

FACULTY OF
**MEDIEVAL
AND
MODERN
LANGUAGES**



**HANDBOOK
FOR TAUGHT-COURSE GRADUATE STUDENTS
IN MEDIEVAL & MODERN LANGUAGES
2023-24**

Graduate Studies Office
Faculty of Medieval & Modern Languages
41 Wellington Square
Oxford OX1 2JF
01865 270 751
graduate.studies@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk
www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Humanities Division at Oxford University. A great deal of careful planning has taken place before the start of your programme to ensure you receive the best possible learning experience and that you benefit from the resources, services and facilities available to you at Oxford. This handbook will support you with detailed guidance on teaching and assessment for your course and will be an important point of reference for you throughout the year

This handbook is designed as a guide for postgraduate students in the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages undertaking either the **Master of Studies in Modern Languages** or the **Master of Philosophy in Modern Languages**. This handbook applies to students starting in Michaelmas 2023 and may be different for those starting in other years. Don't try to read it at one sitting, but do familiarise yourself with the contents, so that you know roughly what is covered in these notes for future reference.

The information in this handbook is accurate as of October 2023, it may be necessary for [course changes](#) to be made in certain circumstances. If such changes are made the department will publish a new version of this handbook, together with a list of the changes, and students will be informed.

If you have any questions or concerns, you should contact the following people:

- The Director of Graduate Studies
 - Professor Katherine Ibbett, Trinity College: dgs@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk
- The Director of Masters Courses
 - Professor Andrew Counter, New College: dmc@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk
- Graduate Studies Administrators:
 - Mr Ryan Brown (On leave)
Mrs Tash Purple (Interim Education Manager), Ms Liz Turner (Interim Graduate Studies Officer):
graduate.studies@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk
- Your Special Subject Tutors
- The Tutor for Graduates or Dean of Graduates at your college
- The Graduate Student Representatives
 - Following elections in Michaelmas, the representatives for the new academic year will be detailed on the [Graduate Representatives](#) web page.

Overall responsibility for graduate studies in Modern Languages lies with the Modern Languages Faculty Board. A committee of the Board, the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), meets at least once a term, on Monday of 3rd week, and reports to the Faculty Board, which

meets on Monday afternoons in the 2nd and 8th weeks. The Board appoints the Director of Graduate Studies and the Director of Masters Courses. Day-to-day administration is done by the Graduate Studies Office, based at 41 Wellington Square.

Further Course-Related Information

You may also need to consult the following sources:

- The Medieval & Modern Languages [Canvas site](#), which has links to a range of relevant information and guidance.
- Examination Regulations are the ultimate authority on the regulations governing graduate and other degrees at Oxford – you should refer to the Examination Regulations relating to the [MSt in Modern Languages](#) or the Regulations relating to the [MPhil in Modern Languages](#), as appropriate. If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the Examination Regulations then you should follow the Examination Regulations. If you have any concerns, please contact the Graduate Studies Officer.
- Termly lecture lists, detailed on the Medieval & Modern Languages Canvas site, and from your college the week before each full term (0th week). The lists for other faculties, such as English or Modern History, are available online and from the University Offices.
- [Oxford University Gazette](#) (The University ‘newspaper’), which contains details of special lectures, scholarships, dates of examinations, academic jobs and junior research fellowships at Oxford and Cambridge.
- The Education Committee’s [Guidance for Postgraduate Taught Courses](#).

Oxford Academic Year

The academic year at Oxford is divided into three 8-week terms, during which residence in Oxford is obligatory. Students should also expect to be engaged in academic work for a significant part of the vacation periods.

In Oxford, the three terms are known as *Michaelmas* (Autumn), *Hilary* (Spring), and *Trinity* (Summer).

Registration and Student Self Service

All new students are sent a college fresher’s pack containing details of how to activate their Oxford Single Sign-on account. The Oxford Single Sign-on (SSO) is used to access [Student Self Service](#) to register online, as well as to access other central IT services such as University email, Canvas, Inpera and the Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) System.

In order to complete your registration as an Oxford University student, you will be sent an email with instructions on how to register. New students must complete their registration by the end of the first week of term in order to confirm their status as members of the University. Ideally students should complete registration before they arrive. Continuing students must register at the anniversary of the term in which they first started their programme of study.

Once students have completed their University registration, an enrolment certificate is available from Student Self Service to download and print. This certificate may be used to obtain council tax exemption. In addition to enabling students to register online, Student Self Service provides web access to important course and other information needed by students throughout their academic career. Students can amend their address and contact details via Student Self Service, and they can use the Service to access detailed exam results, see their full academic record and print transcripts.

See the [Getting Started](#) pages for full information about the IT Services available to you to support your studies.

University Card

The [University Card](#) provides students with access to facilities and services such as libraries, computing services and the [OU Language Centre](#). In some colleges and faculties, students also need the card as a payment card or to enter buildings which have swipe-card access control. The University Card also acts as a form of identity when students are on college or University premises. Cards are issued to students by their college on arrival in Oxford, once registration has been completed.

Email

Once a student's registration details have been processed, they will be able to find out their email address from OUCS Self Service and have access to email either by the Webmail service (<https://outlook.office.com>) or via an email client such as Thunderbird or Outlook Express. The email system is controlled by the [Oxford University IT Services](#) and any problems should be referred to them.

Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR)

At the end of Michaelmas and Hilary term, your Special Subject tutor(s) will submit a report on your academic progress. At the end of Trinity term the report will be submitted by your dissertation supervisor. To facilitate this reporting, the University operates Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) in eVision. Within this system, you also have the opportunity to contribute to your termly supervision reports by reviewing and commenting on your own progress.

You are strongly encouraged to take the opportunity to review and comment on your academic progress, any skills training you have undertaken or may need to undertake in the future, and on your engagement with the academic community. When reporting on academic progress, you should review progress during the current term, and measure this progress against the timetable and requirements for the specific programme of study on which you are engaged. You should also reflect on the skills required to undertake the work you intend to carry out, and mention any skills you do not already have or you may wish to strengthen through undertaking training. Your Special Subject tutor(s) should discuss these reports with you, as they will form the basis for feedback on your progress, for identifying areas where further work is required, for reviewing your progress against an agreed timetable, and for agreeing plans for the term ahead. **Students are asked to report between weeks 7 and 9 of term.** Once you have completed your sections of the online form, it will be released to your Special Subject tutor(s) for completion in Michaelmas and Hilary terms, and your dissertation supervisor in Trinity term. When the tutor/supervisor's sections are completed, you will be able to view the full report, as will the

Director of Graduate Studies and your College Advisor. Directors of Graduate Studies are responsible for ensuring that appropriate supervision takes place, and this is one of the mechanisms they use to obtain information about supervision. College advisors are a source of support and advice to students, and it is therefore important that they are informed of your progress, including concerns (expressed by you and/or your tutor/supervisor).

Access to GSR for students is via [Student Self Service](#). You will be sent a GSR automated email notification with details of how to log in at the start of each reporting window, and who to contact with queries; however, should you need additional support, please contact the Graduate Studies Office in the first instance.

TAUGHT COURSES

A post-graduate taught course in Modern Languages may be taken as a stand-alone qualification or as preparation for a higher research degree. The Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages offers the following post-graduate taught courses:

Master of Studies in Modern Languages (FHEQ Level 7 – minimum credit rating 180).

The degree of Master of Studies (MSt.) is a taught course normally requiring three terms of full-time study. During the first two terms students undertake course work and in the third term complete a 10,000-12,000 word dissertation.

Master of Philosophy in Modern Languages (FHEQ Level 7 – minimum credit rating 180).

The degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) is a taught course normally requiring six terms of full-time study. During the first four terms students undertake course work, while from Trinity Term of Year 1 onwards they also conceive, research, and complete a 20,000-25,000 word dissertation.

Overview of the MSt and MPhil Courses

The emphasis in the MSt and MPhil courses is on self-directed learning. The courses provide a general framework within which students are encouraged, in conversation with the Faculty, to develop their own programmes of study.

The Method/Theory course runs across Michaelmas and Hilary Terms, and involves a series of hour-long lectures and, depending on student numbers, either seminars or tutorials, lasting up to 2 hours, in which students give presentations to their tutor/s and peers. At the end of Hilary Term, students must submit a 5000-7000 word paper. The topic of the papers will arise out of the issues and/or be an analysis of the topics explored in the lectures or during the seminars. The Method Option convenors provide students with guidance on their papers, which are, however, independently produced pieces of research.

Each Special Subject runs across one of either Michaelmas or Hilary Terms, and normally involves four meetings, which will take the form of seminars (where there are three or more students) or tutorials (where there are one or two students). These meetings may be weekly or fortnightly. Seminars are generally delivered as 4 x 1.5-hour meetings or more rarely 6 x 1-hour meetings; tutorials will be 4 x 1-hour sessions.

Feedback for Special Subjects can take a number of forms as appropriate, including oral comments on oral presentations, annotations on draft bibliographies, email responses to proposed research questions, and so on. The Special Subject Tutors will normally read and give formal written feedback, and indicate a ball-park mark or band (pass, merit, distinction), on 1 or 2 pieces of written work during the term; where these pieces are subsequently revised and presented as a portfolio for assessment, the Special Subject Tutors should not generally offer additional written comments on the revision. In cases where the proposed submission for assessment differs very substantially from the piece(s) submitted during the term, the Special Subject Tutors may also read, comment on, and indicate a ball-park mark or band for this piece too, provided the work is submitted for comment by Friday of 8th week at the latest. Students meet with their Dissertation Supervisor in Michaelmas for an initial discussion of the proposed dissertation, and again in Hilary for a progress report and to agree a schedule of meetings for

Trinity term, including a deadline by which the student is to submit a draft for the Dissertation supervisor to provide feedback on.

Students are free to attend any lectures and seminars advertised on the Lecture List, as well as the various Humanities seminars and events that are advertised throughout the year.

SUPERVISION

Over the course, you will be taught by your Special Subject Tutors, a Dissertation Supervisor, and the Convenor(s) of the Method Option you choose. Your Dissertation Supervisor is initially allocated based on the personal statement you submitted as part of the admissions process, and will arrange a meeting with you in Michaelmas term. Should your dissertation plans change in such a way that your allocated supervisor is no longer suitable, please inform us as soon as possible and ideally before you submit the Confirmation of Study Programme form that you will be asked to complete by week 4 of Hilary Term. We can then allocate you a different Dissertation Supervisor.

While your Special Subject Tutors and/or Dissertation Supervisor will be your first point of contact in any one term, you should also feel free to consult through them any member of the Faculty or the wider University whose advice might be useful.

RESEARCH ETHICS

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. All such research needs to be subject to appropriate ethical review. More information can be found at the [Research Ethics website](#) and an online training course can be accessed on [Canvas](#).

SUBMISSION OF ESSAYS AND DISSERTATION

All assessments are submitted electronically via InSpera. Ensure you are familiar with the online submission process in advance of any deadline. Full information is provided on the student web pages on the [submission of coursework assessments](#).

Format of Submitted Work

All submitted work must be anonymised, and your **candidate number** must be used on all items of submitted work. Please note that your candidate number is different from your Student number and University Card number.

All submitted files must be in .doc, .docx or .pdf format, and must be free from any metadata that could identify you as the author.

All submitted files must be named according to the following convention: [CANDIDATE NUMBER]_[TYPE]. The types of submission are "MT" (Michaelmas Term essay),

“HT” (Hilary Term), “MO” (Method Option) or “DIS” (Dissertation). For example, if your candidate number is 123456, and you are submitting your Hilary Term essay, your file would be named “123456_HT”.

Submissions should be presented in scholarly form. If in doubt, you should follow a standard set of conventions, such as those prescribed by the Modern Humanities Research Association and set out in the [MHRA Style Guide](#).

Submission Deadline

The submission time (noon) and date must be strictly adhered to, unless you have been given permission by the Proctors to submit at a later time and date. Penalties will be imposed by the Board of Examiners for work that is submitted after the deadline.

Hardware or internet connectivity problems unrelated to the Inspira system will not be accepted as mitigating factors for late submission. Make frequent backups of your work, and give yourself plenty of time to make your submission.

Remember to put your candidate number, assignment title and word count on the front cover of your work. Do not add your name, college, Special Subject tutor(s), or dissertation supervisor to any part of the work. Allow yourself sufficient time to check your submission before submitting it online. Make absolutely sure that the file you are submitting is the correct and final version. Once you have submitted a piece of work, you will not be permitted to change your mind and resubmit a substitute.

Declaration

As part of your submission, you must make a declaration certifying that the essay is your own work. Please note that in accordance with the University regulations regarding plagiarism, you must avoid duplication when it comes to your essays and dissertation – you may not repeat or resubmit material in an essay or your dissertation that you have already submitted as part of another assessed piece of work. The relevant regulation states:

Unless specifically permitted by the Special Subject Regulations for the examination concerned, no candidate shall submit to the Examiners any work which he or she has previously submitted partially or in full for examination at this University or elsewhere. Where earlier work by a candidate is citable, he or she shall reference it clearly.

Problems Completing Assessment

There are a number of University processes in place to help you if you find that illness or other personal circumstances are affecting your assessments or if you experience technical difficulties with an online submission. Full information is available on the Oxford students web page on [problems completing your assessment](#).

MASTER OF STUDIES (MST) IN MODERN LANGUAGES

The MSt is a one-year degree, assessed by course work and dissertation. There is no timed written examination. The Faculty offers a wide range of lecture courses for undergraduates and graduates, and a number of research seminars which enable graduates to present their own work and discuss that of others. The course enables you to read widely, to acquire research skills, to develop your own research interest, and to pursue it in a dissertation.

The MSt is also suitable if you are unsure whether you want to do a research degree, or if you only want to study in Oxford for a year before continuing your studies elsewhere or going on to a non-academic career. It allows you to build on your undergraduate studies, learn about literary theory or methods of scholarship, and write a dissertation on a topic that interests you. It thus provides a self-contained qualification that can lead on to further study but is also valuable in its own right.

| Michaelmas Term | Hilary Term | Trinity Term |
|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Special Subject 1 | Special Subject 2 | Dissertation (10-12,000 words) |
| Method/Theory Option | | |

The MSt is conceived as a coherent course with four components: a series of theoretical/methodological seminars; two Special Subjects; and a dissertation. Your progression from the Special Subjects to the dissertation should enable you to discover and define your own interests and to explore them with increasing independence. You may already be clear about the topic you are interested in, in which case the Special Subject enables you to begin investigating it in depth. Or you may be looking for a topic, in which case a broadly defined Special Subject promotes wide but focussed reading within a general area. The theoretical/methodological seminars open up a range of critical perspectives which should both enlarge your understanding of your field of study and equip you with research skills for further study. Finally, the dissertation, which usually develops a theme from your Special Subjects, allows you to write a substantial piece of original scholarly work that benefits from the new perspectives opened up by the theoretical/methodological seminars.

All four components of the MSt will be examined.

Marks awarded for the dissertation are counted twice towards the total mark. Of the marks for the two Special Subjects and the Method essay, two will be carried forward to contribute to the total mark. Assuming all three pieces of work achieve a mark of at least 50 (the pass mark for the MSt), the two highest marks will go forward. No candidate who has failed any of the components will be awarded the degree. In the case of resubmission, candidates shall be required to resubmit all the material by noon of the final Monday of September following their first examination. Candidates may resubmit on one occasion only.

(I) Theoretical/Methodological Option

An important feature of the MSt in Modern Languages is that it provides all students with training in the theoretical and methodological issues relevant to their studies. A number of different options are available, and you should choose the option that is most suitable for your interests. The teaching for these options takes place across the first two terms of the course.

Essays for this option should be written in the 8th and 9th Weeks of Hilary Term (though you will have been planning it before that). You may ask the seminar tutors for advice on the presentation of the essay, and on the proposed title and a summary of your project (up to 50 words), but they cannot comment on the substance in detail. **You are required to submit your essay electronically by noon on Thursday week 10 of Hilary Term.**

(II) Two Special Subjects

Students may choose their Special Subjects from the list circulated by the Graduate Studies Office. The Special Subjects in the list correspond to areas of particular teaching and research strength in Oxford, and will be taught by Special Subject Tutors. Your progression from the Special Subjects to the dissertation should enable you to discover and define your own interests with increasing independence. The Special Subjects will enable you to begin investigating research topics in depth within a structured framework, promoting wide reading, and mentoring you in your ability to develop focussed research questions in preparation for the dissertation. Students should state in their initial application the Special Subjects they wish to study and will be asked to confirm their choices after they accept an offer of a place on the course. The Faculty reserves the right not to run an option if there are insufficient numbers enrolled.

You will normally meet your Special Subject Tutor four times during the term. Your Tutor will also read and mark written work as outlined earlier in this handbook (see Taught Courses section). Special Subject submissions may comprise one or two essays to a total maximum word length of between 5,000 and 7,000 words (the word count includes footnotes, but excludes bibliography).

Your submitted work must demonstrate that you have specialist knowledge of the relevant language/s (e.g. by quoting primary and secondary sources in the original language/s).

You are required to submit the final version of the portfolio electronically by noon on Thursday week 10 of the term in which the Special Subject was taken.

(III) Dissertation

All students prepare a dissertation of 10,000 – 12,000 words (including footnotes, but excluding bibliography). The subject of the dissertation will normally be related to one (or both) of your Special Subjects, or to your theoretical or methodological option, but material deployed in such pieces of work may not be repeated in the dissertation. It allows you to use and extend the reading you have done for your Special Subjects, to apply the theoretical reflections or methodological approaches acquired during the year, and to undertake a piece of research that may lead on to doctoral work.

MSt dissertations are normally written in the final term of the MSt course, though you should expect to do some of the preparatory work before that.

The dissertation should be submitted electronically by noon on Thursday week 7 of Trinity Term.

Permission to submit the dissertation after the deadline can only be given by the Proctors, via the Tutor for Graduates in your college. If delay is caused by illness, a medical certificate must be provided. Late submission of a dissertation without any mitigating circumstances will incur a deduction of marks.

If in doubt about the scholarly form in which your dissertation should be presented, you should follow a standard set of conventions. A well-known and widely used set of conventions is that prescribed by the Modern Humanities Research Association and set out in the [MHRA Style Guide](#), which is available online or in the Upper Reading Room of the Bodleian.

Submission of Study Programme

In Week 4 of Hilary Term MSt students and first- and second-year MPhil students are asked to submit their full study programme. A link to the submission form will be circulated in Week 3 of Hilary Term. Students should provide details of their method essay title or topic, the constituent essays for their Special Subject portfolios, and the title or topic of their dissertation. Students unable to confirm their exact dissertation title in Week 4 should provide a description of the proposed topic. This information will be used to appoint appropriate assessors for the submitted work. If students subsequently wish to amend their dissertation title they should contact the Graduate Office. Minor changes require the approval of the Dissertation Supervisor; more substantial changes (i.e. a change requiring the appointment of different assessors) must be approved by the Chair of Examiners. Please ensure you communicate any potential changes in topic to the Graduate Studies Office as soon as possible.

Dissertation Preparation Workshop

The Director of Masters Courses, Professor Andrew Counter, will be hosting a workshop in Hilary term, designed to assist in planning of dissertations. The workshop will enable students to develop a realistic idea of what a dissertation looks like, in order to assist in essay planning and time management. Further details on the session, including a link to sign up, will be circulated in Hilary term.

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (MPHIL) IN MODERN LANGUAGES

This two-year course enables students who already have a high level of attainment in a foreign language or languages, and have studied literature to honours level, to develop their interests further; to address general problems in literary study; to acquire research skills, often of a highly technical kind; and to do a substantial piece of independent research. It is especially suitable for those interested in comparative literature, since it can be done in either one or two literatures. These may be English, French, German, Italian, Spanish (including Latin American), Portuguese (including Brazilian), Russian, Czech, Slovak, Byzantine and Modern Greek, Classical or Medieval Latin, or Classical Greek. The only restrictions are that if you offer Classical Latin or Classical Greek, the other literature must not be English; if you offer Medieval Latin, the other literature must not be Classical Latin or Classical Greek or English; and if you offer a single language, it must not be English.

| YEAR ONE | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Michaelmas Term | Hilary Term | Trinity Term |
| Special Subject 1 | Special Subject 2 | Dissertation |
| Method/Theory Option | | Workshops |
| YEAR TWO | | |
| Michaelmas Term | Hilary Term | Trinity Term |
| Special Subject 3* | | |
| Dissertation (20-25,000 words) | | |

- Can be selected from either MT or HT Special Subjects

The components of the MPhil are the same as those of the MSt, except that you do three Special Subjects, and that your dissertation is 20,000 – 25,000 words in length. Students are required to submit work for assessment on all four of the non-dissertation components. Of these four, providing all receive at least a pass, the component gaining the lowest mark will be discounted in the final assessment.

The Special Subjects are taught in the first year of the course. You will normally meet your Special Subject Tutor four times during the term and will write a number of essays which your Tutor will read, mark, and discuss with you. You will then select what you and your Tutor think are the best essays, and submit clean copies of the final versions as a portfolio for examination. Special Subject submissions may comprise one or two essays to a total maximum word length of between 5,000 and 7,000 words (the word count includes footnotes, but excludes bibliography).

Your Special Subject submissions should be submitted electronically by noon on Thursdays as follows:

Michaelmas Term Special Subject: Week 10 of Michaelmas Term

Hilary Term Special Subject and Method option: Week 10 of Hilary Term

Third Special Subject: Week 10 of the term in which you study the Special Subject (either Michaelmas Term or Hilary Term of your second year)

Dissertations are normally written in the second year of the MPhil course. They should be submitted in a scholarly form, acknowledging primary and secondary sources, making full use of the bibliographical resources available in Oxford, and with an appropriate critical apparatus. Students should bear in mind that the MPhil Dissertation represents a substantial piece of academic work.

The dissertation should be submitted electronically by noon on Thursday week 7 of Trinity Term in the second year of the course

Permission to submit the dissertation after the deadline can only be given by the Proctors. If delay is caused by illness, a medical certificate must be provided. Late submission of a dissertation without any mitigating circumstances will incur a deduction of marks.

Marks awarded for the dissertation contribute towards 55% of your final grade. Of the marks for the three Special Subjects and the Method essay, three will be carried forward to contribute to the total mark. Assuming all four pieces of work achieve a mark of at least 50 (the pass mark for the MPhil), the three highest marks will go forward, and contribute the remaining 45% of your final grade. No candidate who has failed any of the components will be awarded the degree. In the case of resubmission, candidates shall be required to resubmit all the material by noon of the final Monday of September following their first examination. Candidates may resubmit on one occasion only.

THEORETICAL/METHODOLOGICAL OPTIONS

A) Key Questions in Critical Thought

This is taught by a lecture series Key Questions in Critical Thought during Michaelmas term, and by three seminars in Michaelmas followed by two seminars in Hilary. You will then have an individual meeting with one of the course tutors to discuss your essay. The course covers a range of topics including feminism and gender, post-colonialism and globalisation, affect theory, eco-criticism and the new materialism, ethical criticism, and the debate about humanities and education. The seminar provides a forum for detailed discussion of some of the issues that have been raised in the lectures and that students want to explore further. Every student is expected to make a short presentation (no more than fifteen minutes) to the seminar.

At the end of the second term, every student submits an essay of between 5,000 and 7,000 words in length (the word count includes footnotes, but excludes bibliography). The topic of the essay will arise out of the issues and / or be an analysis of the topics explored in the lectures or during the seminars. Students should have made contact with the course convenors by the end of week 5 HT at the latest in order to agree with them via e-mail their title and primary reading material, and also to request suggestions for further reading. The essay itself is then an independent piece of research responding to the discussion held during the seminar. It can be on thinkers covered in the course, or on other contributors to the field of criticism and theory.

The essay must be written in English. To be of passable standard, the essay should demonstrate independent reading beyond the texts and authors discussed in the seminars, and they should show an ability to understand and explicate complex theoretical issues and where relevant compare different theories. To be of a Merit standard, the work should show evidence of independent critical thought and a firm command of the subject. The essay should present a convincing, informed and broadly coherent argument. To obtain a Distinction standard, students are expected also to adopt distinctive analytical and critical positions in respect of the topics they are discussing; this might entail a detailed reading and critique of the work of one theorist, a well-informed survey of different positions adopted in respect of a given theoretical issue, or a comparison of the work of two or more theorists working in related fields which lucidly accounts for the strengths and weaknesses of their respective views.

B) Spaces of Comparison

This course is for students who have opted to explore approaches to comparative literature consists in 5 seminars spread over Michaelmas and Hilary Terms. The seminars will bring teaching staff and graduates with expertise in different literatures together, providing an opportunity to engage in debate on theoretical and methodological questions that will be central to your graduate work. Topics addressed will include: National Literatures v. World Literature; Genre and Tradition; Literary Translation; Intermediality; Margins and Peripheries.

In 1827, Goethe stated provocatively that 'National literature has become rather meaningless. The time has come for world literature'. This view may seem particularly pertinent today, in the age of globalisation. Yet there is little sign that literature is becoming homogenised. For some of us, our limited linguistic competence and our specific cultural identities entail that we are most familiar with the literature of our own culture, and that other literatures are 'foreign'. The

historical events and developments that help to shape literature differ between nations, and each literature has its own major authors and texts acting as models to be emulated or refuted. But this does not mean that literature is constrained by national or cultural boundaries. Writers and readers move between literatures and bring them into play with each other. Translation and adaptation provide modes of creative transfer. By studying literature comparatively, you will develop an enhanced awareness of the complexity of literary communication and develop your cultural imagination.

This course brings together teaching staff and graduates with expertise in different literatures, providing an opportunity to engage in debate on theoretical and methodological questions central to comparative work. The course will be taught in five fortnightly seminars (in weeks 2, 4 & 8 of Michaelmas Term and weeks 1 and 3 of Hilary Term with one-to-one sessions on your essay in week 4). Students should also attend twelve weekly lectures on comparative literature and critical translation (in weeks 1-6 of Michaelmas and Hilary Terms – these are available alongside the students for the Masters in Comparative Literature and Critical Translation). Topics addressed will include: National and World literature? Literary Translation; The Question of the Canon; Centre and Margins. Each student will normally be expected to contribute one short presentation to the seminar.

At the end of Hilary Term each student submits an essay of between 5,000 and 7,000 words in length (the word count includes footnotes, but excludes bibliography). The essay must be written in English. All quotations should be in the original language in the main text. For all languages other than English, a translation should be provided in the footnotes. These translations should not be included in the total word count. The essay must be typed, and include a bibliography. To be of passable standard, the essay should show an ability to understand and explicate complex theoretical issues that are relevant to an area of comparative criticism discussed during the course. To attain a Merit standard, an essay will show a greater control of ideas and their implications. To attain a Distinction standard, candidates will be expected also to draw upon wide independent reading and to adopt distinctive analytical and critical positions in respect of the topics they are discussing. This might entail a detailed reading and critique of the work of one theorist, a well-informed survey of different positions adopted in respect of a given theoretical issue, or a discussion of approaches which lucidly accounts for their strengths and weaknesses.

C) History of Ideas in Germany from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Centuries

This course is taught by an introductory series of lectures in the first term and by a series of seminars in the first and second terms. Graduates from all languages are welcome; readings have been chosen that are available in both German and in translation. The course deals with historical writers such as Schiller, Marx, Benjamin, Wittgenstein, Arendt and Adorno, and also with contemporary thinkers such as Rahel Jaeggi and Hartmut Rosa. Every student is expected to make a short presentation (no more than ten minutes) to the seminar; the presentation will normally consist of the exposition and analysis of one or two passages from the set reading. At the end of the second term each student submits an essay of between 5,000 and 7,000 words in length (the word count includes footnotes, but excludes bibliography). The essay may be written in English or German; it must include a bibliography.

To be of passable standard, the essays should demonstrate independent reading beyond the texts and authors discussed in the seminars, and they should show an ability to explicate complex theoretical texts and place them in the appropriate historical and intellectual context. To be of a Merit standard, the work should show evidence of independent critical thought and a firm command of the subject. The essay should present a convincing, informed and broadly coherent argument. To obtain a Distinction standard, students are expected also to adopt distinctive analytical and critical positions in respect to the texts they are discussing: this might entail a detailed reading and critique of the text or texts; a well-informed study of the reception or transmission of one or more literary works in relation to the history of ideas and/or critical practices; an account of how a particular text fits into a long-running critical debate; or a comparison of two or more texts which gives a lucid and critical account of their historical and intellectual framework.

D) Palaeography, History of the Book and Digital Humanities

The course provides hand-on training in dealing with manuscripts, books and digital resources across different historical periods and European languages. The aim is to combine philological training with project work which takes seriously the material turn in Modern Languages and will enable students to do editorial work in the age of Digital Humanities. Within the framework of knowledge exchange, the Method Option is taught in Michaelmas Term through a series of workshops and masterclasses in cooperation with colleagues and institutions around Oxford, particularly Emma Huber for Digital Editions. In Hilary Term, students develop a self-devised project based on holdings in the local libraries. This unlocks the unparalleled richness of Oxford resources, especially the Taylorian Institute and the Bodleian. The course has its own blog, History of the Book, which features the work of students. Further examples of past work from the course can be found at the [Teaching the Codex blog](#), and the Conveyor. Open access reading list on [ORLO](#).

During Michaelmas Term, students are expected to attend a series of seminars which will introduce them to the various aspects of palaeography, codicology, history of the book and digital humanities. They will be expected to complete a portfolio of regular practical tasks such as test transcriptions, manuscript descriptions, codicological analysis, basic xml encoding and catalogue entries for books. Students identify their own project by the end of Michaelmas Term and will receive two individual sessions to plan that project as well as receiving feedback on a draft. At the end of Hilary Term, each student submits an essay of between 5,000 and 7,000 words in length (the word count includes footnotes but excludes bibliography). It is recommended that the essay focus on source material available in Oxford libraries. The essay must be written in English. All quotations should be in the original language in the main text. For languages other than English, a translation should be provided in the footnotes. These translations should not be included in the total word count. The essay must include a bibliography and be handed in as formatted docx- or pdf-document. To be of passable standard, the essays should demonstrate independent first-hand examination of the primary sources, apply scholarly standards for transcription, cataloguing, or encoding to new material, and link the practical and descriptive side of the assignment with the wider discussion within the discipline. To be of a Merit standard, the work should show evidence of independent critical thought and a firm command of the subject. The essay should present a convincing, informed and broadly coherent argument. To obtain a Distinction standard, students

are expected also to adopt distinctive analytical and critical positions in respect of the topics they are discussing.

SPECIAL SUBJECTS

MSt and MPhil students may choose to pursue a Programme of linked Special Subjects (e.g. Enlightenment Studies, Cultural Studies) or select individual Special Subjects to create their own unique Programme of Study. Students have been asked to nominate their preferred Special Subjects by, and the Graduate Studies Office will confirm these choices before the start of Michaelmas term.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The emphasis in the MSt and MPhil programmes is on self-directed learning and students are encouraged to develop their own study programmes within the wider framework of the course. Students will be expected to attend Method lectures during their first two terms and to contribute to the appropriate series of seminars. In addition, students will meet with their Special Subject tutors at least four times each term to discuss their work in detail. Students will also be invited to attend seminars and events specific to their language Sub-Faculty or research topic.

Both the MSt and MPhil programmes are intensive and challenging courses. Graduate students should look upon their study as a full-time occupation and be prepared to commit at least 40 hours each week. While students may wish to take on additional, non-academic commitments (e.g. paid work) the University recommends that this be limited to a maximum of eight hours per week. Further information can be found in the [Paid Work Guidelines for Pxford Graduate Students](#).

If you have any issues with teaching or supervision, please raise these as soon as possible either with the Director of Graduate Studies or the Director of Masters Courses.

ASSESSMENT – GENERAL POINTS

Language

Work for the MSt and MPhil in Modern Languages is normally written in English, but may be submitted in an appropriate language other than English, provided you seek permission from the Director of Graduate Studies. This is best done by completing the appropriate form, which is available on Canvas, and sending it to the Graduate Studies Office. The only restrictions are:

- The essays submitted for the seminars on Key Questions in Critical Thought, Palaeography, History of the Book and Digital Humanities and Spaces of Comparison must be in English. Those written for German Cultural Theory may be written in English or German;

- At least one of the pieces of written work you submit must be in English.
- A lack of competence in academic English is not an acceptable reason for such a request.

Before seeking permission to write in a language other than English, students should consult with their Special Subject tutor, or dissertation supervisor as appropriate, and give careful consideration to the wider implications of their request. It is important to recognise that the language of the dissertation will to some extent determine the opportunities for possible publication and, ultimately, future career choices.

Quotations in foreign languages should be given in the text in the original language.

Translations into English should be provided in footnotes where there is an expectation that the work will be assessed by more than one sub-faculty, and it is largely a matter for the individual student and Special Subject tutor, or dissertation supervisor, to decide whether this is the case. In any event, translations in the footnotes of material already included in the text will not contribute to the overall word-count (i.e. this material should not be counted twice).

Examination (MSt And MPhil)

Students for the MSt and MPhil in Modern Languages are examined entirely on the basis of submitted work. The examinations are conducted by a board of appointed examiners whose membership changes every year. There is also an External Examiner from another university.

Although the External Examiner will whenever possible be a comparatist, they cannot normally be expected to offer expert advice on more than one or two of the numerous literatures studied in the MSt and MPhil. Although they will supply such advice whenever possible, the External's role is mainly to moderate submitted work in order to ensure that it follows uniform criteria of argumentative coherence, clarity, and scholarly presentation. The External will expect to sample Special Subject portfolios, method essays, and dissertations, including examples of work provisionally assigned the highest and lowest marks, and work that is on the pass/fail, pass/merit, and merit/distinction borderlines.

You must formally enter for your examinations with the Examination Schools. This should be done through your college in Michaelmas Term of the academic year in which the examination is to be taken (MPhil in second week and MSt in the eighth week of term). If in doubt, consult the Tutor for Graduates in your college. Failure to enter for your examinations within the requested time frame will incur a monetary fine.

Your Special Subject portfolios will be jointly marked by an examiner and your Special Subject tutor. Should there be any substantial disagreement between the two markers, the External Examiner will adjudicate. The examiners will take into account the stage in your course at which the essays were written, and also the need to ensure that the work of different students is marked to a consistent standard. Other submitted work will be read by two examiners (neither of whom is your dissertation supervisor). If you wish the examiners to take into account any medical problems you may have suffered, you must consult the Proctors via the Tutor for Graduates at your college.

Although failure in these degrees is rare, it can happen, and experience shows that it may be due to one or more of the following avoidable causes:

- a student, mistakenly thinking of undergraduate courses, may not realise until too late that a graduate course demands continuous and sustained effort throughout one's residence at Oxford to prepare adequately for all options, as well as writing a thesis, in a period of twenty-one months (for the MPhil) or barely nine months (for the MSt);
- students may allow themselves too little time to write a dissertation and to present it in the proper scholarly manner.

Late Submissions

The *Examination Regulations* state that where a candidate wished 'on some reasonable grounds' to submit a thesis or essay after the deadline (e.g. health or welfare grounds), the candidate must apply through their Senior Tutor to the Proctors for permission. If a candidate submitted after the deadline without prior permission, the candidate may apply retrospectively to the Proctors, who might allow the examiners to impose an academic penalty according to conventions agreed by the relevant supervisory body. **Please note: you must contact the Senior Tutor within your College regarding late submissions, NOT any teacher on the course.**

| Lateness: | Penalty |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| After the deadline but submitted on the same day | - 5 marks (-5 percentage points) |
| Each additional calendar day | -1 mark (-1 percentage point) |
| Max. deducted marks up to 14 days late | -18 marks (-18 percentage points) |
| More than 14 calendar days after the notice of non-submission | Fail |

Exceeding Word Length

Word length includes material in footnotes but not bibliography. Similarly, appendices and lists of illustrations do not count towards the overall word count. Quotations in foreign languages should be given in the text in the original language.

Translations into English should be provided in footnotes where there is an expectation that the work will be assessed by more than one sub-faculty, and it is largely a matter for the individual student and Special Subject tutor, or dissertation supervisor, to decide whether this is the case. In any event, translations in the footnotes of material already included in the text will not contribute to the overall word-count (i.e. this material should not be counted twice). For the avoidance of doubt, students should declare on the cover sheet of their essay where they have translated materials into English.

Please be aware that, in conjunction with declaring the word limit on your essay, your word count can and may be double checked by the Graduate Studies Office after submission. Where it is found your essay exceeds the word count following this secondary check, you will be contacted by the Graduate Studies Office for further clarification.

It is advised that you keep to the word limit. In addition to these penalties, too many or too few words may influence the overall mark. There will be no direct penalties for going under the word limit. The following tariff of marks will be deducted for going over the maximum word count. **You must cite the number of words at the start of the piece of work on your cover sheet.**

| Method/Theory Essay, Special Subject Portfolio, Dissertation: | Penalty <i>up to a maximum of – 10</i> |
|--|--|
| Up to 5% over word limit | -1 mark |
| Up to 10% over | -2 |
| Up to 15% over | -3 |
| Each further 1-5% over | -1 further mark |

Examining Conventions

The examination process is governed by the Examination Conventions, the formal record of the specific assessment standard for the course. These set out how your examined work will be marked and how the resulting marks will be used to arrive at a final result and classification of your award. They include information on: marking scales, marking and classification criteria, progression, resits, penalties for late submission, and penalties for over-long work. The conventions can be found on the Faculty Canvas page.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism in the research and writing of essays and dissertations:

Plagiarism is the use of material appropriated from another source or sources, passing it off as one's own work. It may take the form of unacknowledged quotation or substantial paraphrase. Sources of material here include all printed and electronically available publications in English or other languages, or unpublished materials, including theses, written by others.

Plagiarism also includes the citation from secondary sources of primary materials which have not been consulted, and are not properly acknowledged (see examples below).

Essays and dissertations will invariably involve the use and discussion of material written by others, with due acknowledgement and with references given. This is standard practice, and can clearly be distinguished from appropriating without acknowledgement, and presenting as your own material produced by others, which is what constitutes plagiarism. It is possible to proceed in two ways if you wish to present an idea or theory from one of your sources.

An argument, for example, from Raymond Gillespie's work on religion in Ireland in the early modern period might be presented by direct quotation as follows:

'The idea of providence [became] powerfully divisive in early modern Ireland since each confessional group was convinced that it had unique access to the power of God.'¹

Or, you might paraphrase:

Providence caused conflict in early modern Ireland: each confession claimed particular Divine favour.²

If you adopt the latter course, be aware that you should be expressing ideas essentially in your own words and that any paraphrased material should be brief.

When you conduct research for your dissertation, you should always consult the primary materials, as far as possible, rather than depending on secondary sources. The latter will often point you in the direction of original sources, which you must then pursue and analyse independently.

There may, however, be some occasions on which it is impossible to gain direct access to the relevant primary source (if, for example, it is unprinted and located in a foreign or private archive, or has been translated from a language with which you are unfamiliar). In these circumstances, you may cite from the secondary source, with full acknowledgement. This should be in the following form, here in a Welsh-language example:

'In order to buy this [the Bible] and to be free of oppression, go, sell thy shirt, thou Welshman.'³

1 R. Gillespie, *Devoted People: Belief and Religion in Early Modern Ireland* (Manchester, 1997), p. 50

2 R. Gillespie, *Devoted People: Belief and Religion in Early Modern Ireland* (Manchester, 1997), p. 50.

3 Thomas Jones, *Hen Gwndidau Carolau a Chywyddau*, cited and translated in G. Williams, *Wales and the Reformation* (Cardiff, 1997), p. 358.

When choosing your dissertation subject it is important to check that you can gain access to most of the primary materials that you will need, in order to avoid the type of dependence discussed here.

Note that the use of AI-generated text in any submission will be regarded as plagiarism. The use of AI language models as research tools is strongly discouraged for students on Modern Languages graduate programmes.

Guidance for note-taking

The best way to ensure that you do not engage in plagiarism of either of the kinds discussed above is to develop good note-taking practices from the beginning. When you take notes from secondary sources always register author, title, place and date of publication and page numbers. Above all, if you think you might wish to quote a sentence or phrase directly, put it in quotation marks from the outset: otherwise make sure the summary language is your own. When you extract a primary source immediately note both its place or origin and situation within your secondary text. If you have any doubts about how to access the primary material, ask for advice at this early stage, not when you come to assemble your ideas prior to writing up the essay or dissertation.

Penalties

The Proctors regard plagiarism as a serious form of cheating for which offenders can expect to receive severe penalties including the return of a mark of zero on the work submitted. Even the lightest penalties for plagiarism will almost certainly have the effect of pulling down the candidates' overall result. The Examiners will check theses for plagiarism, and will use internet forms of check if it is deemed necessary to do so. There is guidance on how to avoid plagiarism on the [study skills website](#).

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT DATES: MST

MICHAELMAS TERM

Students should have submitted their Special Subjects and Method choices to the Graduate Office by 31 July.

Thursday Week 10

Submission of (MT) Special Subject portfolio.

HILARY TERM

Friday Week 4

Confirmation of Study Programme (Method Essay, Special Subjects, Dissertation Title).

Thursday Week 10

Submission of (HT) Special Subject portfolio.

Submission of Method essay.

TRINITY TERM

Thursday Week 7

Submission of dissertation.

Please note: It is *your responsibility* to submit work in accordance with this schedule. You should not rely on reminders from your Special Subject tutors, dissertation supervisor, College or the Graduate Office.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT DATES: MPHIL

YEAR 1

MICHAELMAS TERM YEAR 1

1st Year students should have submitted their 1st and 2nd Special Subject and Method choices to the Graduate Office by 31 July.

Thursday Week 10

Submission of (MT) Special Subject portfolio.

HILARY TERM YEAR 1

Friday Week 4

Confirmation of Study Programme (Method essay, Special Subjects, Dissertation title).

Thursday Week 10

Submission of (HT) Special Subject portfolio.

Submission of Method essay.

TRINITY TERM YEAR 1

2nd Year students should have submitted their 3rd Special Subject choice to the Graduate Office by 31 July after their first year of study.

YEAR 2

MICHAELMAS TERM YEAR 2

Thursday Week 10

Submission of 3rd Special Subject portfolio.

TRINITY TERM YEAR 2

Thursday Week 7

Submission of dissertation.

Please note: It is *your* responsibility to submit work in accordance with this schedule.
You should not rely on reminders from your Special Subject tutors, dissertation supervisor, College or the Graduate Office.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Applying for the D.Phil.

If you wish to apply to stay in Oxford to do a research degree, you should start thinking about this early in the academic year and begin talking to relevant people as soon as possible. Consult with your Special Subject tutors, dissertation supervisor, the Director of Masters Courses, and the Graduate Studies Office for advice in Michaelmas term. Applications should normally be made in the first two submission rounds (November or January). While applications may be allowed after this date, these cannot be considered for funding support. Admission to the DPhil depends first and foremost on your mark in the MSt/MPhil, where a mark of 70 or better will normally be expected.

Pastoral and Welfare Support

Your Special Subject tutors, dissertation supervisor, the Director of Graduate Studies and the Director of Masters Courses are available to assist graduate students in all aspects of their studies. In addition, graduate students have access in their college to many officers with responsibility for pastoral and welfare support. These include the college tutor for graduates, a designated college adviser for each student, the Chaplain, and the college nurse and doctor. In addition, there is peer support from the Middle Common Room (MCR), which elects student officers with special responsibility for welfare. These will liaise with the central Oxford University Students Union. The University provides support services for students with children. There is a central University Counselling Service, and colleges have different college-based welfare structures within which non-professional counselling is provided by student peers or designated tutors. Financial support is available from central university and college hardship funds.

Data Protection

You should have received from your college a statement regarding student personal data, including a declaration for you to sign indicating your acceptance of that statement. Please contact your college's Data Protection Officer if you have not. Further information with regard to University Policy on Data Protection may be found on the [compliance web pages](#).

Student Representation and Feedback

Each sub-faculty elects a graduate representative, and additional representatives are elected from the DPhil, MPhil and MSt cohorts. Together these graduate representatives form a Graduate Joint Consultative Committee (GJCC) which in turn can bring student concerns to the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC). Elections for these representative posts will be held in Michaelmas Term.

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

The Medieval and Modern Languages Graduate Network

The MML Graduate Network aims to foster a sense of community amongst graduate students in the faculty, and provides an opportunity to socialise in an informal environment. The Graduate Network organises a variety of social and academic events each term. In addition to the mentoring programme for new graduate students, they also host lunches and evening events, film screenings, seminars and poetry readings, and fund an annual Graduate Conference. All Modern Languages graduates are automatically members of the Graduate Network.

Help and Feedback on Writing – Royal Literary Fellow

We are pleased to advise that, for the 2023-24 academic year, the Faculty has a dedicated Fellow in post to assist graduate students with their writing and academic literacy.

Julia Hollander is a successful writer who has published non-fiction books and three radio plays, as well as extensive journalism. She will be available two days a week for informal one-to-one sessions offering advice on all aspects of academic writing. This service is free, confidential and works on a voluntary basis. Anyone experiencing problems with writing, whether stylistic or structural, is welcome to make an appointment, which can be repeated. Julia's expertise is on formal aspects of writing, and it should be stressed that she is not employed to comment on *content*. Given that wider remit, however, she can offer help at the micro-level of sentence and paragraph construction, on bibliographical methods, or with queries about structure and planning. Normally, each appointment lasts 50 minutes, and, to repeat, is strictly confidential in nature.

Appointments are made in advance by e-mail to Julia at: julia.hollander@rlfeducation.org.uk

She will respond with all the necessary details and an online calendar to fix a time.

This is YOUR service so please don't hesitate in making an appointment!

*The Royal Literary Fund (RLF) is a UK charity that places writers in universities to help students develop their writing. The principal aim of the RLF Fellow's work is to foster good writing practice across disciplines. Students meet the Fellow on a purely voluntary basis, although they may initially be responding to a tutor's recommendation. In the experience of RLF Fellows and partner institutions, students benefit by learning about good writing practice from a professional author.

Computing/Common Room Facilities

A common room with kitchen facilities is available for graduate use in 47 Wellington Square.

There is one PC in the common room, and one PC in the ground floor workspace opposite the Graduate Common Room in 47 Wellington Square. The Graduate Workspace also has desk space for six students to work using their own laptop. Your University card should automatically allow you access to both these rooms.

There is another computer room for Modern Languages students on the second floor at 47 Wellington Square. It contains 1 PC connected to a laser printer for high-quality printing. All the

computers are connected to the University network for services such as e-mail. There is also desk space for five students to work using their own laptop.

If you wish to use the computer facilities please contact our IT team at it-support@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk for log-in details.

IT Services run regular courses which students are encouraged to attend. Details and support for any other IT issues can be on the [IT Services website](#).

Additional Sources of Funds for Graduate Students

The Faculty encourage graduate students to make visits abroad, familiarise themselves with library resources, make contact with scholars in their field, and attend conferences (particularly if giving a paper). There are a number of prizes and awards available to Modern Languages graduate students. A list of all prizes and awards are available on the Graduate Studies [Canvas](#) site.

Modern Languages students may also be eligible for funding from the wider University. You should consult the [student funding website](#) for more information.

Suspension of Status for a Limited Period

Suspension of status as a postgraduate student is possible, on certain grounds, for a specified period not exceeding one year at a time. To apply for a suspension please complete a GSO.17 form, available from the [graduate forms web page](#), and submit it to the Graduate Studies Administrator. If the application is approved, the student will not be liable to pay fees during the period of suspension and will automatically resume their former status at the end of the period. No student may be granted more than six terms' suspension of status unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Applications will be considered on the following grounds:

- (a) where the student is prevented from study in circumstances which are outside their control though there are good grounds for believing that work could be resumed within a reasonable period (e.g. cases of unforeseeable financial difficulty, physical or mental incapacity, maternity leave, or unexpected domestic crises);
- (b) where it is desirable that a student should give up study for a limited period to undertake some other project, course, or temporary work relevant to their proposed career, which cannot reasonably be deferred;
- (c) where a UK student is studying abroad and their studentship is suspended, or any award received does not cover fee liabilities, or the work is unduly delayed by difficulties in completing such study abroad.
- (d) where appropriate written medical evidence may be required and conditions may be set for readmission to the course.

At the end of a period of suspension, students must confirm to the Graduate Studies Office whether or not they intend to return to study. If they wish to return to study, students are required to complete a GSO.17a form in advance of their return.

Please note that given the nature of the MSt and MPhil programmes, where suspension is sought, students are generally expected to return at the equivalent point of the following academic year.

Change of Programme of Study

Masters students may elect to change from the MSt. to MPhil programme or vice-versa by completing a GSO.28 form available on the [graduate forms webpage](#). This application will require the support of your current (and, if necessary, future) Special Subject tutor and the approval of your college. The completed application form should be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office. Early planning is essential due to the practicalities involved. Student visa holders wishing to change from the MSt. to MPhil or vice-versa should take very early advice from the University's Student Immigration team (student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk) to make sure they are aware of any additional requirements associated with their visa status.

COMPLAINTS AND ACADEMIC APPEALS

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

However, all those concerned believe that it is important for students to be clear about how to raise a concern or make a complaint, and how to appeal against the outcome of assessment. The following guidance attempts to provide such information.

Nothing in this guidance precludes 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). This is often the simplest way to achieve a satisfactory resolution.

Many sources of advice are available within colleges, within faculties/departments and from bodies like OUSU or the Counselling Service, which have extensive experience in advising students. You may wish to take advice from one of these sources before pursuing your complaint.

General areas of concern about provision affecting students as a whole should, of course, continue to 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. Within the Faculty, the officer concerned will attempt to resolve your concern or complaint informally.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, then you may take your concern further by making a formal complaint to the University Proctors. A complaint may cover aspects of teaching and learning (e.g. teaching facilities, supervision arrangements), and non-academic issues (e.g. support services, library services, university accommodation, university clubs and societies). A complaint to the Proctors should be made only if attempts at informal resolution have been

unsuccessful. The procedures adopted by the Proctors for the consideration of complaints and appeals are described in the [University Student Handbook](#), and the relevant [Council regulations](#).

If your concern or complaint relates to teaching or other provision **made by your college**, then you should raise it either with your tutor or with one of the college officers, Senior Tutor, or 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 appeal is defined as a formal questioning of a decision on an academic matter made by the responsible academic body.

For undergraduate or taught graduate courses, a concern which might lead to an appeal should be raised with your college authorities and the individual responsible for overseeing your work. **It must not be raised directly with examiners or assessors.** If it is not possible to clear up your concern in this way, you may put your concern in writing and submit it to the Proctors via the Senior Tutor of your college. As noted above, the procedures adopted by the Proctors in relation to complaints and appeals are available online in the [University statutes and regulations](#).

Please remember in connection with all the cases in paragraphs 5 - 7 that:

- (a) The Proctors are not empowered to challenge the academic judgement of examiners or academic bodies.
- (b) The Proctors can consider whether the procedures for reaching an academic decision were properly followed; i.e. whether there was a significant procedural administrative error; whether there is evidence of bias or inadequate assessment; whether the examiners failed to take into account special factors affecting a candidate's performance.
- (c) On no account should you contact your examiners or assessors directly.

The Proctors will indicate what further action you can take if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint or appeal considered by them.

Harassment

Both colleges and faculties have appointed Harassment Advisers within a network of such advisers organised centrally, in line with the [University's Harassment Policy](#).

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AT OXFORD

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

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

The [Equality and Diversity Unit](#) works with all parts of the collegiate University to develop and promote an understanding of equality and diversity and ensure that this is reflected in all its processes. The Unit also supports the University in meeting the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people with and without the 'protected characteristics' of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and/or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality and Diversity Unit also supports a broad network of harassment advisors in departments/faculties and colleges and a central [Harassment Advisory Service](#).

There are also a range of faith societies, belief groups, and religious centres within Oxford University that are open to students. For more information visit the EDU's [religion and belief](#) page.

STUDENT WELFARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Information about the student welfare services available can be found on the [Welfare and Wellbeing pages](#) on the University website.

The [Disability Advisory Service](#) (DAS) can provide information, advice and guidance on the way in which a particular disability may impact on your student experience at the University and assist with organising disability-related study support.

The [Counselling Service](#) is here to help you address personal or emotional problems that get in the way of having a good experience at Oxford and realising your full academic and personal potential. They offer a free and confidential service. Virtual consultations may also be available.

A range of services led by students are available to help provide support to other students, including the [peer support network](#), the Oxford SU's Student Advice Service and Nightline. Oxford SU also runs a [series of campaigns](#) to raise awareness and promote causes that matter to students. There is also a wide range of [student clubs and societies](#) to get involved in.

Additionally, every college has their own systems of support for students. Please refer to your College handbook or website for more information on who to contact and what support is available through your college.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, EMPLOYABILITY AND CAREERS SUPPORT

There are a number of services and programmes across the University that provide support in developing yourself both personally and professionally. These opportunities complement the development opportunities provided through your own activities – within and beyond your research - and those provided by your faculty.

Humanities Researcher Development & Training Programme

The Humanities Researcher Development and Training Programme is a comprehensive personal and professional development programme of events, opportunities, workshops and resources to support and develop Humanities researchers at all stages of their career from postgraduate level upwards. Some opportunities are bespoke and developed in-house; others are provided through external partners, student support services or in partnership with faculties. The programme serves all the faculties of the Humanities Division and any researchers working in Humanities-related subject areas.

The aims of the programme are:

- To train our postgraduate students and postdoctoral researchers to become research leaders of the future
- To empower postgraduate students and postdoctoral researchers to become pioneers in a range of careers and professions, within and beyond the sphere of higher education
- To enhance our postgraduate students' and postdoctoral researchers' disruptive voice as active citizens who are confident speaking truth to power, and as ambassadors for the Humanities

Experiential, hands-on learning is fundamental to our approach, with student-led and early career researcher-led initiatives and projects being generated and supported through a range of funds and initiatives such as the AHRC-TORCH Graduate Fund, Student Peer Review College, and the annual Public Engagement with Research Summer School. All of these mechanisms are in turn run (with support from the Researcher Development and Training Manager) by early career researchers themselves.

How to get involved:

The Humanities Researcher Development and Training Programme is open to all postgraduate students (Master's and DPhil) and early career researchers (including college appointments and those on teaching-only contracts) in the Humanities Division.¹ An extensive programme of opportunities runs throughout the academic year, arranged into a number of 'pathways':

¹ Postgraduate students in social sciences who are in receipt of AHRC funding are also eligible to participate.

Business and Entrepreneurship – pitch an idea to the Humanities Innovation Challenge Competition and win £2,000, or find out what history can teach us about entrepreneurship through the Said Business School’s series of lectures on ‘Engaging with the Humanities’

Career Confidence – explore your options, develop your CV, draft cover letters for roles within or beyond academia, practise fellowship interview techniques, enhance your digital profile or learn how to give a teaching presentation. We work closely with the Careers Service, who offer tailored support for postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers (see below)

Digital Humanities – learn how to encode text, 3D-scan museum objects and write code, or participate in the world-leading Digital Humanities at Oxford Summer School

Heritage – network with industry leaders in the heritage sector, learn how to set up a research collaboration with a heritage organisation, take a tour of a museum under development with a lead curator, or contribute to [Trusted Source](#), the National Trust’s research-led online knowledge bank

Public Engagement with Research – create a podcast, practise on-camera interviews, learn the techniques of ‘storytelling’ when talking about your research, apply for funding to support a public engagement project for your research through the Graduate Fund.

Preparation for Academic Practice – attend workshops on writing journal articles, preparing for the DPhil viva, organising a conference, or using EndNote. Pitch your idea for a monograph to editors from world-leading publishing houses, and prepare a fieldwork application for ethical review.

Creative Industries – participate in workshops led by organisations in the creative industries, develop a research collaboration, or learn about career opportunities in this sector

Teaching – build on the training offered by your faculty (Preparation for Learning and Teaching at Oxford) and gain accreditation to the Staff and Educational Development Association by enrolling in [Developing Learning and Teaching](#) seminars. Attend workshops on applying your teaching experience to the job application process, or learn how to teach with objects at the Ashmolean Museum.

All our events and opportunities are **free** to attend, and a number of workshops, particularly those in the ‘Preparation for Academic Practice’ pathway, are repeated each term. See the [researcher training](#) web pages for the calendar of upcoming events and for more information about the programme. You can also email the Humanities Researcher Development and Training Manager, Caroline Thurston, at training@humanities.ox.ac.uk if you have any queries.

Support for Research Students from the Careers Service

Doing a research degree opens up a range of career options, yet it is up to you to seize the opportunities to exploit these and get ready for the next step. Our best advice is to start early, because you will get busier as your research progresses. No need to decide at this point whether you will stay in academia or move on to new pastures: many of the career-building steps that you can take now will benefit your CV and your wider employment options whichever step you take next.

The [Careers Service](#) works alongside the Humanities divisional training team to offer information resources, one-to-one support and a programme of bespoke workshops focusing on key career skills and tools for career planning and development. We support DPhil students and research staff from every department across the university, regardless of their chosen career paths.

How to get involved:

The [researcher pages](#) on the main Careers Service website contain a wealth of information on what other researchers have done, tips on how to develop your careers thinking and links to useful resources. The **Resources Room** in the Careers Service building (56 Banbury Road, open 09:00 – 17:00, Monday to Friday) stocks leaflets, briefings and relevant career-related matters, including books on securing work in the academic job market and other sectors, or negotiating a change in direction.

Our **termly programme of workshops** caters specifically for researchers and focus on career design and development, networking, CV writing, job applications and interviews, and more. See our programme and book places via the CareerConnect calendar. And don't miss our ***Insight into Academia*** programme, which gives insider perspectives on becoming an academic and the steps required to keep you there, along with tips to maximise your chances of application success.

If you're looking to boost your skill set, consider taking part in the [Researcher Strategy Consultancy](#), which provides early career researchers with an opportunity to develop the core employability skills required for independent consulting in any field or a transition into analytical, business or policy roles in the public and private sector.

Research students are also eligible for the fantastic opportunities to explore different work sectors and roles offered through our [summer internships](#) and [micro-internships](#) programmes; see the [Internships Office](#) pages for more information on these.

Unsure where to begin or how to use your time here most effectively? A **one-to-one conversation with a Careers Adviser** may help! Come and discuss your personal career plans, aspirations and worries in a confidential setting: appointments can be made via CareerConnect.