Programme Handbook for:

DPhil in Modern Languages
and
MLitt in Modern Languages

2026-27

Applies to both full-time and part-time students

for the academic year 2026-27

Graduate Studies Office
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WELCOME

Welcome to postgraduate study in the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages, which belongs to the Humanities Division at the University of Oxford - we hope you will enjoy your studies with us!

This handbook provides an overview of the teaching and assessment for your course and will be an important point of reference for you throughout the year. Please ensure that you pay close attention to email communication from your faculty and remain in regular contact with your key Faculty contacts (details below).

This handbook is designed as a guide for your doctoral studies in the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages undertaking either the **Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) in Medieval and Modern Languages** or the **Master of Letters (MLitt) in Medieval and Modern Languages**. Please note that this handbook contains guidance for students submitting their thesis for the first time on or after Sunday of Week 1 of MT 2026. Do not try to read it at one sitting, but do familiarise yourself with the content, so that you know what is covered in these notes for future reference.

The Examination Regulations relating to this course are easily accessible online. If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the Examination Regulations, then you should follow the Examination Regulations.

The Oxford Students website is also a key source of information about the rules applying to, and the services available to support you in, your studies.

The information in this handbook is accurate as of October 2026; however, it may be necessary for course changes to be made in certain circumstances. If any 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.

Key Contacts

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

- Your General Supervisor(s)
- The Director of Graduate Studies:
    - Professor Catriona Seth, All Souls College
      dgs@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk
- Graduate Studies Administrators:
    - Sandra Beaumont, Graduate Studies Officer and Daniel Dolley, Graduate Assistant
      graduate.studies@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk
- The Tutor for Graduates or Dean of Graduates at your College
- Your College Advisor – not to be confused with your Faculty supervisor(s). Their role is not to supervise your research, but to be a source of independent counsel and guidance, should that be needed.
- The Graduate Student Representatives – following elections in Michaelmas, the representatives for the new academic year will be detailed on Canvas.

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, usually 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.

Day-to-day administration of the MML research degrees is managed by the Graduate Studies Office, based at the Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities.

Further Course-Related Information

You may also need to consult the following sources:

- The DPhil Medieval & Modern Languages Canvas site, which has links to a range of relevant information and guidance.
- Termly lecture lists, detailed on the Medieval & Modern Languages Canvas site and from your college the week before each full term (week 0). The lists for other Faculties, such as English or Modern History, are available online.
- 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 Policy and Guidance on Research Degrees

Faculty and College

Like every other student of the University, as a graduate student you are a member of both a college and a faculty. The following is an overview of main responsibilities.

Colleges are responsible for:

• the general welfare and pastoral care of graduate students,
• housing,
• financial support and guidance,
• reviewing student reports and progress,
• presentation of the student for their degree,
• requests for special provision for examinations and assessments,
• appeal to Proctors after examinations.

The Faculty is responsible for:

• examination of your university degree,
• reviewing student support and progress,
• advice and academic oversight regarding your course,
• appointment of supervisors,
• provision of teaching and delivery of your course.

Structure of the Oxford Academic Year

The University of Oxford's academic year is divided into three terms of 8 weeks. The weeks of term begin on Sundays and are numbered 1 to 8, as follows:

Michaelmas term 2026 begins on Sunday 11 October (referred to as Week 1 or 1st Week) and ends on Saturday 5 December (Week 8 or 8th Week). The weeks either side of this are known as

Week 0 and Week 9 or 0th Week and 9th Week, Week -1 or -1st Week and Week 10 or 10th Week etc.

Hilary term 2027 begins on Sunday 17 January and ends on Saturday 13 March.

Trinity term 2027 begins on Sunday 25 April and ends on Saturday 19 June.

Students should also expect to be engaged in academic work for a significant part of the vacation periods.

Residency Requirement

Full-time DPhil students are subject to the University's residency requirements and must usually reside within 25 miles of Carfax Tower, i.e. Oxford city centre, for a minimum of six terms over the duration of the programme if they have no prior study at Oxford, or three terms if they have successfully completed a Masters at Oxford. The terms do not need to be consecutive. For the MLitt, the minimum residence period is three terms over the duration of the programme.

In exceptional circumstances, such as the need to conduct research in another location, students may apply for a residency dispensation for up to a maximum of three terms via the online GSO.8 Application for Dispensation from Residence form available via Student Self-Service.

Part-time students are required to attend course-related activities in Oxford for a minimum of 30 days each year and are expected to devote the equivalent of two to three days a week to your research. The dates of attendance will be determined by mutual agreement with your supervisor.

Registration and Student Self Service

All new students should complete the first step of University registration by verifying their details online using Student Self Service before arriving. New students must complete their registration by the end of the first week of term and their status as a member of the University is not confirmed until registration has been completed with their college, which usually takes place in Week 0 of term. Your college will provide you with your University card as part of this process.

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 and the Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) System.

Continuing DPhil students must register each year at the anniversary of the term in which they first started their programme of study until they meet the requirements for the award of the research degree for which they are registered (i.e. until they are granted *leave to supplicate*).

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.

University Card

The University Card, also called a ‘Bod Card’ or Bodleian Card, provides students with access to facilities and services including the Bodleian library system, your departmental and college libraries, computing services and the Oxford University 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 proof 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 and IT

Information on the IT services available, your Oxford email account, and how to set up your IT access, is available on the Getting started with IT web pages.

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.

Complete Harassment and Sexual Misconduct online training

All students starting a course at Oxford are required to complete the University's Harassment and Sexual Misconduct online training. You can access the training once your IT access has been set up, and you should complete it before you begin registration. Together, we can create a community where we all feel valued and able to thrive.

Graduate On-Course Applications

You will find that you will need to complete a variety of applications during the course of your studies (explained in the following sections of this handbook). Most applications are available to complete online through your Student Self-Service account – these are indicated with an asterisk in the list below. Once logged into your self-service account, click the tab 'My Student Record' at the top, scroll down to 'On Course Applications' and choose the relevant application. Online applications are automatically sent on to your supervisor, then your college, then the Director of Graduate Studies for approval.

For the applications not available online, students are recommended to consult the graduate applications webpage to ensure you download and complete the most recent version.

Applications Relating to Transfer of Status

***GSO.2**	Application for Transfer of Status
***GSO.2b**	Application for Deferral of Transfer of Status

Applications Relating to Confirmation of DPhil Status

***GSO.14**	Application for Confirmation of DPhil Status
***GSO.14b**	Application for Deferral of Confirmation of DPhil Status

Miscellaneous Applications

***GS0.4**	Change of Mode of Study
***GSO.6**	Application for Change of Thesis Title (MLitt or DPhil)

***GSO.8**	Application for Dispensation from Statutory Residence
***GSO.15**	Application for Extension of Time (MLitt or DPhil)
***GSO.17**	Application for Suspension of Status
***GSO.17a**	Return from Suspension of Status
***GSO.17b**	Application for Suspension of Status for Maternity, Extended Paternity and Adoption Leave
GSO.19	Application for Adjustments to Assessment Arrangements
GSO.23	Application for Reinstatement as a Graduate Student
***GSO.25**	Application for a Change of Supervisor or Appointment of a Joint Supervisor
***GSO.28**	Change of Programme of Study
***GSO.29**	Notification of Withdrawal from Programme of Study

Applications Relating to the Examination of Research Degrees

***GSO.3**	Application for Appointment of Examiners for DPhil or MLitt
GSO.26	Thesis Cataloguing Form for MPhil., MLitt or DPhil *This should be submitted to Examination Schools with the library copy of the thesis and is used by the Bodleian for thesis cataloguing.*

Post-Outcome Applications (after the final viva has been held):

*Post-outcome suspension of status
*Post-outcome suspension of status (parental leave)

Additional Applications:

***GSO.3c**	Application for Dispensation from Consultation of Thesis MLitt/DPhil
GSO.18	Application for Extension of Time to complete Minor or Major Corrections for MLitt or DPhil (after the viva has been held)

RESEARCH DEGREES – STUDY & SUPERVISION

DPhil and MLitt at Oxford

A research degree, which takes up to four years of full-time study, offers you the chance to acquire research skills and do a substantial piece of original research. The Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages offers the following research degrees:

- **Doctor of Philosophy in Medieval and Modern Languages** (FHEQ Level 8)
  The degree of Doctor of Philosophy (known as a 'DPhil' at Oxford and a 'PhD' at other institutions) is an advanced research degree, normally requiring between nine and twelve terms full-time study to complete and is awarded following submission of a thesis and an oral examination.

- **Master of Letters in Medieval and Modern Languages** (FHEQ Level 7)
  The degree of Master of Letters (MLitt) is a research award normally requiring six terms full-time study to complete, and is awarded following submission of a thesis and oral examination.

All applicants for research degrees are admitted first as Probationer Research Students (PRS). They are expected to have previously taken the MSt in Modern Languages or an equivalent first-year graduate course, either at Oxford or another university.

The two degrees differ in the length of the thesis and in the rigour of the requirements.

Word Limits and Word Limit Extensions

The maximum length of a DPhil thesis is 80,000 words. However, extensions to this limit, usually up to 90,000 words but sometimes more, may be permitted subject to application to the Director of Graduate Studies.

The maximum length of an MLitt thesis is 50,000 words, and extensions may be permitted subject to application to the Director of Graduate Studies.

In both cases the word-count includes notes, glossary, appendices, quotations and their English translations, but excludes the abstracts and bibliography, and any text that is being edited.

Any application to exceed these word limits should be sought through the completion of a Word Count Exemption Request, available on Canvas, which should be made ***before*** the submission of either the Appointment of Examiners (**GSO.3**) application or the thesis itself. Such an application would need to demonstrate clear academic reasons for including additional material in the thesis, and would require strong support from the student's supervisor.

Duration of Study

The DPhil may be undertaken either as a full-time or a part-time student. A full-time DPhil student would be expected to complete the thesis in three to four years. A part-time student is expected to complete within six to eight years.

The MLitt can only be taken as a full-time student and should normally be completed within two years. The MLitt is a degree which can only be awarded to DPhil students who, for unforeseen circumstances, are unable to complete their DPhil degree.

Language of Study

MLitt and DPhil theses are normally written in English, but with special permission may be written in an appropriate language other than English. Before seeking permission to write in a language other than English, students should consult with their supervisors and give careful consideration to the wider implications of their request. It is important to recognise that the language of the thesis will to some extent determine the opportunities for subsequent publication and, ultimately, future career choices. Permission to write in a language other than English should be sought from the Director of Graduate Studies through the completion of a form, available on Canvas, well in advance of the submission of the thesis.

Supervision

The MLitt and DPhil are research degrees for which students work under the guidance of a supervisor who is a specialist in their subject. If your research requires guidance in two separate areas, you may be assigned two supervisors.

You might expect to see your supervisor once every few weeks in the early stages of your research, and less often as you become more independent. Your supervisor will also expect to stay in touch with you outside the eight weeks of Full Term, but cannot guarantee to be available at short notice during the vacation. Guidance for research students and their supervisors is available on Canvas.

At the end of each term, your supervisor is required to submit a report on your progress, on work received, and on the frequency of academic contact (see section on GSR above). This reporting continues to be made even if you have completed your residence requirements and are no longer resident in Oxford. Supervisors' reports are carefully reviewed so that action may be taken if there appears to be problems concerning your work. Supervisors are also required to inform the Director of Graduate Studies at once if you appear unlikely to reach the standard required of the research degree for which you are reading.

If you are worried about your supervision in any way, you should first try to discuss your concerns frankly with your supervisors. If you find this difficult, please seek advice or mediation from the Director of Graduate Studies. You may apply to change your supervisor/s if your research moves in an unexpected direction.

Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR)

At the end of each term, in weeks 6 and 7, you will be asked to submit a report on your academic progress. To facilitate this reporting, the University operates an online Graduate Supervision Reporting system (GSR), which is accessed via Student Self Service. Within this system, you have the opportunity to contribute to your termly supervision reports (plus an additional report in the summer) by reviewing and commenting on your own progress.

You are strongly encouraged to use this opportunity to:

- Review and comment on your academic progress
- Measure your progress against the timetable and requirements of your programme of study
- Identify skills which you have developed and training undertaken or required
- Record your engagement with the academic community (e.g. seminar/conference attendance or any teaching you have undertaken).
- Raise concerns or issues regarding your academic progress to your supervisor

All students should briefly describe which subject-specific research skills and more general personal/professional skills they have acquired or developed during the current term. You should include attendance at relevant classes that form part of your programme of study and also include courses, seminars or workshops offered or arranged by your Faculty or the Division. Students should also reflect on the skills required to undertake the work they intend to carry out - you should mention any skills you do not already have or you may wish to strengthen through undertaking training.

Once you have completed your sections of the online form, your supervisor will be asked to comment on your progress. They will use your self-assessment report as a basis to complete a

report on your performance during the reporting period, for identifying areas where further work may be required, and for reviewing your progress against agreed timetables and plans for the term ahead.

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. GSR will alert you by email when your supervisor or Director of Graduate Studies has completed your report and it is available for you to view. The Director of Graduate Studies is 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 supervisor). If you have any complaints about the supervision you are receiving, you should raise this with your Director of Graduate Studies. You should not use the supervision reporting system as a mechanism for complaints.

Research Integrity

Please note that all DPhil students **must** complete the Research Integrity - online training in good practice in research course **before** applying for transfer of status, as set out in the Research integrity and ethics policy.

For evidence that you have completed the core course, you will need to take and pass the quizzes at the end of each module and score an overall pass mark of 80% or over. Once you have passed all the quizzes, you will then be sent an email certificate of completion of the core course.

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 graduate students involved in research involving human participants need to fill in an application to be approved to carry out the research. If you are in any doubt about the ethical status of your research and/or the need for clearance, please discuss this with your supervisor(s). Alternatively, please contact ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk. Further information, including how to apply, can be found on the Research Ethics website.

Graduate Travel and Risk Assessments

Any travel that is related to your course/research should be subject to a risk assessment by the Faculty. Travel insurance is available for University-related travel, although you may prefer to arrange your own insurance. Whether you are applying for University travel insurance or not, if the travel is related to your course/research, the travel should be reported on the University's Travel Insurance and Reporting System (TIRS).

The Faculty's risk assessment is available on Canvas, and must be reviewed/signed by your supervisor before submission to the Graduate Studies Office and being uploaded to TIRS.

RESEARCH DEGREES - ACADEMIC MILESTONES

There are a number of key milestones which you must pass in order to move to subsequent stages of your studies. Detailed guidance on each academic milestone is set out in Appendix 2. We recommend you consult this information in advance of each milestone deadline.

Transfer from Probationer Research Student status (PRS) to MLitt or DPhil candidate status

Full-time students must apply for transfer to MLitt or DPhil status no later than the **Friday** of **week 6** of **Trinity Term*** of their first year (the third term in PRS status).

Part-time students must apply for transfer to MLitt or DPhil status no later than the **Friday** of **week 6** of **Trinity Term*** of their second year (the sixth term in PRS status).

The following documents must be submitted to apply for Transfer of Status:

i. A fully completed **GSO.2** application, available online via Student Self-Service.
ii. A detailed outline (not exceeding 1,000 words) providing the proposed thesis title, subject and an overview of the manner in which it will be treated, including a provisional list of chapters and their proposed coverage. This should also include an indication of the intended place of a 'written submission' (see iii. below) in the thesis as a whole.
iii. A written submission of approximately 10,000 words including footnotes. The word count does not include the bibliography. The work should be presented in a scholarly form, which will usually be a draft chapter of the thesis, but may be an essay related to it. Such an essay may deal with the theoretical issues raised by the thesis, or with the historical and literary background, or with the source material relevant to the proposed subject. If the submitted work is not a draft chapter, then the candidate should provide a clear explanation of the written work's relationship to the thesis. If the student's submitted work greatly exceeds 10,000 words, they are advised to section the piece in such a way that the assessors can choose not to read beyond the 10,000 words.
iv. Students need to have completed the University's online research integrity training before applying for transfer of status.

Materials should be submitted via eVision.

***Please be aware that the MML deadline differs from the one suggested in the University Regulations and shown on your Student Self-Service record.**

Confirmation of Status as a DPhil candidate

A further formal assessment of progress takes place when you are required to apply for the confirmation of your DPhil status.

Full-time students must apply for Confirmation of Status no later than the **Friday** of **week 8** of **Trinity Term of their second year** (the end of the sixth term after admission as a PRS).

Part-time students must apply for Confirmation of Status no later than the **Friday** of **week 8** of **Trinity Term of their fourth year** (the twelfth term after admission as a PRS).

To apply for confirmation of DPhil status please submit the following:

i. A fully-completed **GSO.14** application, available online via Student Self-Service.

ii. A statement (of not more than 1,000 words) giving the title of the proposed thesis, providing a list of chapters, and explaining how the subject will be treated and how much work remains to be done (including a proposed timeframe for completion). Students are also required to indicate the intended place of the submitted work in the thesis as a whole.

iii. A piece of written work of approximately 15,000 words, including footnotes but excluding bibliography (except where text is accompanied by graphs or statistical material), being a draft of a chapter of the thesis (excluding the introductory or concluding chapters, and any section submitted for the first transfer assessment). If the chapter(s) you plan to submit greatly exceed(s) 15,000 words, you are advised to section the submitted work in such a way that the examiners can choose not to read beyond the 15,000 words.

Materials should be submitted via eVision.

Further information on Confirmation of Status is detailed later in this handbook, within **Appendix 2.**

Please be aware that the MML deadline differs from the one suggested in the University Regulations and shown on your Student Self-Service record.

RESEARCH DEGREES - SUBMISSION OF THESES

Students nearing the end of their programme of study are advised to consult the Notes of Guidance for Research Examinations (**GSO.20a**) which can be downloaded from the Research examinations webpage or the Graduate forms webpage.

Confirmation of DPhil status must have been approved prior to thesis submission. Students must submit their thesis electronically to Examination Schools no later than the maximum submission date as stated on your student record.

Change of Thesis Title

If you find at any time that the title of your thesis no longer accurately reflects the direction your research is taking, you may apply for a change of title. The change might be a relatively minor one, or it might even involve a major change of subject area. In either case, such changes should be discussed with your supervisor before you apply.

To apply for a change of thesis title, please complete a **GSO.6** online application, available via your student record in Student Self Service.

It is particularly important that the title under which you propose to submit your thesis is precisely that which the Committee has already approved. If necessary, you should apply for a change of title at least one clear term before submission, so that any difficulties which your supervisor or the Committee might have with the change can be resolved in good time.

Appointment of Examiners

Prior to submission of the thesis, students must submit an Application for the Appointment of Examiners using a **GSO.3** online application, accessible via your Student Self Service**.** The application must be submitted by the student, with the examiners' details entered into the online application afterwards by the supervisor. Students are strongly advised to apply for the appointment of examiners **at least four to six weeks prior to submission**.

If you know you will need to attend the examination (the 'viva voce' or 'viva') online (if, for example, you or your examiners cannot be in Oxford), you and your supervisor should first ask permission from the DGS, and your supervisor should also inform both examiners in advance.

All examinations must be advertised by the examiners in advance of the date of the viva, and students must be examined from a thesis that has been formally submitted to the Research Degree Examination Office. The thesis will be dispatched to examiners following submission to Examination Schools, and after formal confirmation has been received from the examiners of their willingness to act.

Students should not contact examiners directly unless requested to do so by a formally appointed examiner in relation to the process of arranging a date for the viva. Furthermore, students should not submit a copy of their thesis directly to the examiners; they must be examined from the formal copy sent to the examiners by the Research Degree Examination Office. This is to ensure that there is a definitive version of a thesis, which is the subject of the examination.

After the viva has taken place, the examiners will be required to submit a joint report to the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages Graduate Office for approval by the Director of Graduate Studies on behalf of the Graduate Studies Committee. The Research Degree Examination Office will then notify students of the outcome in writing. Please allow sufficient time for this process to be completed when making arrangements to attend a degree ceremony.

In cases where a student has applied for an early viva, the Research Degree Examination Office will make every effort to accommodate these requests. However, candidates should be aware that the examination date requested should not be earlier than one calendar month after the date on which the thesis has been received at the Examination Schools, or after the date on which the examiners have formally agreed to act, whichever is the latest. The actual date of the examination will depend primarily on the availability of both examiners.

Submission Deadline – How and When to Submit

Presentation guidance is detailed in the section Thesis Format and Presentation, below. Your thesis must be submitted online digitally via the 'My Research Degrees' tab in Student Self Service no later than 23:59 on your maximum submission date. Submissions made via any other method will not be accepted. Full guidance on how to submit your thesis via Student Self Service can be found in the Quick Reference Guide for Students.

All thesis files must be in a PDF format and can be up to 250MB in size. Your thesis should contain a Short Abstract normally not exceeding 300 words, and a Long Abstract normally not exceeding 1,500 words for an MLitt and 2,500 words for a DPhil. See the Presentation of a Thesis section below for further guidance on the production of abstracts.

The Viva Voce Examination

When the examiners have formally agreed to act and copies of the thesis have been sent to them, you will be notified of the names of your examiners. The examiners are expected to arrange the date of the viva voce examination as soon as practicable (even if the actual date is a number of weeks ahead) and to notify the student formally of the date, time and place. You must present yourself punctually at the viva in proper academic dress (i.e. sub-fusc), and you are strongly advised to have a copy of the thesis with you during the examination. The date and place of the examination will be published in the Gazette. The examination is open to members of the

University wearing full academic dress, though they are expected, as a matter of courtesy, to let the student and the examiners know beforehand if they intend to be present and in practice it is rare that others attend in this way.

The examiners of a **DPhil thesis** are required to certify that:

(a) the student possesses a good general knowledge of the particular field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls;
(b) the student has made a significant and substantial contribution in the particular field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls;
(c) the thesis is presented in a lucid and scholarly manner; and
(d) the student has presented a satisfactory abstract of the thesis.

The examiners for an **MLitt thesis** are required to certify that:

(a) the student possesses a good general knowledge of the field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls;
(b) the student shows competence in investigating the chosen topic;
(c) the student has made a worthwhile contribution to knowledge or understanding in the field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls; and
(d) the results have been presented in a lucid and scholarly manner.

Viva Voce Outcomes

In most cases, the examiners recommend to the Graduate Studies Committee that the student be given ‘leave to supplicate’ for the degree for which they were registered as a student, but it is not uncommon for examiners to stipulate that corrections should be carried out before the thesis is deposited and the degree can be conferred. Examiners have the option of requesting minor corrections (to be completed within two calendar months) or major corrections (to be completed within six months).

Should the examiners decide that the thesis does not meet the standard required, the regulations permit them to recommend to the Committee that the thesis be referred back to the student for resubmission. In the case of the degree of DPhil, the examiners may recommend that the thesis be referred back to the student (i) for resubmission for the degree of DPhil, with or without the option of giving the student leave to supplicate for the degree of MLitt for the thesis as it stands; or (ii) for resubmission for the degree of MLitt.

In certain instances, the examiners may recommend, in place of resubmission, the award of the MLitt for the thesis as it stands. The only other option open to examiners is to recommend outright failure, but this is extremely rare.

In the case of reference back, the student is notified of the respects in which the thesis fell short of the standard required for the degree and they are informed of the revisions which would have to be made for the thesis to be successfully resubmitted for the degree. Students are given an additional period of status as research students in which to revise the thesis, and supervision continues as before the examination.

Notification of Results

Students for the degrees of MLitt and DPhil will be notified of the result of their examination after the Director of Graduate Studies has considered the report of the examiners, and the examiners’ report has been sent to the Examination Schools.

THESIS FORMAT AND PRESENTATION

The format of a thesis submitted for the award of a research degree is hugely important. Tidy and rational presentation makes for easy reading, and, for example, references which are carelessly or eccentrically cited can be very irritating to the reader. Between a paper prepared for oral discussion (such as an undergraduate essay) and a manuscript which will be published (if only by being made available to other scholars in the Bodleian Library) there is a significant difference in the standard and level of accuracy required in matters such as quotations, bibliographical references, etc.

You should note the regulations concerning word limits and state on your application for the appointment of examiners (**GSO.3**) the approximate number of words in your thesis. Further generic guidance on the presentation of your thesis and preparation for your examination can be found on the research examinations webpages.

Spacing and Pagination

The regulations require that, unless the Board of the Faculty has excused the student from this requirement, a thesis for the degree of DPhil or MLitt must be word-processed with a margin of 3 to 3.5 centimetres on the left-hand edge of each page. The main text should be double-spaced with quotations and footnotes in single spacing. Double spacing should be taken to mean a distance of about 0.33 inch or 8 mm between successive lines of text. Text should be typed using an easily readable font, with a minimum font size of 11 pt. Footnotes should be font size 10 pt. You are advised that it is your responsibility to ensure that the print of your thesis is of an adequate definition and standard for legibility.

As noted above, the main text should be in double spacing. Quotations from verse, if of more than one line, should be indented and in single spacing. Quotations from prose should run on in the text if they do not exceed two or three lines; otherwise they too should be indented and in single spacing. The pages of the thesis must be numbered. Pagination should run through consecutively from beginning to end and should include any appendices, etc. Cross-references should include page numbers.

Footnotes

Footnotes should normally be placed at the bottom of each page. Notes at the bottom of the page to which they refer are easier to read and check. If they are placed at the foot of the page they should be separated from the text by a short horizontal line. All footnotes should be typed in single spacing. Where they are given at the end of each chapter or at the end of the thesis, a separate pdf of footnotes should be uploaded under “Additional Materials”, for the convenience of the examiners.

Abbreviation

Students may, if they wish, refer to works by quoting in the body of their thesis the year of publication and, where necessary, a letter distinguishing the particular work from others published by the author in the same year - e.g. (J. Smith 1989 c) would indicate the third work listed in the bibliography for 1989 under that author. There would then have to be a note at the head of the bibliography explaining this form of reference. It is suggested that letters and not numerals should be used to identify the work concerned within the year in question, in order to avoid any possibility of confusion with page numbers.

Conventions in Transcription

Students whose theses include quotations from Russian, Yiddish and Greek literature are advised to consider the following conventions for transcription:

i. Students of Russian should note that the normal transcription system from Cyrillic should be British Standard (BS 2979:1958, as modified in Oxford Slavonic Papers), though the International System should be used in theses on philological subjects.
ii. Students of Yiddish should cite items and passages quoted from textual sources in the Yiddish alphabet, and supply transcription and translation. Citations in the Yiddish alphabet should follow the Code of Yiddish Spelling (Oxford 1992) except where variant historic spellings are at issue, in which case the supervisor's guidance should be sought. Transcriptions of literary citations, proper names and titles of works in bibliographies must be in accordance with the faculty's approved system of transcription. Where phonetic accuracy is at stake in linguistics theses, phonetic script is used instead. Where linguistics theses draw upon fieldwork and scholarly literature, Yiddish alphabet citations may be omitted, subject to your supervisor's approval.
iii. Students of Greek should note that it is most unusual for Modern Greek texts to be transliterated (except of course for linguistic purposes, when a phonetic or phonemic representation is used). In a thesis the only items that need to be transliterated are proper names and (optionally) titles of publications, etc. In deciding which system is to be adopted for proper names etc., you should consult your supervisor.

Order of Contents

After the title-page there should normally follow in sequence:

i. Preface (if any): this should be kept as short as possible, and should be used to call the reader's attention to any new discoveries and important points about sources, treatment, and obligations to other work.
ii. Table of Contents: this should show in sequence, with page numbers, all the sub-divisions of the thesis. The titles of chapters and appendices should be given.
iii. List of abbreviations, cue-titles, symbols, etc.
iv. Thesis: divided into chapters together with an introduction and a conclusion. Each chapter should have a clear descriptive title.
v. Appendices (if any): also with descriptive titles.
vi. List of books and manuscripts used.

Matters of Detail

Students writing a thesis should give consideration to the following matters: the practice of underlining and the use of quotation marks; the form of abbreviations; the use of capital letters; the form of dates and of references to books and articles; and the ordering of footnotes. The Faculty Board does not lay down regulations covering these points but you are expected to handle them in a clear, neat and consistent fashion, in conformity with generally accepted practice. You can find very helpful detailed guidance about this whole matter in a work published for the Modern Humanities Research Association: MHRA Style Guide. This manual makes it unnecessary to go into further detail in these notes. However, since the preparation of bibliographies in theses is frequently a source of difficulty, the following further comments are offered.

Bibliography

The bibliography is a functional part of a thesis. It is not a mere list of matter read, nor, a fortiori, of matter unread. Unlike that in a book, the bibliography in a thesis should list all sources used. However, you should only include books and manuscripts which you have both read and found useful.

The bibliography, can best be subdivided into (a) manuscript sources and (b) printed sources; the printed sources should be subdivided into (i) primary sources and (ii) secondary sources.

Manuscript sources should be listed according to the places in which they are to be found. Printed sources should be listed alphabetically, by surname of author followed by the initials (if any). Anonymous printed sources should be listed alphabetically by the first word of the title (excluding the articles 'the', 'a', 'an' or their foreign equivalents).

In the preparation of a thesis it is wise to make a note for each book, article, or volume of documents the first time it is consulted and to include the abbreviated form of reference that is to be used. These notes will also serve as the raw material of the bibliography.

The Abstracts

As noted in section 4 above, the submitted thesis should be accompanied by a short abstract not exceeding 300 words, and a longer abstract not exceeding 1,500 words (for the MLitt) and 2,500 words (for the DPhil).

The shorter abstract of the thesis should concisely summarise its scope and principal arguments. Each copy of the abstract should be headed with the title of the thesis, the name and college of the candidate, the degree for which it is submitted, and the term and year of submission.

The purpose of the longer abstract is to make clear to the examiners, before they read the thesis, what problems you have set out to solve, how you have approached them, and where you believe the originality of your thesis to lie. Although this abstract will inevitably summarise the content of the thesis, it should not be a mere summary or synopsis. Rather it should be an attempt to describe your own work: what you have tried to do, why the effort was worth making, where you think you have succeeded. It should indicate, very briefly, the state of the question at the time, should explain the method you have adopted, and should give a very brief synopsis of the content and conclusions of the thesis.

The abstracts are best written independently, after the thesis is complete and corrected and you can view your own work, as it were, from outside and as a whole. One copy of the abstracts prepared at the time of the examination should be included within the pdf file of your thesis. Further information about the requirements for abstracts can be found in the edition of the Examination Regulations for the year in which the thesis is presented for examination.

AFTER THE EXAMINATION

This section outlines the processes you need to go through once it has been confirmed that you have met the requirements for the award of the research degree for which you are registered (i.e. you have been granted *leave to supplicate*).

Deposit and Consultation of Theses in the Bodleian Library

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. ORA provides maximum visibility and digital preservation for Oxford digital theses. 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.

Once you receive leave to supplicate, the Regulations require that a copy of your thesis must be deposited with the ORA a minimum of five working days prior to your graduation date. Please be aware that this is a condition for award of the degree and it is enforced - students will not be able to attend a degree ceremony (even in absentia) without doing so. Information regarding this process will be sent with your result letter, and is available in the online ORA guide on submitting your thesis, which 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.

The copy to be deposited to ORA should contain any corrections or amendments which the examiners may require. For further information on preparation and submission, please see document **GSO.20a** on the Research examinations webpage or via the graduate applications website.

Deposited theses are made available for consultation, including printing and microfilming, by other readers, on condition that they sign a declaration stating they recognise that the copyright of the thesis belongs to the author, and that no part may be published without the prior written consent of the author. You may apply, at the time of submitting the thesis for examination, for dispensation (for a limited period) from the requirement that the thesis be made available for consultation, but dispensation is not normally granted except in special circumstances, where good reasons have been provided (in writing) by the student.

Where confidential material has been obtained for use in the thesis on condition that it is kept confidential, it is possible to apply for certain parts of the thesis to be blocked out in the library copy made available for consultation. The Modern Languages Board's policy is not to restrict access to successful theses (even for a limited period) apart from instances in which sensitive information or private material is involved, and where the student has fully justified the need for access to be so restricted.

Publication of Theses

You should bear in mind that you are at liberty to publish material to be incorporated subsequently in a thesis to be submitted for the degree of MPhil, MLitt or DPhil, and there is a great advantage in submitting material to reputable refereed journals. If you intend to publish material you may wish to seek further advice on publication possibilities both before and after the thesis has been accepted for the degree for which it was submitted. The Modern Languages Board is able to propose the publication of suitable MLitt or DPhil theses by the Oxford University Press in the Oxford Monographs series (see below), and examiners of theses are asked to make recommendations in such cases. Naturally, the number of theses which can be published in this way is extremely

limited and, in any case, not all theses would be acceptable in terms of content or length for inclusion in this particular series. Please note that University of Oxford DPhil theses are also published electronically via the Oxford Research Archive (ORA).

Some other Faculty boards and committees now accept theses which consist of a collection of more or less related, article-length papers (which may or may not have been published previously). The Modern Languages Board does not accept theses in this form.

Oxford Modern Languages and Literature Monographs Series

Oxford Modern Languages and Literature Monographs Series, an Oxford University Press (OUP) imprint, publishes a small number of successfully revised DPhil theses each year. The committee, made up of Faculty members, reviews examiners' reports on all theses submitted each term, and issues invitations to potential authors to have their work formally considered for publication by the Press. Whilst in the past, some projects have taken a very long time to move from initial invitation to publication, every effort is now made to bring the process to completion as swiftly as possible, without in any way compromising the high standards of scholarship exemplified by the Series. For the first stage of review, doctoral candidates are asked to send an additional copy of both the long and the short abstracts to the Graduate Studies Office (at the same time as submitting their final thesis). This, along with the examiners' reports, will enable the committee to assess the potential of the revised thesis for publication.

Third Party Copyright

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. 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 at ora@bodleian.ox.ac.uk if they are unsure about this or have any other queries about depositing digital theses.

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 wish 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)
ii. Abstract
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 Medieval and Modern Languages 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 Medieval and Modern Languages 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 application (**GSO.3C**) is not submitted.

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

> The Terms and Conditions of Research Council Training Grants 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

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.

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 on-line application available via Student Self-Service.

If you need to apply for a dispensation having completed your course, you should apply for dispensation by completing the **GSO.3C** application available on the graduate applications webpage.

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

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. For guidance, 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 requests for further information, or queries regarding the deposit of your digital thesis, should be referred to ora@bodleian.ox.ac.uk.

TIMETABLE FOR SUBMISSION OF MLITT OR DPHIL THESES

The Examination Regulations allow for MLitt and DPhil students to submit their thesis at the end of two years of study following their admission to that student status (for most students this is two years after Transfer of Status, but for students coming direct from the MPhil, this is two years after starting DPhil studies). The Regulations also indicate that – unless an extension of time has been granted – an MLitt thesis must be submitted not later than the end of the ninth term after admission to that status, and a DPhil thesis not later than the twelfth term after admission to that status.

It is expected that most students will complete their thesis within the normal period. If this proves impossible, however, three options are available:

- application for an **extension**; suitable for students who are near to completion, and who are able to continue to work regularly towards completion.
- application for temporary **suspension of status**; should be considered by those who expect their research to be interrupted for a limited period of time (up to one year).
- **lapse of status**. This is appropriate where the student's research will be interrupted for a longer period of time, but may be resumed later. See below for further explanation of these terms.

Please note that the university will apply a termly continuation charge once students have exceeded the standard period of tuition fee liability. The charge is approximately £500 per term and will apply to all students (regardless of fee status). Some colleges also apply a separate college continuation charge. For part-time students, the termly charge will be half of the termly rate payable by full-time students.

Most colleges apply a continuation charge once students have reached the end of their standard period of fee liability. The table here provides details of the college continuation charges that apply. If you are a part-time student and are unsure of whether your college's continuation charge is applied at a different rate for part-time study, please contact your college for further information. Fees will usually increase annually. For details, please see the guidance on likely increases to fees and charges.

Extensions of Time

Extensions of time for the completion and submission of MLitt or DPhil theses may be granted on account of 'exceptional causes' of delay in completing the thesis. **Extensions up to a limit of six terms may be granted by the Modern Languages Board.** It is University policy to encourage timely completion, and the Modern Languages Board will not, as a matter of policy, grant any extension for more than one term at a time. When you apply for an extension, you will be asked to make a reasoned case for the extra time and to present a feasible schedule for completion. The most recent supervisor's reports will be reviewed and supervisors may be asked for further information to ensure that extensions are not granted except in appropriate circumstances.

Prior to applying for an extension, students and supervisors should consider carefully whether extension of candidature or suspension of status is the more appropriate course. To apply for an extension please complete a **GSO.15** online application (accessible online via Student Self-Service).

It is recommended that extensions are applied for as soon as possible in advance of the deadline; extension approval is not guaranteed, and therefore last-minute applications are not advised. Retrospective extensions will only be considered in cases with serious extenuating circumstances.

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 (three terms). Applications for suspension of status should be made via the 'My Student Record' section in Student Self-Service. If the application is approved, the student will not be liable to pay fees during the period of suspension, and may 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.

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 do wish to return to study, students are required to complete a form via the 'My Student Record' section in Student Self-Service in advance of their return.

Withdrawal or Lapsing from Status, and Reinstatement

It sometimes happens that, for good reason, students are unable to complete their research work or thesis writing within the time limits noted above. Students who fail to apply for an extension, or whose applications for an extension of time are not approved, will automatically lapse from MLitt or DPhil status at the end of their period of registration, and must apply for reinstatement before the thesis can be submitted for examination. In some cases, when it becomes clear that they will be unable to complete the thesis within the time limits set, the student may wish to withdraw from status with a view to applying for reinstatement when the thesis is virtually ready for submission.

Reinstatement may only be considered when no more than twenty-four months have passed since a student's enrolment was withdrawn, and they had not already, before withdrawal, spent the maximum permitted number of terms (plus permitted extension of time) on course. Applications for reinstatement may be approved where the student has given good reasons for it, and where there is adequate supervision available. Further information about reinstatement is available on the Changes in student status webpage.

Applications for reinstatement should be made on a **GSO.23** application form from the graduate applications webpage. If the application is approved, the student's previous fulfilment of the requirements regarding fees and residence will still count, and their supervision will be resumed.

If more than twenty-four months have passed since a student's enrolment was withdrawn, an application for reinstatement would require an additional application for exceptional reinstatement to the University's Education Committee. This would require a statement explaining why it is reasonable for the Education Committee to permit reinstatement and outlining the circumstances that have prevented earlier submission. The Education Committee would also need to take into account the length of time since the student's enrolment was withdrawn; the reasons for the delay; along with the views of the Faculty, the student's supervisor and former college.

Any student looking to apply for reinstatement is advised to get in touch with the Graduate Studies Office as early as possible, in order to allow good time to complete the stages of the process.

SUPPORTING YOUR STUDIES

Pastoral and Welfare Support

Your General Supervisor and the Director of Graduate Studies 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. There is also peer support from the Middle Common Room (MCR), which elects student officers with special responsibility for welfare, who liaise with the central Oxford University

Students Union. The University provides support services for students with children. Financial support is available from central university and college hardship funds.

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 and Nightline. The Oxford Student Union (SU) also offers free, confidential and independent information, advice and guidance on navigating college and university processes. They have a wide range of online resources available on their website and if you need further support you can get in touch with them via their Online Form. 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.

Student Representation and Feedback

Each sub-faculty elects a graduate representative, and additional programme 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.

Together, the elected representatives also serve as the organisers of the MML Graduate Network, which 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. They also organise 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 2026-27 academic year, the Faculty has a dedicated Fellow in post to assist students with their writing skills and academic literacy.

MML students at ***any*** level of study (from first year to postgraduate) – and staff – are welcome to book a session with our Royal Literary Fund Fellow, **Elizabeth Lowry**. Sessions are in-person in Room 30.513 at the MML Faculty, Schwarzman Centre, Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6GG.

Elizabeth Lowry is a professional writer who can help you improve your academic writing and make the whole process more enjoyable. Each session lasts 50 minutes and is free and confidential: this service is independent from university services for students.

Possible **topics** we might discuss include:

- understanding the title and scope of the question
- planning your essay, dissertation or report to meet the word count
- critical thinking
- writing clearly, including help with grammar and sentence structure
- using AI appropriately
- rewriting and editing your work so that **you continue to gain in confidence**

You are very welcome to contact me with any specific needs you have. Please note, though, that I do not undertake proofreading or EAP and TEFL tuition.

Details about the appointments available can be found on Canvas. To enquire or book your online session, email: elizabeth.lowry@rlfeducation.org.uk

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By making an appointment you indicate that you understand and accept the following:

Disclaimer:
The Fellow is not employed by the university or funded by it; the Fellow is a self-employed published writer and provides an independent service as a non-academic expert in writing; the Fellow is required to work within parameters established and monitored by the Royal Literary Fund (RLF), organiser and funder of the service; the Fellow may therefore be unable to assist with certain types of enquiry and, with reference to these parameters, has the right to refuse to provide the service to any student; the Fellow and the RLF do not accept any liability for any direct, indirect, special, consequential or other losses or damages of any kind arising from use of the service by a student; students retain sole responsibility for their own work.

Privacy
The Royal Literary Fund stores the data you provide for the duration of the Fellowship. The Fellow also completes and retains a record of each tutorial session. This data is stored electronically. We collect and store this data solely for the purposes of providing the Fellowship service and monitoring the effectiveness of that service, and retain it only as long as is necessary for these purposes. Only RLF staff and contracted personnel have access, and that data is not shared with any third party. The university/college and its staff are not given access to your personal data.

Research Methods Seminar

Professor Neil Kenny hosts a fortnightly seminar for DPhil students in the Faculty during term time.

The seminar, entitled 'Researching and Writing a DPhil: Problems, Methods' is held **5-6pm on Fridays of even weeks throughout the year**, i.e. fortnightly, with 12 sessions per year in total (Wharton Room, All Souls). Tea and biscuits are served from 4.45pm.

All DPhil students are welcome to attend, at any stage of the year, whatever year they are in, and whether or not they attended in previous terms or years. We discuss a wide range of problems,

techniques, and methods that tend to arise in the researching and writing of the kinds of doctorates done within the Faculty (with the exception of linguistics, to which the workshop is less well geared). Apart from perhaps giving a very brief presentation at one point during the year, students do no preparation: they just turn up.

This is different from a 'work in progress' seminar; students are encouraged to be open about difficulties encountered rather than to show their research at its most polished. The aim is to build up confidence and to focus on typical challenges that tend to arise in doctoral work, rather than on the presenter's specialism.

For more information, or to register your interest, please contact Prof Kenny at neil.kenny@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk.

Graduate Study Spaces

There are dedicated study spaces for graduate students on Floor 1 and Floor 2 of the Humanities Library in the Schwarzman Centre: on each floor a 32-seater room for individual study and an 8-seater room for individual or group study (bookable - arrangements to be confirmed). This provision complements graduate study space in the Schwarzman Centre and general study space elsewhere in the Humanities Library.

There is also a graduate reading room in the Taylor Institution Library.

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.

If you are applying for a travel grant, be aware of the termly deadline, which is Friday of Week 5 (NB this deadline has changed from previous years). Funds are, unfortunately, limited, and students are eligible for up to £350 across the course of your degree. You should think carefully about when it will be most useful to draw on this.

Modern Languages students may also be eligible for funding from the wider University. You should consult the student fees and funding web pages for more information. Your college may also be able to help with funding for research travel.

Equality and Diversity at Oxford

The University of Oxford Equality Policy states that…

> *"The 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."*

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. Visit their website for further details or contact them directly for advice on equality@admin.ox.ac.uk

The Equality and Diversity Unit also supports a broad network of harassment advisors in departments/faculties and colleges and a central Harassment Advisory Service. The harassment officer in the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages is Alejandra Crosta.

There are a wide range of faith societies, belief groups, and religious centres within Oxford University that are open to students and can be important sources of support. For more information visit the religious life page.

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, we 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. You can find further information about how to make a complaint or academic appeal on the student webpages.

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 complaints and academic appeals web page.

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.

APPENDIX 1 – 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. The Faculty offers termly workshop sessions on various topics specific to Modern Languages degrees, including employment opportunities, publishing and teaching qualifications.

The Faculty also offers two termly seminars for first year DPhil students, introducing them to a range of work in Modern Languages and to a number of colleagues at Oxford and elsewhere. In 2026-27, these seminars will usually take place on Wednesday evenings in weeks 3 and 8 of each term. You will receive information about these seminars in due course.

Graduates will only normally start teaching in their 2nd year; the gateway to teaching and to participating in courses at the Centre for Teaching and Learning is the faculty's Preparation for Learning and Teaching at Oxford (PLTO) session which runs in Trinity Term each year. Completion of the PLTO is also a precondition for giving a lecture in the faculty's Graduate Lecture Series (open to 2nd year DPhils only). Please address any questions about this to the Director of Masters Courses, Dr Rajendra Chitnis, who runs the PLTO session. University policy states that:

> *Students should normally have completed (or had waived) transfer of status before participating in any teaching activities.* (Policy on Research Degrees. Section 2.4.1.2; Work, including teaching; Requirements)

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.

Whether you are a graduate student or a postdoctoral researcher, there are two pressing questions with which you will no doubt be occupied:

- How can I get this project finished in time and up to the standard I want it to be?
- What am I going to do afterwards?

The development opportunities provided by the Humanities Division are designed to help you address these questions in stimulating, interactive ways.

Our programme is organised via 'training pathways', designed to foster virtuous circles between research and personal development. These Pathways are:

- Preparation for Academic Practice Pathway: Resources to support all aspects of your development as a researcher, from writing book proposals to preparing for the DPhil viva

- Public Engagement with Research Pathway: Skills and tools to enable researchers to communicate, collaborate and inspire beyond the academy. Workshops include storytelling, Presentation Delivery Skills and How to Organise a Conference

- Heritage Pathway: A varied programme of research, training and events in collaboration with heritage partners to promote knowledge exchange and Public Engagement with Research

- Teaching Pathway: Supports Humanities researchers who are currently teaching (or intend to teach) at Oxford

- Career Confidence: Resources and opportunities tailored to the interests, skills and preferred career destinations of Humanities researchers.

Our workshops and events are open to Master's and DPhil students and postdoctoral researchers (including teaching-only and college-only appointments). Most of our events are free, but some require a £20 deposit which will be returned once you have attended the course, or cancel more than 72 hours before the event start time.

See https://researcherdevelopment.humanities.ox.ac.uk for the calendar of upcoming events and for more information about the programme.

You can also email the Humanities Researcher Development and Training Team at training@humanities.ox.ac.uk if you have any queries.

Support for Research Students from Careers, University of Oxford

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.

Careers, University of Oxford, 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. The careers guidance webpages are freely accessible to anyone exploring their career options.

APPENDIX 2 – HUMANITIES PROGRESSION FRAMEWORK

Transfer and Confirmation of Status: Progression of Doctoral Students

Acronyms and Definitions

PRS	Probationer Research Student. This is the 'status' which the majority of students have when they are first admitted to a DPhil degree in a Humanities subject at Oxford.
Transfer	'Transfer' refers to the process of transferring status from Probationer Research Student to DPhil student.
Confirmation	'Confirmation' refers to the process of confirming status as a DPhil student.
DPhil	Doctor of Philosophy
DGS	Director of Graduate Studies
GSC	Graduate Studies Committee

Summary of Recommended Timeline for a DPhil in a Humanities Subject at Oxford
(for students admitted to PRS status)

Year 1	Michaelmas term	Student admitted to PRS Status
	Hilary term	
	Trinity term	Apply for Transfer of Status
Year 2	Michaelmas term	Complete Transfer of Status
	Hilary term	
	Trinity term	Apply for Confirmation
Year 3	Michaelmas term	Complete Confirmation
	Hilary term	
	Trinity term	Thesis Submission
Year 4	Michaelmas term	
	Hilary term	
	Trinity term	*Final Date of Possible Submission*

I. Transfer of Status

Purpose and Criteria

(i) To assess whether the candidate is capable of carrying out advanced research, and has had suitable preparation in terms of subject specific research training.

(ii) To assess whether the subject of the thesis and the manner of its treatment as proposed by the candidate are acceptable and potentially of DPhil quality.

(iii) To assess whether the thesis can reasonably be completed in no more than 6 to 9 terms from transfer.

Timing

(i) Students admitted to PRS status

Students who have completed a one-year Master's degree at Oxford or elsewhere or a two-year MPhil at a university other than Oxford must be admitted to PRS status.

Transfer of status from PRS to DPhil must take place in Trinity Term of Year 1 or Michaelmas Term of Year 2 as measured from the first term of PRS.

(ii) Students admitted to DPhil status

In the case of students who have completed a two-year MPhil at Oxford and who have already commenced work on their doctoral thesis, faculties are required to decide between:

(a) admitting the student to PRS status, with transfer taking place no later than Trinity Term of Year 1 or Michaelmas Term of Year 2, or

(b) Admitting the student to (non-confirmed) DPhil status, and waiving the transfer of status process.

If the faculty chooses option (b), it must be satisfied that the student meets the three conditions described under purpose of transfer of status above. In such cases, the admissions process should follow the same pattern as the transfer of status process, and all candidates who are admitted directly to DPhil status should be interviewed.

Material Required for Applications for Transfer

Students must check local faculty requirements for their subject area.

(i) GSO.2 application to transfer application (available online via Student Self-Service).

(ii) A detailed outline (not exceeding 1,000 words) of the proposed subject and of the manner in which it will be treated, including a provisional list of chapters and their proposed coverage.

(iii) Written work (or equivalent, e.g. a portfolio, score or CD/DVD, to be specified by the faculty). The submitted work should be on the topic of the proposed thesis. The work will usually be a draft chapter of the thesis and should be a clean copy with footnotes and a bibliography. It should be about 10,000 words long including footnotes. The word count does not include the bibliography. If the submitted work is not a draft chapter, then the candidate should provide a written explanation of the written work's relationship to the thesis.

(iv) Reference from the supervisor: the supervisor (or supervisors, if there is more than one) must provide a full and detailed assessment of the student and the student's application for transfer in the 'Comment' section of the GSO.2 application. Where there are two supervisors, either each one must submit an assessment report or both must sign a joint assessment.

(v) Information about subject-specific research or other training completed by the student, e.g. proof of linguistic competence. The faculty should specify any research training/research skills (e.g. linguistic competence, ability to use archives, handling of ancient documents) which students are expected to have acquired by this stage of their doctoral studies.

Assessment

(i) Assessors: the faculty must appoint two assessors, neither of whom must be the candidate's supervisor.

(ii) Interview: an interview by both assessors, based on the submitted written materials, is compulsory. Academic dress is not required at the interview.

(iii) Report: assessors must submit a joint written report, making a clear recommendation to the relevant Graduate Studies Committee of 'transfer' or 'not transfer', and providing reasons for their recommendation. The report should note any subject-specific research training still required by the student successfully to complete their doctorate.

Outcome of Assessment

(i) The assessors may recommend that the candidate be transferred to DPhil status.

(ii) The assessors may judge that the candidate is not (yet) ready to transfer, in which case they may:

(a) Recommend that the candidate should re-apply after undertaking further preparatory work, which should be clearly described in their report, or

(b) Recommend that the candidate should transfer to a lower level of research degree, such as the MLitt

Unsuccessful Applications

(i) A candidate whose first application for transfer to DPhil status is not approved shall be permitted to make one further application, and will be granted an extension of time for one term if this is necessary for the purposes of making the application. Normally the assessors should be the same as for the original application.

(ii) If, after considering a candidate's second application for transfer of status, the relevant faculty board concludes that the student's progress does not warrant transfer, the board must:

(a) Approve his or her transfer to the status of Student for the Degree of Master of Letters (MLitt), or

(b) Arrange for the student to be removed from the University's register of students.

(iii) Candidates who are transferred to MLitt status are permitted one further opportunity to apply for transfer to DPhil status, provided that (a) not more than 3 terms have elapsed from the original transfer attempt, and (b) that the candidate's supervisor is prepared to support a further application.

The intention behind these requirements is not to place obstacles in your way but to let you discuss your work with scholars other than your supervisor and benefit from other perspectives on your work.

Reporting

The report of the assessors must be considered by the Faculty Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), which may delegate authority to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). Where authority

is delegated, the DGS must report his or her decision to the GSC. A copy of the transfer report must also be sent to the student, supervisor and college.

Appeals

Candidates who wish to contest the outcome of the transfer 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. 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 - see the University complaints and appeals processes.

Loss of Probationer Research Student (PRS) Status

Candidates will lose their Probationer Research Student status if they have not gained admission to another status (e.g. DPhil or MLitt) within six terms of admission as a full-time student to the status of Probationer Research Student, unless they have been granted one term's extension following an unsuccessful transfer application; or if the faculty board concerned deprives them of such status (after consultation with the college/hall and supervisor). If a candidate loses his or her status as a PRS and has not gained admission to another status, the candidate is no longer registered as a student of the University.

II. Confirmation of Status

Purpose and Criteria

The purpose of confirmation is to:

(i) Assess the progress of the student's research, and

(ii) To ensure that the student's research progress is such that the student may reasonably be expected to submit within six months to one year.

Timing

(i) Candidates admitted to Probationer Research Student (PRS) status must apply for confirmation of status between Trinity Term of Year 2 of their doctoral studies and Trinity Term of Year 3 of their doctoral studies. The confirmation process must be completed no later than the end of Trinity Term of Year 3 of their doctoral studies.

(ii) Application for confirmation of status should be made at least six months (i.e. two terms, or Trinity Term plus the summer vacation) prior to submission of the thesis.

Material Required for Assessment of Applications for Confirmation

(i) GSO.14 application to confirm DPhil status application (available online via Student Self-Service).

(ii) 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.

(iii) Written work (or equivalent, e.g. a portfolio, score or CD/DVD), to be specified by the faculty. The submitted work should be on the topic of the proposed thesis. The work will usually be a draft chapter of the thesis and should be a clean copy with footnotes and a bibliography. It should be about 15,000 words long including footnotes. The word count does not include the bibliography. If the submitted work is not a draft chapter, then the candidate should provide a written explanation of the written work's relationship to the thesis).

(iv) Reference from supervisor: the supervisor must provide a confidential assessment of the student and their application (this must be in addition to, or instead of, the 'Comment' section of GSO.14). The faculty may specify additional references.

(v) Confirmation material should normally include copies of the report(s) from the transfer process. This information will be complied by the Graduate Studies Office.

Assessment

(i) Assessors: the faculty must appoint at least one assessor, who must not be the candidate's supervisor. Ideally two assessors should be appointed.

(ii) Interview: an interview by at least one assessor who is not the supervisor, based on the submitted written materials, is compulsory. Academic dress is not required at the interview.

(iii) Report: the assessor(s) must submit a written report on both the written and interview components of the application, making a clear recommendation to the relevant Graduate Studies Committee. The assessors are required to report on the following points: whether the subject of the thesis and the manner of its treatment proposed by the student are acceptable; and whether the thesis can reasonably be completed in three or at most four years of full-time study from the date of the student's admission as a research student.

Outcome of Assessment

(i) The assessor(s) may recommend that the candidate's DPhil status be confirmed.

(ii) The assessor(s) may judge that the candidate does not (yet) satisfy the purpose of the confirmation process as described above, and may:

(a) Recommend resubmission of the application at a later date within the normal timetable;

(b) Recommend that the candidate should transfer to a lower level of research degree, such as the MLitt

Unsuccessful Applications

(i) If the candidate's first application for confirmation of status is not approved, the candidate is permitted to make one further application, normally within one term of the original application. The candidate will be granted an extension of time for one term if this is necessary for the purposes of making the application.

(ii) If, after considering a candidate's second application for confirmation of status, a board concludes that the student's progress does not warrant confirmation, the board must:

(a) Approve his or her transfer to the status of Student for the Degree of Master of Letters,

Or

(b) Arrange for the student to be removed from the University's register of students

The report will be considered by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Studies Committee and if in light of the assessors' report it is decided that the subject is unsatisfactory for a DPhil thesis, or that you are unlikely to be able to complete it within the time limit, it may permit a further application by a specified date, or it may allow your admission to MLitt status. If after a second application the Committee continues to be unable to give approval, it will either admit you to MLitt status or take appropriate action to remove your name from the register.

The intention behind these requirements is not to place obstacles in your way but to let you discuss your work with scholars other than your supervisor and benefit from other perspectives on your work.

Deferral of Confirmation

In exceptional circumstances where unforeseen and unavoidable obstacles have arisen since transfer of status so as to delay a student's research progress, the student may apply to their faculty board for deferral of confirmation of status. **The maximum total period by which confirmation may be deferred is 3 terms.** An application for deferral must consist of:

(i) A clear and detailed description of the obstacles;

(ii) A statement of support from the student's supervisor;

(iii) A statement of support from the Director of Graduate Studies.

Reporting

The report of the assessor(s) must be considered by the Faculty Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), which may delegate authority to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). Where authority is delegated, the DGS must report their decisions to the GSC. A copy of the transfer report must also be sent to the student, supervisor and college.

Appeals

Candidates who wish to contest the outcome of the 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, then the candidate, their supervisor or their college authority may make an appeal directly to the Proctors. 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 - see the University complaints and appeals processes.

III. Procedures for Oxford MPhil Students Progressing To DPhil Transfer of Status

Readmissions

The relevant faculty must decide whether a prospective doctoral student who has completed a two-year MPhil at Oxford should be admitted to Probationer Research Student (PRS) status or directly to DPhil status.

- Normally MPhil students should be admitted to PRS status if they have not already started work on their doctoral thesis.
- In the case of MPhil students who have started work on their doctoral thesis, the faculty may decide to waive the transfer of status process and admit the student directly to DPhil status.
- The faculty should only waive transfer if the student is judged to have reached the stage normally required successfully to complete the transfer of status process.

Timetable

(i) MPhil student admitted to PRS status

The timetable is the same as for students with a one-year Master's admitted to PRS status, i.e. the student is expected to complete transfer of status in Trinity Term of Year 1 or Michaelmas Term of Year 2 as measured from the first term of PRS.

(ii) Confirmation of status

(a) MPhil student admitted to PRS status

(1) All candidates admitted to PRS status must apply for confirmation of status between the start of Trinity Term of Year 2 of their doctoral studies and by the end of Trinity Term of Year 3 of their doctoral studies.

(2) Application for confirmation of status should be made at least six months prior to submission of the thesis.

(b) MPhil student admitted directly to DPhil status

(1) The student must apply for and complete the confirmation of status process by the end of Trinity Term of Year 1 of their doctoral studies.

(2) Application for confirmation of status should be made at least six months prior to submission of the thesis.