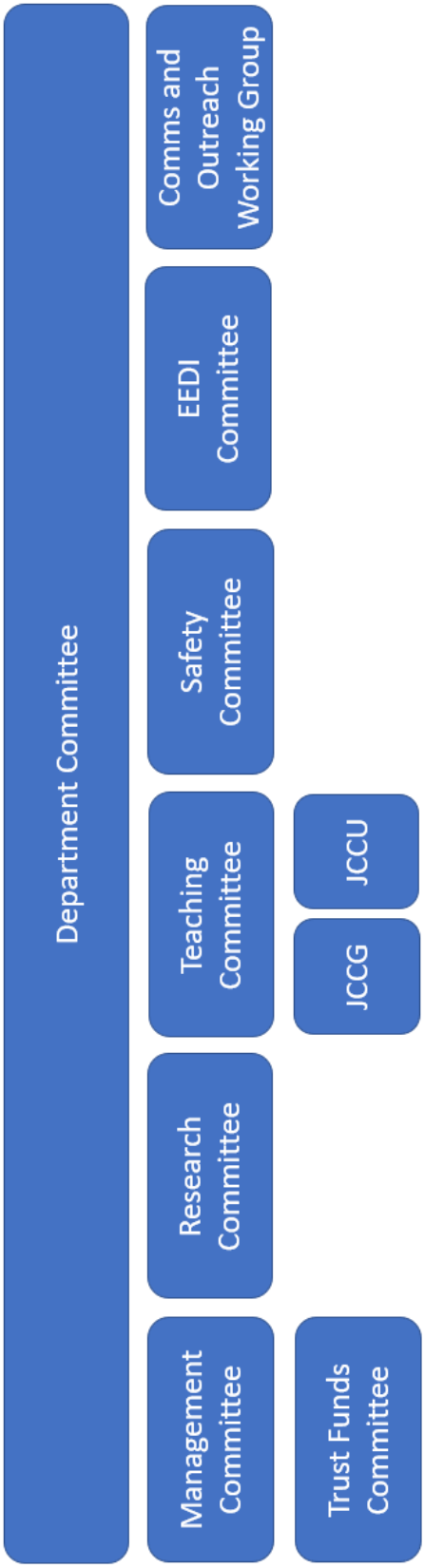
- Senior Tutor
- College Advisor
- Tutor for Graduate Studies
- College Doctor
- Chaplain
- Dean

**Across the University:**

- University Counselling Service www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling
- Oxford University Student Union Student Advice Service www.oxfordsu.org/support/studentadvice
- Nightline http://oxfordnightline.org
- University Harassment Advisor network www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/harassment
- Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/supportservice?wssl=1

- Student Resolution Service www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/student-resolution-service?wssl=1
- Equality and Diversity Office www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop

# Appendix M: Department Committee Structure



# Appendix N: Departmental policy on the Billing and Use of SRF

The principal objective of the Small Research Facilities (SRF) is to aid in the production and execution of world-class science. With respect to students, our responsibilities include both education into research techniques and facilitating their original research. However, both the Department and the SRFs need to recover costs to ensure they continue to perform their duties well into the future, and for reasons of equity.

All users are strongly encouraged to fully fund their SRF usage. The purpose of this policy is to help SRF managers, students and PIs in managing these (sometimes competing) interests.

Note that this policy does not apply to 4th-year projects which have their own instrument-use policies.

## Billing and Use

**PI**: In general, SRF use should be paid for from a grant. In exceptional circumstances where no such funds are available (e.g., when pump-priming is required for future grant proposals), a PI can request access to a Departmental grant of £2,000 per year to spend between the Department SRF. Note that the Departmental grant is usable only in the year of issue and is non-transferable.

**PhD Students**: SRF usage should be paid for from a student's RTSG, or from a grant of the PI (if related to the student's project). In exceptional circumstances where funds are unavailable, each student can request a Departmental grant of £2,000 per year to spend between the Department SRF. Departmental funds are usable only in the year of issue and are non-transferable. Note that a certain portion of a student's RTSG will be ring-fenced to allow them to attend a conference or to complete field work near the end of their degree. Cost allocations (RTSG and/or supervisor research-grant funds) should form part of the project budget that students (in consultation with their supervisor) create at the start of their degree and discuss again at Transfer of Status. If, when creating this budget at the start of the degree, it is anticipated that the SRF budget required will exceed funds available, please discuss this with the DGS and HAF as early as possible.

**Implementation**: Lab managers will report usage to the Finance department on a quarterly basis, in advance of the SRF and Research Committee meetings. This ensures that the Finance department can then report on the status of each user to the SRF manager (i.e., if a grant, RTSG or Departmental grant was billed). While all efforts are being made to support a full range of science within the department, usage limits will apply to projects that have exhausted funds and allowances, and priority can be given to funded projects.