



DPhil Handbook
Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
University of Oxford
Academic Year 2026-27 v.1

FACULTY OF
**ASIAN AND
MIDDLE
EASTERN
STUDIES**



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

THIS HANDBOOK

The handbook sets out the basic framework for a graduate research degree, and what to do should you encounter delays, setbacks, or need to make changes.

This handbook applies to students starting their course in Michaelmas Term 2026. The information in this handbook may be different for students starting in other years.

The information in this handbook is accurate as at Michaelmas Term 2026; however, it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at [Changes to courses | Oxford University](#). If such changes are made the faculty will publish a new version of this handbook together with a list of the changes and students will be informed.

The Examination Regulations relating to this course are available at [Research Degrees in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies \(ox.ac.uk\)](#).

You should consult the current edition of the Examination Regulations for information regarding your degree. The information in this handbook should be read in conjunction with the Examination regulations (below), the [University Student Handbook](#), and your college handbook.

1. [General Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy](#)
2. [General Regulations Governing Research Degrees](#)
3. [Research Degrees in the Humanities Division](#)
4. [Research Degrees in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies](#)
5. [General Regulations for the Degree of Master of Letters](#)

If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the Examination Regulations then you should follow the Examination Regulations. If you have any concerns please contact the Senior Academic Administrator, [Edmund Howard](#).

Comments and criticism of the handbook are always welcome; they should be sent to the Director of Graduate Studies ([Jim Mallinson](#)) or the Senior Academic Administrator.

STUDENT HUB

The [Student Hub](#) is an ongoing project to provide a live online version of the handbook. Please check the information on the Student Hub in conjunction with this handbook as it provides you with additional important information covering:

- Support and Welfare
- Student Representation and feedback
- Supervisor and student responsibilities
- Graduate Supervision (GSR)
- Graduate teaching opportunities and Preparation for Learning and Teaching at Oxford (PLTO)
- Research Ethics and CUREC approval
- Travelling abroad for study
- Financial Support
- Support for Changes and Unexpected Circumstances
- Researcher training and development

You can also access the Student Hub through the top bar of the Faculty Website, through the '**Student Hub**' button. You may need to log in using your SSO details.

Version history

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INTRODUCTION TO THE FACULTY OF ASIAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

Welcome

Among studies in the humanities, Asian and Middle Eastern Studies is unique in introducing students to non-Western civilisations. The field embraces the study of Asian, Middle Eastern and North African cultures from prehistoric times to the present. People in the West are becoming increasingly aware of these civilisations through travel, publications, and rising general interest. Our faculty's courses offer the opportunity to learn in depth about the ancient and modern traditions of non-Western cultures and societies. Many students are able to apply methods acquired in the study of European languages, history, and literature to challenging new subjects. Others enter Asian and Middle Eastern Studies from quite different backgrounds, including the social sciences and law.

Our courses present the major traditions of the regions studied and, where appropriate, modern developments in culture and society. All courses include language, literature, history, and culture, and there is a wide range of options in such fields as art and architecture, history, literature, philosophy, religion and the social sciences.

'Oriental' languages have been taught at Oxford for centuries: for instance, the Regius Professorship of Hebrew was established in 1540, the Laudian Professorship of Arabic in 1636, and the Shaw Professorship of Chinese in 1876. Since the Second World War, Asian and Middle Eastern Studies in Oxford have been transformed. Though the Faculty was traditionally centred on linguistics/philology and the study of literary, religious and historical texts, today the field is much more diverse and embraces a wide range of humanities and social science disciplines. However, the teaching of languages and texts remains central to courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level, whether for the ancient or modern period, and this marks out Oxford's Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies from a global perspective. Intensive small group teaching is the most effective way to achieve rapid progress in language acquisition, and students are expected to dedicate a large part of their time in preparing for class and assimilating the language and other teaching that is delivered.

We hope that your time in Oxford will be both challenging and rewarding, and we look forward to working with you.

Professor Jim Mallinson
Director of Graduate Studies

Faculty Structure

The Faculty is led by the Chair of the Faculty Board. The Faculty Board has a Chair and a Vice-Chair, and includes a Director of Undergraduate Studies and a Director of Graduate Studies. The Board has a number of Committees. There is also the Joint Consultative Committee, which is specifically devoted to discussion of issues between faculty and students. Each degree area has a subject Course Coordinator. The courses offered within the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies are subdivided into groups who meet frequently throughout the year. These Subject Groups are based on languages and subjects within particular geographical areas:

- Arabic, Persian & Turkish;
- Chinese Studies;
- Egypt, Ancient Near Eastern Studies;
- Hebrew, Jewish & Eastern Christian;
- Inner & South Asia;
- Japanese & Korean.

PROGRESSING THROUGH YOUR RESEARCH DEGREE

As a research student, you are responsible for your own academic progress. This might sound straightforward, but student life is very busy; it is therefore crucial that you plan well. Learning languages, for example, is a matter of regular preparation and revision, rather than last-minute cramming for tests or examinations. It is easy to fall behind, but much more difficult to make up lost ground. Your degree is full-time and you are expected to continue your study during vacations.

A wide range of information and training materials are available to help you develop your academic skills – including time management, research and library skills, referencing, revision skills and academic writing through: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills>.

During your degree you will have the opportunity to attend faculty seminars, lectures and colloquia, as well as a variety of skills training sessions offered by the faculty, as appropriate to different stages of the graduate career.

PROBATIONER RESEARCH STUDENT (YEARS 1-2)

All incoming research students begin their careers at Oxford as Probationer Research Students (PRS) and as part of your degree you are required to meet certain milestones in order to progress. You will apply for Transfer of Status (after which your status will be that of DPhil candidate/student) and then Confirmation of Status before finally submitting your thesis for examination.

You are normally expected to complete Transfer before the end of your fourth term, Confirmation before the end of eighth term and to submit your thesis before the end of your twelfth term.

You should familiarise yourself with these procedures for Transfer, Confirmation and submission of your thesis which are set out in the Examination Regulations.

Transfer of Status

During your first year you will work towards submitting for your Transfer of Status at the beginning of your second year. 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, that you have acquired the necessary skills to carry out the research, and to satisfy the assessors that the work is potentially of DPhil quality. You will need to speak with your supervisor about the work you want to submit for Transfer; at this stage it need not be a draft chapter of your thesis but must be of a nature to demonstrate your abilities to pursue your thesis topic.

What to submit and when

Submission deadline: Week 1, Monday of Term 4

Please contact the Academic Office if you are ready to submit for Transfer before this deadline.

Both your application form and Transfer work are submitted via 'On Course Applications' found in the 'My Student Record' section in [Student Self Service](#), from where you can easily and efficiently complete and track the progress of applications.

Step 1: Complete the Transfer of Status application form

- Please submit this as early as possible so that your supervisor(s), college and faculty can complete their sections (which includes approving your assessors).
- The application includes sections about: subject specific research skills that you have developed, personal and professional skills which you foresee the need for further development or training, and research ethics approval.
- Upload your certificate of completion from the online [Research Integrity course](#) as part of this application.

Step 2: Submit your Transfer written work

The following documents make up the written work that is formally assessed:

- a satisfactory outline (not more than 1000 words) of the proposed subject of the thesis, i.e. how you propose to treat your subject, and what materials and sources you plan to use.
- a piece of formal written work (5,000 -10,000 words) related to the field of your proposed thesis. This piece of work should be wholly or substantially the result of work undertaken while a Probationer Research Student and not be a reworking of a previously submitted Master's dissertation.

Submit your work by clicking on 'Manage documents' (don't forget to submit, not just upload it). Please get in contact if you need to amend any files after you submit them.

Word count

Please include the word count on the cover page of your written work, the Transfer word count is exclusive of any text that is being edited, and of bibliography, but including notes, glossary, appendices, etc. Overly long work may be returned to you and may delay the assessment process.

Viva

Two assessors will be arranged to conduct the Transfer of Status assessment and they will contact you to arrange a viva. Assessors will aim to hold the viva before Week 8 of term, depending on teaching and research obligations. The viva should last 1-2 hours (for which you do not need to wear sub fusc). You should be ready briefly to introduce your intended research (if invited to do so by the assessors) and to answer questions about your transfer paper and research project.

Outcomes

Your assessors can recommend one of the following outcomes:

- *Successful transfer*
Your report should include an assessment of your proposed project, suggestions for improvement (where appropriate) and comments on the suggested timetable.
- *Reference back for a second attempt (due within one term)*
Your assessors should include a detailed description of what is required in your resubmitted piece of work. This can range from better referencing of submitted work or redrafting of your proposal to significant further reading of secondary sources or rethinking the broad outlines of the project. You will be expected to submit your second attempt at Transfer of Status by Week 8 in the following term. Please note, you may not apply for a deferral at this stage and you should contact the Academic Office if you anticipate difficulties meeting this deadline.
- *Transfer to Master of Letters (MLitt)*
This is only where the assessors are firmly of the opinion that a student is unlikely to be able to produce work of DPhil standard during their time at Oxford.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY CANDIDATE (YEARS 2-3)

You will continue your research after Transfer of Status and for many students, at this stage it may include undertaking fieldwork.

Confirmation of Status

Confirmation of Status normally takes place a year after Transfer of Status. The purpose of Confirmation is to confirm that you are continuing to work at the appropriate doctoral level and to provide assurance that if the work on the thesis continues to develop satisfactorily, then it is reasonable to anticipate submission by your deadline.

For Confirmation, the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Board states that it wishes to be assured:

- i. that the subject proposed is such, in its scope and nature, as to give the student a proper opportunity to fulfil the statutory requirements for the award of the degree of DPhil, and in particular the requirement that 'the student has presented a significant and substantial piece of research of a kind which might reasonably be expected of a diligent and competent student after three or at most four years of full-time study';
- ii. that the subject is a valid one, is satisfactorily defined, and can profitably be studied at Oxford. Providing that these conditions are satisfied, the board has no preconceptions about the type of subject that is suitable for a DPhil, except that it is to come under the aegis of the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Board;
- iii. that the candidate's ability and qualifications, as judged by the evidence before the board (in particular the reports of especially appointed assessors and the reports of their supervisor), are such as to hold out a reasonable expectation that they will be able to reach the standard required for the award of the degree.

What to submit and when

Submission deadline: Monday, Week 1 of Term 8

Please contact the Academic Office if you are ready to submit for Confirmation before this deadline.

As at Transfer of Status, both your application form and Confirmation work are submitted via 'On Course Applications' found in the 'My Student Record' section in [Student Self Service](#), from where you can easily and efficiently complete and track the progress of applications.

Step 1: Complete the Confirmation of Status application form

- Please submit this as early as possible so that your supervisor(s), college and faculty can complete their sections (which includes approving your assessors).
- The application includes sections about the nature and progress of your research to date, your proposed timetable for submission, and research ethics approval.
- Upload your certificate of completion from the online [Research Integrity course](#) as part of this application.

Step 2: Submit your Confirmation written work

The following documents make up the written work that is formally assessed:

- An abstract of the thesis, a list of chapters with a paragraph describing each chapter, a clear statement indicating which chapters have been written, and a detailed timetable for the completion of the remaining chapters.
- A piece of written work, which is expected to be a draft chapter or two chapters of your thesis, approximately 10,000 -15,000 words in total.

Submit your work by clicking on 'Manage documents' (don't forget to submit, not just upload it). Please get in contact if you need to amend any files after you submit them.

Word count

Please include the word count on the cover page of your written work, the Confirmation word count is exclusive of any text that is being edited, and of bibliography, but including notes, glossary, appendices, etc. Overly long work may be returned to you and may delay the assessment process.

Viva

Two assessors will be arranged to conduct the Confirmation of Status assessment and they will contact you to arrange a viva. Assessors will aim to hold the viva before Week 8 of term, depending on teaching and research obligations. The viva should last 1-2 hours (for which you do not need to wear sub fusc). You should be ready to give a brief introductory presentation about the written work and your thesis (if invited to do so by the assessors) and to answer questions about the written work, the project as a whole, and the timetable for completion.

Outcomes

Your assessors can recommend one of the following outcomes:

- *Successful confirmation*
Your report should include an assessment of your proposed project, suggestions for improvement (where appropriate) and comments on the suggested timetable.
- *Reference back for a second attempt (due within one term)*
Your assessors should include a detailed description of what is required in your resubmitted piece of work. This can range from better referencing of submitted work or redrafting of your proposal to significant further reading of secondary sources or rethinking the broad outlines of the project. You will be expected to submit your second attempt at Confirmation of Status by Week 8 in the following term. Please note, you may not apply for a deferral at this stage and you should contact the Academic Office if you anticipate difficulties meeting this deadline.
- *Transfer to Master of Letters (MLitt)*
This is only where the assessors are firmly of the opinion that a student is unlikely to be able to produce work of DPhil standard during their time at Oxford.

DEFERRING YOUR TRANSFER OR CONFIRMATION OF STATUS

In exceptional circumstances, where unforeseen and unavoidable obstacles have arisen to delay your research progress, you may apply for a deferral of Transfer or Confirmation of Status. Deferrals will not be granted without good reason and require the support of your supervisor and college to be considered by the Director of Graduate Studies.

How to apply

- Deferral applications should be submitted by Friday, **Week 5 of the term Transfer or Confirmation is due**. Applications are made via the On-course applications section of Student Self-Service (in My Student Record).
- As well as explaining the reasons a deferral is required you should include a detailed work-plan towards submission in the next term and progress made since any previously granted deferrals (if relevant).
- You may be asked to supply medical evidence if relevant to your application and any evidence should meet the University's standard of medical evidence required, which is outlined [here](#).

- Your supervisor and college will review and comment on your application before the Director of Graduate Studies makes a decision.

You may only be granted **two terms** of deferral at Transfer, and **three terms** of deferral at Confirmation (normally one term at a time). Each deferral application will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and being granted a deferral does not guarantee the success of any future deferral applications. Please note, when a deferral is granted, this does not affect your Confirmation of Status or final submission deadlines.

Deferrals can only be applied for during your first attempt at either Transfer or Confirmation, not when you have been referred back for a second attempt.

APPEALS

Students who wish to contest the outcome of their transfer or confirmation assessment, either on procedural or academic grounds, should first discuss the matter with their Director of Graduate Studies. Where a concern is not satisfactorily settled by that means, the candidate, their supervisor or their college authority may make an appeal directly to the Proctors. In accordance with the University's complaints and appeals processes, the Proctors can only consider whether the procedures for reaching an academic decision were properly followed, and cannot challenge the academic judgement of the assessors.

USE OF ASSESSORS FOR TRANSFER, CONFIRMATION AND DPHIL EXAMINATION

As Transfer and Confirmation of Status are internal procedures. **Assessors should normally be post-holders of the University of Oxford** (although not necessarily be post-holders within the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies). It is understood that some subject areas within the Faculty are very small and will therefore need to use assessors external to the University in order to ensure that there is adequate expertise for the assessment of your work.

In such cases your supervisor should write to the Director of Graduate Studies in advance of the application to explain why an external assessor is required and give an indication of the expenses that will be incurred. It is unlikely that permission will be granted to use two external assessors for transfer or confirmation or that permission will be granted to use assessors based abroad owing to the cost of bringing them to Oxford.

Although formal assessments, Transfer and Confirmation are also opportunities for you to receive substantive feedback on your work by experts other than your supervisor(s). The Faculty Board has stipulated that **one assessor should remain the same from transfer to confirmation** where at all possible, while the other assessor used should be different. This ensures that three different assessors will give you feedback prior to the final DPhil examination. An assessor who has participated in your confirmation of status may not then serve as an examiner for your DPhil examination; but an assessor used at transfer of status may.

APPLYING FOR AN EXTENSION TO YOUR MAXIMUM SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Ordinarily you are expected to submit your thesis by your maximum submission deadline. In certain circumstances, however, additional time may be required and you may apply for an Extension of Time but please understand that extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Examples of acceptable grounds include

- A temporary difficulty in the student's personal life that has slowed progress
- interrupted supervision; practical problems with a student's project
- Applications on medical grounds or on grounds of personal difficulties that have prevented any work progressing would generally be more appropriately handled proactively through a Suspension of Status application.

The Faculty can only grant a maximum of **six terms of extension** will normally only consider applications for a term at a time, so that a student's progress towards submission can be the subject of regular monitoring by others in addition to the supervisor. Where a student has received a number of extensions and their prospect of making progress with the thesis is small, then withdrawal (and a later application for reinstatement) may be recommended.

Suspension of Status or Extension of Time?

Please see the information on extensions and suspensions on the Faculty's [Support for Changes and Unexpected Circumstances pages](#). Please contact the Academic Office to discuss your circumstances if you have any questions about which application is right for you.

How to apply

- Apply via the On-course applications section of Student Self-Service (in My Student Record). Extension of Time is listed as one of the On-course applications you can apply for.
- You must include a detailed work-plan towards the submission of your thesis, with a detailed progress report since Confirmation of Status and, if applicable, since any previous extensions.
- You may be asked to supply medical evidence if relevant to your application and any evidence should meet the University's standard of medical evidence required, which is outlined [here](#).
- Your supervisor and college will then review and comment on your application before the Director of Graduate Studies makes a decision.

Students on a student visa

[Student Immigration](#) can help with any queries you have about what happens to your visa if you need to apply for an extension.

SUBMISSION OF YOUR THESIS FOR EXAMINATION

The submission of your thesis and your DPhil examination is the culmination of your years of research at Oxford and at this stage you will probably also be thinking about your next steps. The examination process involves coordination between different departments and your examiners, who often have busy schedules and are based overseas, which can make the process a lengthy one. It is recommended that you factor in more time, and not less, when making plans for meeting your submission deadline and the following months.

Appointment of Examiners

Once your supervisor (after consultation with you) has chosen internal and external Examiners for the thesis, the student and the Supervisor must complete the Appointment of Examiners application.

You can submit your thesis without this application being completed, but please note that this can cause delays since your thesis will not be sent to your examiners until the appointment of examiners process is complete. Your examiners will need to be approved by Faculty Board and have accepted the formal invitation to examine which is then sent out by Research Degrees Team.

Do not attach your thesis for examination to this application. You must only submit your thesis via Student Self Service.

Submission of Examiners' Copy of Your Thesis

Students will submit a **digital copy only** of their thesis via the 'My Research Degrees' tab in Student Self Service. The examination copies of your thesis must be submitted digitally via the 'My Research Degrees' tab in [Student Self Service](#) **by 11:59pm on your maximum submission date.**

Submissions made via any other method will not be accepted.

Full guidance on the functionality and instructions on how to submit your thesis via Student Self Service can be found in the [Quick Reference Guide for Students](#).

Please note that your examiners will not be sent a link to download the thesis, until your Application for Appointment of Examiners has been approved, and your examiners have accepted their appointments in response to formal invitations issued by the Research Degrees office.

Research Examinations have [prepared information](#) to help when preparing your thesis which covers the entire examination process from appointment of examiners and presentation of your thesis to depositing it in order to have your degree conferred. The [Notes of Guidance for the Examination of Research Degrees](#) is also an important source of information which provides guidance on the submission and examination process.

This information is intended for guidance and to supplement, not replace, the University's Examination Regulations, which remain the final authority and which are your responsibility to read and adhere to.

Referencing/Citation Style

Because of the large numbers of subjects, languages and disciplines covered within Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, each of which may have its own particular scholarly conventions, it is not practical to set out here a full listing of modes of citation; this is a matter on which you should seek guidance from your supervisor(s) early on in your research. Whichever style is employed should be used consistently throughout your thesis.

DPhil and MLitt Word Limits

The word limit for a DPhil thesis is 100,000 words exclusive of any text that is being edited, and of bibliography, but including notes, glossary, appendices, etc.) The Faculty Board strongly encourages you to write no more than 80,000 words and you should take care to ensure that your thesis topic is feasible within these limits.

The word limit for an MLitt thesis is 50,000 words exclusive of any text that is being edited, and of bibliography, but including notes, glossary, appendices, etc.)

Applying to exceed the word limit

The DGS may permit an increase of up to 20,000 words if a convincing case is made that the additional material would be for the convenience of the examiners. Your supervisor should write to the DGS in support of this increase.

Candidates who for special reasons (e.g. the need to quote at length from unpublished or inaccessible sources) cannot confine themselves within these limits should apply through their Supervisors to the Board for permission to exceed them by a stated number of words.

Such applications should normally be submitted to the Academic Administrator (Graduate Studies) **not less than three months** before the intended date of submission of the thesis. This is to allow time for approval of the request. A thesis that exceeds the permitted length may be returned to the candidate for abridgement.

It is not permissible to submit a thesis in excess of the word limit with instructions to the examiners to consider only certain selected chapters.

EXAMINATION OF YOUR THESIS

The Viva

The purpose of your viva is to enable your examiners to be assured that the thesis is your own work; to give you an opportunity to defend your thesis and to clarify any obscurities in it and finally; to allow your examiners to assess your general knowledge in your particular field of learning. You should be able to display your knowledge and abilities to best effect and acknowledge and explore the strengths as well as weaknesses of your thesis. You should be given the opportunity to explain what you intended your thesis to achieve, where you see its significance as a contribution to your field of learning and also address relevant materials, sources, approaches or methodologies used.

Your viva will take place in Oxford in a suitable college or university building and will normally consist of you and your examiners (your external examiner may remote in if this has been approved). Vivas should normally take place between 9am – 5pm during term or vacation. As your viva is a formal examination you will be expected to wear academic dress – sub fusc and a gown and please bring a copy of your thesis with you.

Your internal examiner is responsible for making viva arrangements and should normally contact you within a month of **receiving** your thesis (not a month from the date you submitted your thesis) to discuss viva arrangements. Regulations stipulate that your examiners must have your thesis for a minimum of four weeks before your viva date.

The recommendations open to examiners are set out in detail in the Examination Regulations but a summary follows:

Outcomes

- *Award of the DPhil as the thesis stands*
Your examiners are satisfied that the thesis is of sufficient merit to qualify for the degree, and that you possess a good general knowledge of the particular field of learning within which the subject of your thesis lies, and that they therefore can recommend that the degree should be awarded and the thesis can be deposited in the Bodleian.
- *Minor corrections (two months to complete)*
Your examiners are satisfied that they can recommend that the degree should be awarded, but minor corrections need to be made before the thesis can be deposited in the Bodleian. Your examiners will provide you with a list of the required corrections to be completed within **two months** of being issued and returned to your internal examiner. If you have not received the list of corrections within a week of your viva, contact the Academic Administrator (Graduate Studies).
- *Major corrections (six months to complete)*
If your examiners are satisfied that they can recommend that the degree should be awarded subject to the completion and review of major corrections, and the Faculty endorses this recommendation, then these major corrections must be completed within **six months** and reviewed by both examiners, who will produce a second report for the Faculty. A copy of the Examiners' Report with the required corrections will be sent to you by the Research Degrees Examinations Team, not your examiners. You should complete major corrections within six months of them being issued and your examiners may hold a second viva before producing their final report for the Faculty.

- *Reference back for DPhil or MLitt, as appropriate (one year to complete)*

If your examiners are not satisfied that the thesis as a whole is of sufficient merit to qualify for the degree, they are required to refer the thesis back for revision. The Faculty will review their recommendation, and, once the Faculty has endorsed the recommendation, the Research Degrees Examinations Team will inform you about the outcome of the examination and the procedures for a resubmission of your thesis within **one year**. When you are re-submitting a thesis, you should follow the same procedures detailed above, except that you will need to pay the required re-submission fee. Candidates resubmitting a thesis must also include a separate report indicating the specific changes made to the thesis for resubmission. For students in the Humanities, the word limit for the accompanying report is 1,000 words.

Leave to Supplicate (LTS)

Leave to Supplicate (LTS) is granted once Faculty Board approves the recommendation from your examiners that your degree be awarded. This means you have essentially passed your DPhil and may have your degree conferred upon you. Research Degrees will send you a letter confirming you have been granted LTS and instructions on what to do next.

The title of doctor should only be used once your degree has been conferred at a degree ceremony. Students who have completed their viva or submitted corrections should not use the title until such time as the DPhil degree has been conferred, at which point it is officially recognised by the University.

GRADUATION AND LEAVING OXFORD

Depositing your Thesis

In order to have your degree conferred at a graduation ceremony you are required to deposit a digital copy of the final version of your thesis (including any approved minor corrections) to the [Oxford Research Archive \(ORA\)](#), and you must do so a minimum of five working days prior to their graduation date, and will not be able to attend a degree ceremony (even in absentia) without doing so. Information regarding this process can be found on the Oxford Research Archive website and will be sent with your result letter. Please also see Appendix A for further information.

If you have been granted LTS but have not had your degree conferred at a degree ceremony and require proof of your award to present to a third party, you can request a degree confirmation letter free of charge from the [Degree Conferrals Office](#).

Graduation

Please see The University's [Graduation & leaving Oxford](#) webpages to find out what you need to do in order to graduate and the benefits of joining the University of Oxford's growing body of alumni. There is also useful information on ordering degree certificates as well as opportunities to continue your studies.

Faculty Officers

- [Prof. Jim Mallinson](#) – Director of Graduate Studies
- [Prof. Henrietta Harrison](#) – Faculty Board Chair
- TBC, Faculty Equality and Diversity Officer
- [Thomas Hall](#) and [Edmund Howard](#) - Disability Coordinators
- [Edmund Howard](#) - Welfare Contact
- [Leyla Najafzade](#) - Harassment Officer

Other Faculty Officers and Committee Chairs are listed on the Faculty's [webpages](#).

Academic Administration Staff

- [Thomas Hall](#) – Head of Administration and Finance
- [Edmund Howard](#) – Senior Academic Administrator
- [Aalia Ahmad](#) – Academic Administrator (Undergraduate Studies)
- [Caroline Davis](#) - (MMES Programme Administrator)
- [Jane Kruz](#) – Academic Administrator (Graduate Studies)
- [Xiaobo Wang](#) – Academic Administrator (Examinations)

Other Professional Services staff are listed on the Faculty's webpages [here](#).

GOOD ACADEMIC PRACTICE AND AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

The University's definition of plagiarism is:

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition. Plagiarism may be intentional or reckless, or unintentional. Under the regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offence.

It is important that you take time to look at the University's guidance on plagiarism here: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism>.

You should refer to the University's guidance on referencing (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/referencing>). If, after having done so, you are still unsure how to reference your work properly, you should contact your supervisor for guidance.

The University employs software applications to monitor and detect plagiarism in submitted examination work, both in terms of copying and collusion. It regularly monitors online essay banks, essay-writing services, and other potential sources of material.

ETHICS APPROVAL

The University is committed to ensuring that its research involving human participants is conducted in a way that respects the dignity, rights, and welfare of participants, and minimises risk to participants, researchers, third parties, and to the University itself.

As set out in [its research ethics policy](#), the University requires that all such research be subject to appropriate ethics review.

The Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) has overall responsibility for the development of this policy and for the University's ethics review process. The following [chart](#) will help you check whether you need to apply for ethical review here.

More information can be found at the [Research Ethics website](#) and the [Research Integrity core course](#) explains the key responsibilities you have as a researcher; identifies the challenges you could face in meeting those responsibilities; applies a range of strategies to deal with the challenges you may face.

It is your responsibility to ensure you obtain any ethics approval you may need before undertaking research. The application process can be lengthy, do not leave it to the last minute.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

In accordance with our [Statement of Values](#), the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies is committed to creating a teaching, learning, and research environment in which every member of our community – at every academic level from undergraduate to senior academic, and among library and administrative staff – can achieve their full professional potential without discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender, marriage or civil partnership, nationality, pregnancy or parenthood, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

We welcome suggestions for making our courses more diverse and inclusive. In general, you are encouraged to tell us if you see any ways in which the courses or this handbook might be improved. Staff and students are welcome to contact the Equality and Diversity team with any suggestions or concerns.

WELFARE AND SUPPORT

Our community aims to encourage and support all students. The student experience at Oxford offers lots of opportunities for you to thrive, grow, and look after your own wellbeing, but we know that sometimes there can be stresses and challenges too.

We want to give you the agency to navigate welfare support, and to make your own decisions. This includes by:

- Keeping in touch with your College and Department, and letting them know if you need help
- Seeking support when needed
- Supporting your fellow students
- Registering with Disability Advisory Service for structured support if you have a disability

Should you have any concerns, or for guidance and support, please do not hesitate to contact the following people:

Should you have any concerns, or for guidance and support, please do not hesitate to contact the Faculty's Disability Coordinators, Welfare Contact and Harassment Officers.

Details of the range of sources of support available in the University are available from the [Oxford Students](#) website, including in relation to mental and physical health and disability.

COMPLAINTS AND ACADEMIC APPEALS WITHIN THE FACULTY OF ASIAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

The University, Humanities Division, and the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies all hope that provision made for students at all stages of their course of study will make the need for complaints (about that provision) or appeals (against the outcomes of any form of assessment) infrequent.

Where such a need arises, an informal discussion with the person immediately responsible for the issue that you wish to complain about (and who may not be one of the individuals identified below) is often the simplest way to achieve a satisfactory resolution. Many sources of advice are available from colleges, faculties/departments and bodies like the Counselling Service or the Oxford SU

Student Advice Service, which have extensive experience in advising students. You may wish to take advice from one of those sources before pursuing your complaint.

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

Complaints

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

Complaints about departmental facilities should be made to the Departmental administrator ([Trudi Pinkerton](#)). If you feel unable to approach one of those individuals, you may contact the Head of Administration and Finance or the Faculty Board Chair. The officer concerned will attempt to resolve your concern/complaint informally.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may take your concern further by making a formal complaint to the Proctors under the University's [Student Complaints Procedure](#).

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

Academic appeals

An academic appeal is an appeal against the decision of an academic body (e.g. boards of examiners, transfer and confirmation decisions etc.), on grounds such as procedural error or evidence of bias. There is no right of appeal against academic judgement.

If you have any concerns about your assessment process or outcome it is advisable to discuss these first informally with your subject or college tutor, Senior Tutor, course director, director of studies, supervisor or college or departmental administrator as appropriate. They will be able to explain the assessment process that was undertaken and may be able to address your concerns. Queries must not be raised directly with the examiners. If you still have concerns you can make a formal appeal to the Proctors who will consider appeals under the University's [Academic Appeals Procedure](#).

ANNEX A: OXFORD UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ARCHIVE (ORA) AND DIGITAL PUBLICATION OF THESES

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

DPhil, MLitt and MSc (by Research) Degrees

All students following the DPhil, MLitt or MSc (by Research) who registered for the DPhil from 1 October 2007 onwards, are required to deposit a digital copy of their thesis with the Bodleian Libraries. Please be aware that this is a condition for award of the degree and it is enforced. The digital copy should be deposited into ORA at <http://ora.ox.ac.uk> **after Leave to Supplicate (LTS) has been granted**.

ORA provides maximum visibility and digital preservation for Oxford digital theses. Students should read the important information about the deposit of, and access to, digital theses which is available at <http://ox.libguides.com/digitaltheses> and includes:

- Legal requirements (including funder mandates) and author responsibilities
- When to deposit the digital copy of your thesis
- How to deposit the digital copy of your thesis
- Options for open access and embargos. Theses, or parts of theses, can be embargoed for reasons such as sensitive content, material that would affect commercial interests, pre-publication or legal reasons
- Information about file formats, fonts and file sizes

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

<http://ox.libguides.com/aecontent.php?pid=435474&sid=3564761>

Third-party copyright

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

<http://ox.libguides.com/aecontent.php?pid=435474&sid=3564761>

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

The Humanities Division – Restricted access arrangements

Whilst the Humanities Division strongly supports open access to, and wide dissemination of, theses produced by its students, access to the full text of digital theses can be restricted unless requirements of funding bodies require open access to be provided earlier (see below). When completing the ORA online deposit form authors should therefore indicate whether they would like an embargo (currently a choice of one year or three years) or to make their thesis available immediately. For example, if the author's funding specifies an earlier release date. There is no need to complete a separate application for Dispensation from Consultation at the time of deposit.

If an embargo is chosen at the time of deposit, only the following information from your thesis will be available in ORA for the duration of the embargo:

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

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

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

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

Authors can also choose to override any requested embargo and make their thesis open access, either at the time of deposit or at any time during the embargo. Authors who wish to make their thesis freely available on deposit should indicate this on the online ORA deposit form. Once the embargo is in place, students wishing to end it early should e-mail ORA@bodleian.ox.ac.uk. It is not recommended for those planning to publish their research as a book or article to make their thesis openly available in ORA without first discussing this matter with their supervisor and consulting potential publishers to ascertain their policy. The embargo will be automatically lifted when it expires, and it is the responsibility of the author to apply for an extension, prior to expiry, if required.

No reminder will be sent by the Department/Faculty, the Bodleian Libraries or ORA staff, and it will be assumed that the full text can be released if a Dispensation from Consultation form (GSO.3C) is not submitted (see below).

If you are in receipt of **research funding** the following may apply:

The Terms and Conditions of Research Council Training Grants (<https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/news/training-grants-january-2018-pdf/>) require that metadata describing the thesis should be lodged in ORA as soon as possible after leave to supplicate has been granted, and for the full text version to be available within a **maximum of twelve months**. The Division has therefore agreed that the full-text of RCUK-funded students' theses should be made available within one year of leave to supplicate being granted.

Students funded by any other external body should be aware of, and also abide by, the terms and conditions for open access defined by their funder. Where there are discrepancies, the funding body's requirements should supersede any embargo preferred by the student at the point of deposit.

Dispensation from consultation of your thesis – The Bodleian Libraries and ORA

(i) Authors may apply for dispensation from consultation beyond the end of an embargo period (or other period specified by their funding body) of the copy of the thesis deposited in the Bodleian or other University Library **and/or** of the electronic copy of the thesis deposited in ORA if there is good reason for such a request. Reasons for requesting dispensation might include Intellectual Property considerations: that consultation or reproduction would put at risk confidential material or invalidate an application for a patent on a product or process described in a thesis. Students are advised to be particularly mindful of the terms of any agreements with an outside body or sponsor governing supply of confidential material or the disclosure of research results described in the thesis.

(ii) Dispensation will always be granted (a) in cases where confidentiality has been made a condition of access to materials that are subsequently incorporated in a thesis and (b) for material where copyright is held by a third party and permission to disseminate it via the Internet has not been granted by the copyright holder. Current students should apply for dispensation by completing the online application form available from student self-service:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/selfservice>

If you need to apply for dispensation having completed your course, you should apply for dispensation by completing the GSO3c form available at:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/progression>

Dispensation from consultation is granted by the department/faculty, not the Bodleian Libraries or ORA staff. If you need any help with progression forms, please contact your Graduate Studies Assistant:

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

Journal articles included within the thesis

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

Plagiarism

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

General Queries

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

ANNEX B: STANDARDS REQUIRED FOR RESEARCH DEGREES AT ASIAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

The DPhil in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies is a three to four-year, full-time research degree. While supervision is offered in the full range of areas in which the faculty has expertise, all topics fall under the general degree title of DPhil in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

The two research degrees awarded are the Doctorate of Philosophy (Asian and Middle Eastern Studies) and Masters of Letters (Asian and Middle Eastern Studies). The DPhil is at the NQF Level 8 and MLitt at the NQF Level 7.

The attention of graduate students is drawn to the Regulations that lay down the standards to be attained by candidates for the DPhil and MLitt.

The examiners of a DPhil thesis are required to certify:

- i. that the student possesses a good general knowledge of the particular field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls;
- ii. that the student has presented a significant and substantial contribution in the particular field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls;
- iii. that it is presented in a lucid and scholarly manner;
- iv. that in their opinion it merits the degree of Doctor of Philosophy; and
- v. that the student has presented a satisfactory abstract of his or her thesis.

DPhil examiners are also required to bear in mind that their judgement of the quality of the work should take into account what may reasonably be expected of a capable and diligent student after three or at most four years of full-time study.

Examiners for the degree of MLitt are required to certify:

- i. that the candidate possesses a good general knowledge of the field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls;
- ii. that the candidate has shown competence in investigating the chosen topic;
- iii. that the candidate has made a worthwhile contribution to knowledge or understanding in the field of learning within which the subject falls;
- iv. that the thesis is presented in a lucid and scholarly manner;
- v. that it merits the award of the degree of Master of Letters.

MLitt examiners are also required to bear in mind that their judgement of the extent of the candidate's contribution to knowledge or understanding of the relevant field of learning shall take into account what may reasonably be expected of a capable and diligent student after two years of full-time study.