



NUFFIELD DEPARTMENT OF
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCES
Medical Sciences Division



Graduate Student Handbook

2023 – 2024



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Welcome to NDCN



Welcome to the Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences. You are joining one of the most vibrant and dynamic environments for brain and nerve research anywhere in the world. Our work, which aims to tackle some of the most important and difficult problems in medicine, encompasses the normal function of the nervous system and how it changes in disease. Through world class translational research programs, we aim to improve the diagnosis and treatment of brain and nerve disorders. Whether your work is in a molecular and cellular lab, based on imaging, or is directly working with patients, there are many opportunities to get exposure to neuroscience in the broadest sense, in a highly interdisciplinary environment. I hope you enjoy your time in NDCN and look forward to meeting you.

Professor Kevin Talbot, Head of Department

We would also like to welcome you to the Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences.

We have a thriving graduate programme and currently have over 150 DPhil. and MSc (Res) students conducting research projects in a wide range of Neuroscience related topics. We look forward to interacting with you during your time in the department.

If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch using the email address graduate@ndcn.ox.ac.uk.

Assoc. prof. Chrystalina Antoniadou – Director of Graduate Studies

Dr. Leen Van Broeck – Academic Administration Manager

Ms. Katharine Ware – Academic Administration Officer

Introduction

You are enrolled on either the DPhil in Clinical Neurosciences or MSc by Research programme in the Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences (NDCN). We also host students on several other courses which include:

- Biomedical Imaging (EPSRC & MRC CDT) - Clinical Neurosciences (FMRIB);
- Interdisciplinary Biosciences (BBSRC DTP) - Clinical Neuroscience;
- Systems Biology (EPSRC CDT) - Clinical Neurology and Neuroscience;
- DPhil Neuroscience;
- DPhil Ion Channels and Disease;
- DPhil Cancer Science; DPhil Biomedical and Clinical Sciences and DPhil Biomedical Sciences (NIH Ox-Cam).

NDCN is one of the departments within Oxford University's Medical Sciences Division (MSD, www.medsci.ox.ac.uk) (see **Figure 1** for Organisation).

NDCN was formed in 2010 by bringing together the

- Department of Clinical Neurology (DCN);
- Nuffield Laboratory of Ophthalmology (NLO)
- Nuffield Department of Anaesthetics (NDA)
- Wellcome Centre for Integrative Neuroimaging (WIN) (previously the Oxford Centre for Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the Brain (FMRIB))

Each of these had with their own recognised history and world-leading programmes in basic, translational and clinical research. In 2015 a new division, the Centre for the Prevention of Stroke and Dementia (CPSD), was created. In April 2020 the number of divisions was increased to six when the MRC Brain Network Dynamics Unit (BNDU) joined NDCN. The organisation of NDCN is shown in **Figure 2**.

The Department has over 450 staff and 150 students housed in locations across the John Radcliffe Hospital site and in the South Parks Road 'science area'. The West Wing also includes the in- and outpatient facilities for the clinical Departments of Neurology, Neurosurgery, Neuroanaesthetics, Ophthalmology and ENT, which are closely integrated with NDCN. This provides the perfect setting to share facilities, expertise and knowledge, as well as to realise our translational goals.

This handbook will give you the information you need to get started and guide you through the requirements of the DPhil and the MSc by Research programmes. It contains general information about the programmes and useful contact details.

For more information about the Department, please visit: www.ndcn.ox.ac.uk.

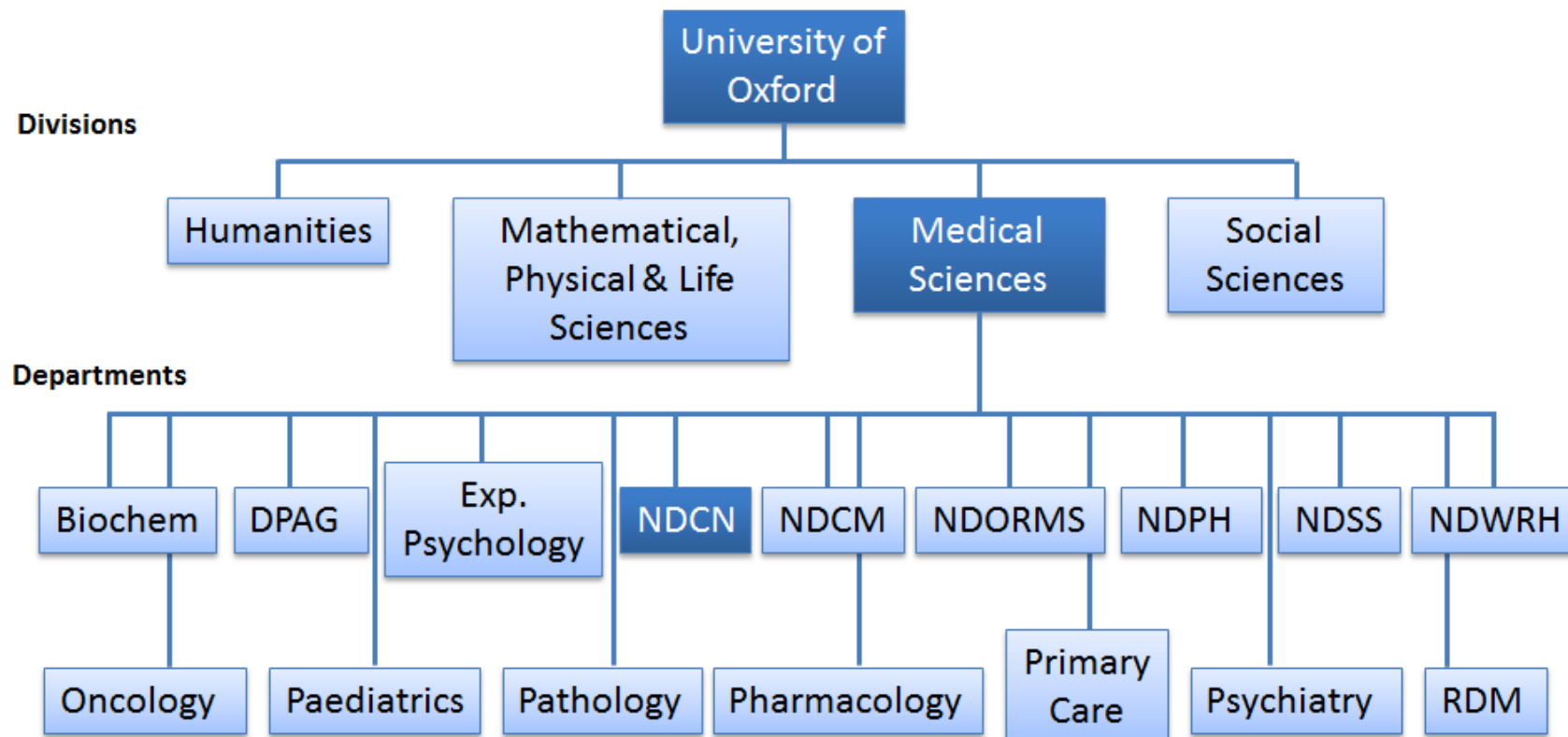


Figure 1. Organisation of University Divisions and Departments

Key: Biochem: Biochemistry; DPAG: Department of Physiology, Anatomy & Genetics; Exp. Psychology: Department of Experimental Psychology; NDCN: Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences; NDCM: Nuffield Department of Clinical Medicine; NDORMS: Nuffield Department of Orthopaedics, Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal Sciences; NDPH: Nuffield Department of Population Health; NDSS: Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences; NDWRH: Nuffield Department of Women's & Reproductive Health; Oncology: Department of Oncology; Paediatrics: Department of Paediatrics; Pathology: Sir William Dunn School of Pathology; Pharmacology: Department of Pharmacology; Primary Care: Department of Primary Care Health Sciences; Psychiatry: Department of Psychiatry; RDM: Radcliffe Department of Medicine

General Information

Contact details

Postal Address: Level 6, West Wing, John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford OX3 9DU

Web address: www.ndcn.ox.ac.uk

General email address for external enquiries: enquiries@ndcn.ox.ac.uk

General email address for graduate enquiries: graduate@ndcn.ox.ac.uk

West Wing Level 6 Reception: +44 (0)1865 234829

Location

Most researchers are based on Levels 5 and 6 of the West Wing, the Wellcome Centre for Integrative Neuroimaging (WIN) near Car Park 1 and the Wolfson Building

There are also staff based at these locations (see **map** at the end of the handbook):

- Levels 1 and 3 of the West Wing
- The Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine (WIMM)
- The Nuffield Division of Anaesthetics (Level 2 of the Main Hospital)
- The Kadoorie Centre (Level 2 of the Main Hospital)
- South Parks Road science area – OMPI

Facilities

The Facilities team is on hand to help you with issues related to the working environment across all of our sites.

Room bookings

To book a seminar room on Level 6 of the West Wing, email wwfacilities@nda.ox.ac.uk or facilities@ndcn.ox.ac.uk, phone 234829, or go to reception and book it in person.

Post and pigeonholes

On Level 6 there are pigeonholes for staff and research groups.

Department Closures

Professional services teams (including reception on Level 6) usually close between Christmas and New Year, over the Easter weekend and during bank holidays.

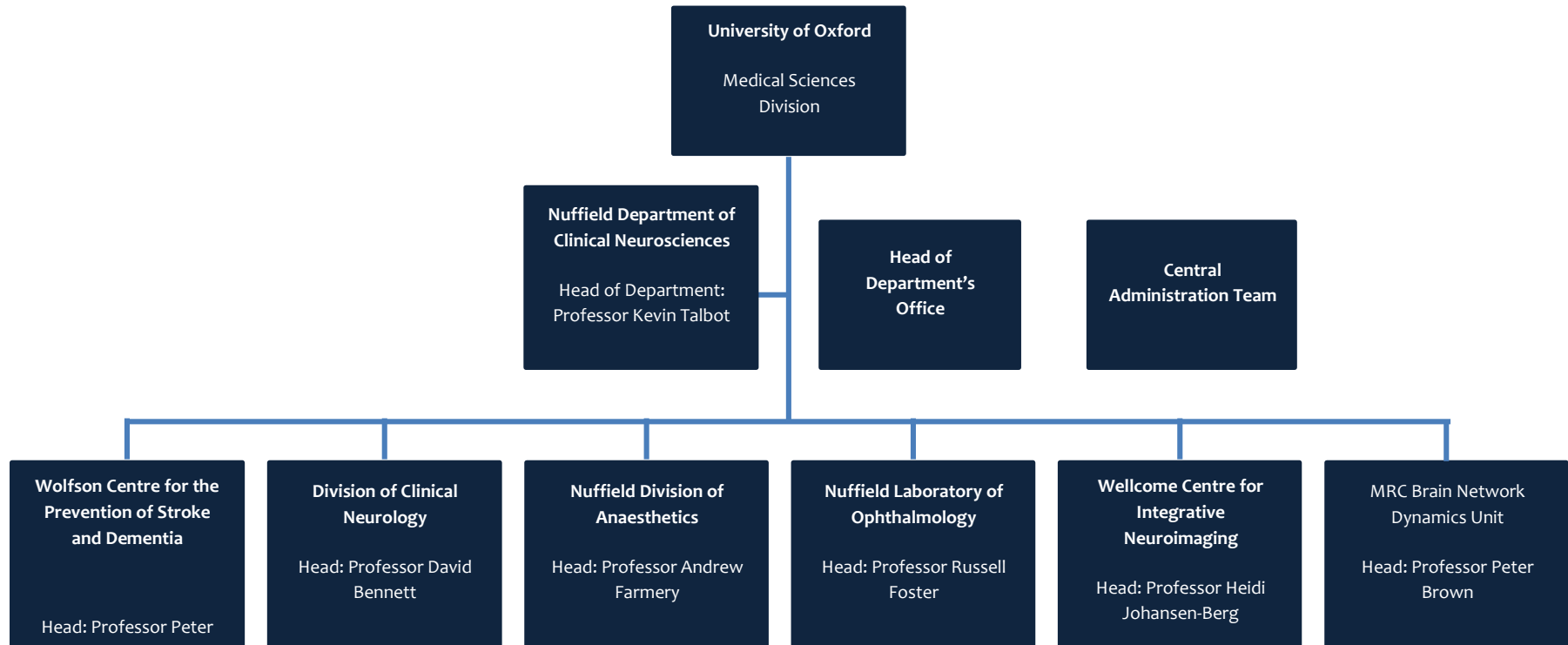


Figure 2. Organisation of NDCN

Departmental Who's Who

Please feel free to visit any of the NDCN support staff in person, or contact us using the emails in the table below. All staff have their own personal email addresses, but we encourage use of the generic emails as they are monitored by more than one person.

Head of Department Office

Head of Operations	hodoffice@ndcn.ox.ac.uk
Staff Development Officer	staff-development@ndcn.ox.ac.uk
Events Co-ordinator	events@ndcn.ox.ac.uk
Communications and Public Engagement Officer	communications@ndcn.ox.ac.uk
PAs to Senior Staff	pa@ndcn.ox.ac.uk

Administration Areas

Manager	Generic emails	What email should be used for
Head of Administration & Finance	moira.westwood@ndcn.ox.ac.uk	
Finance Manager	accounts@ndcn.ox.ac.uk	Fees, stipends, expenses claims – anything to do with money we are paying out
	finance@ndcn.ox.ac.uk	Accounts receivable (invoicing other organisations to get money in), GL reports, budget planning & forecasting
	orders@ndcn.ox.ac.uk	Purchasing (R12/Oracle, KeyTravel, etc.)
Human Resources Manager	recruitment@ndcn.ox.ac.uk	Recruitment up to the point when the employee starts
	hr@ndcn.ox.ac.uk	HR during employment
Research Manager	research.applications@ndcn.ox.ac.uk	Research grant applications up to the point when the award is active
	research.awards@ndcn.ox.ac.uk	Research management post award set-up
Academic Administration Manager	undergraduate@ndcn.ox.ac.uk	Undergraduate teaching
	graduate@ndcn.ox.ac.uk	DPhil and MSc by Research
Facilities Manager	facilities@ndcn.ox.ac.uk	Facilities

Athena SWAN



Our Department is a dynamic and friendly place to work, with a thriving and collaborative research culture, active staff and student societies, and significant opportunities for personal and professional development.

Since 2015 NDCN has held an Athena SWAN Silver Award (which was then renewed until 2024). The Athena SWAN Charter recognises and celebrates work undertaken to address gender equality in the workplace. We support equality of opportunity, provide access to targeted support for staff members who face additional barriers, and promote a healthy and inclusive working culture within the Department. We value diversity and maintain a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all staff and students are respected.

See www.ndcn.ox.ac.uk/about/working-in-our-department for more information.

Graduate Studies Committee

It is essential that departments have in place a body and/or person responsible for ensuring that procedures relating to graduate students at departmental level are followed appropriately and monitored regularly. The responsible body is typically a Graduate Studies Committee, but many of the day-to-day tasks are carried out by a Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) on behalf of the Head of Department. The DGS chairs the departmental Graduate Studies Committee.

The NDCN graduate committee consists of representatives from each of the six divisions, a student representative, the Director of Graduate Studies and is supported by the Academic Administration team. Current members can be found at <https://www.ndcn.ox.ac.uk/study-with-us/graduate-students/Graduate-administration-team-1>.

Mission

The Graduate Studies Committee has a remit to ensure that NDCN graduate study programmes are run and managed to the highest standard delivering teaching and research excellence. The committee is responsible for ensuring that University policies and procedures are adhered to and that appropriate departmental policies and procedures are developed as required.

Terms of Reference

- To ensure that students are admitted in accordance with university and departmental policy
- To ensure that supervisors carry out their academic and pastoral responsibilities in accordance with university and departmental policy
- To ensure that students carry out their studies in accordance with university and departmental policy
- To administer all student funding available to NDCN students e.g. department funds and divisional funds etc.
- To monitor student progression and identify trends which may need addressing. In such cases, the committee will implement remedial action to reverse negative trends
- To monitor recruitment and advise on best practice to ensure the highest standard of students are attracted to NDCN
- To recommend student number targets
- To ensure that the estate of the department is fit for purpose for student study
- To ensure that students adhere to any legal requirements relating to their study e.g. Health & Safety, Data Protection, Good Clinical practice etc.
- To monitor the development of new graduate studies programmes

Single Sign-On (SSO)

Your Oxford Single Sign-On (SSO) account entitles you to use all University resources provided by IT Services and many others run by other parts of the University. It is called a Single Sign-On account as you can access multiple services with a single login and it is sometimes called simply your SSO account. Your SSO account comprises:

- your SSO username (also sometimes called your *Oxford username*) e.g. abcd1234
- your SSO password which you choose yourself

A Single Sign-On account is created automatically for you. You need to activate your account to set it up and [change the password](#) at least once a year.

For new students, your SSO username and activation code will be sent by email to the address held for you on the University record four days after your returned Card Form has been processed. Please ensure the University has a working email address for you.

For more information see:

<https://www.it.ox.ac.uk/welcome/sso>

Supervision

All supervisors in the department must adhere to the Code of Practice for Supervisors produced by the Medical Sciences Division. The latest version of this can always be found on the MSD Graduate School Canvas site, or on the ‘Supervisor’ page on the NDCN website:

https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/courses/22105/pages/supervision?module_item_id=212345 or
<https://www.ndcn.ox.ac.uk/study-with-us/graduate-students/supervisors>.

The most important points are listed below:

- All students in the Medical Sciences Division must have at least **two** supervisors. A variety of different models for the supervisory team can work well, depending on the project and the needs of the student. A student should have had a second supervisor appointed by the end of their first term if not identified at the time they started their studies.
- It is the responsibility of the supervisor to provide the student with regular information as to the student’s progress (to ensure that the student feels properly directed and able to communicate with the supervisor), and, where problems arise, provide guidance and assistance as to necessary corrective action. Also, to complete the termly Graduate Reporting System (GSR) report.
- Supervisors are responsible for all aspects of safety for their students and for the safe conduct of all experiments carried out during their students’ research.

Welfare

Graduate students who have personal, academic or administrative problems and who are uncertain of the proper way to resolve these problems have several possible courses of action open to them. It is usually best to talk to your supervisor and/or the DGS/NDCN academic administration team in the first instance.

We are all here to help and support you so please ask if you are struggling with something.

People and organisations to which you can turn for support are:

- your **Supervisor**, who can consult the appropriate authorities on your behalf;
- the **Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)** or the **Academic Administration Graduate team** (graduate@ndcn.ox.ac.uk);
- the **Head of Department** (Professor Kevin Talbot);
- **in your College**, you can consult the Senior Tutor, Tutor for Graduates or your own College Advisor;
- **in the Medical Sciences Division**, the Director of the Graduate School or a member of the Graduate Studies Committee;
- **Disability Lead** - Dr Helen Higham, and **Disability Coordinator** - Dr Leen Van Broeck : <https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/disability/roles-lead-and-coordinator>
- **peer supporters**, the Division of Medical Sciences has a team of trained peer supporters, who can be contacted using the email msdpeers@medsci.ox.ac.uk.
- **Welfare reps** – students who have been trained to provide help and support to fellow students and promote positive wellbeing practices in the department. At least one per year group. Current appointed reps: Year 1 – Sana Zuberi sana.zuberi@ndcn.ox.ac.uk and Ke (Michael) Li (ke.li@ndcn.ox.ac.uk); Year 2 - Sasha Tinelli (sasha.tinelli@chch.ox.ac.uk); Year 3 - Pranav Mahajan (pranav.mahajan@linacre.ox.ac.uk). If you're interested in becoming a welfare rep in the future, please email graduate@ndcn.ox.ac.uk

The Student Counselling Service at 3 Worcester Street acts in strict confidence and is experienced in helping students address personal or emotional problems which can impact their time at Oxford (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling>).

The Disability Advisory Service provides information, advice and disability-related study support (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability>).

Other useful sources of support are listed on the Health & Welfare pages of the University website (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare>).

The Medical Sciences Divisional Graduate Office is a source of advice on forms, deadlines and other advice on the degree process (graduate.studies@medsci.ox.ac.uk).

Education Committee (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/>) has oversight of all matters relating to the education of students within the University.

Health

For information on accessing medical advice and guidance for staying healthy while studying at the University visit <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/health?wssl=1>

Illness

Students should always let their supervisor and the academic administration team know when illness has impacted progress and if appropriate should apply for suspension of status or deferral of a milestone such as transfer or confirmation of status.

The normal expectation is that students registered on a full-time course should be working full-time. Interpretation of what this means will vary but supervisors should ensure in all cases that students do not feel obliged to work beyond the legal maximum which applies to employees of the University i.e. a maximum average working week of 48 hours. Supervisors should also ensure that, in the interests of equal opportunities, they are reasonably flexible regarding hours, e.g. to ensure study can be compatible with having dependent children. At the same time, hours should be by prior agreement, and arrangements should not be so flexible as to allow students to think that they can habitually miss days or turn up late.

The supervisor should make clear that the student is expected to take a reasonable amount of time off for holiday. Divisional policy is that students should receive a level of leave commensurate with employees of the University, i.e. 38 days of leave per annum inclusive of bank holidays.

Students should have sufficient free time to make the most of the wider University and College resources.

For **COVID-19 information**, please see <https://www.ox.ac.uk/coronavirus>

Visas

If you are the holder of a Student visa, lots of useful information can be found here: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/during> including what to do if your circumstances change and the options available to you while you are studying. We would strongly advise that you look at the Visa Obligations' section as it is important that you observe these whilst on-course.

In order to satisfy Home Office requirements, you will be asked periodically to let the department know of the contact points (e.g. meetings, email exchanges, etc.) you have had during each term with your supervisors/department/college. There should be a minimum of three of these per term.

Complaints Procedure

Details on how to make complaints in relation to your degree are available here:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/complaints>

Health and Safety

Supervisors are responsible for all aspects of safety of students under their control however all students must attend the departmental Health and Safety induction session (this is required for access to the department). You should also attend required safety courses for specific skills (e.g. radiation or animal handling). Researchers working with human tissue should be aware of the Human Tissue Act:

<https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/human-tissue/training>

The current University Safety Policies and the Department's Statement of Health and Safety can be found online:

www.admin.ox.ac.uk/safety/hs-mgement-policy

Relevant training for health & safety as well as other training is logged on a system called iPassport, and compliance is monitored that way too. You should receive a set-up email for that system from NDCN facilities soon after starting. Please contact us if you do not.

Expense claims

From time to time, you may incur expenses from your own money, e.g. travel and conferences. To reclaim these expenses if they fall within the remit of the financial support the department can offer students, you should submit an expenses [claim form](#). Please check with the academic administration team whether your expense is allowable under any of our schemes *before* making your purchase.

<https://www.ndcn.ox.ac.uk/about/professional-services/finance/expenses>

Libraries and Information Technology

For information on all Bodleian Health Care Libraries please see

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/medicine>

Electronic resources:

- Find books, e-books, journals & e-journals & bibliographic databases <http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>
- Remote access to online resources <http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/finding-resources/remote-access>
- Book purchase requests can be made via <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/collections-and-resources/recommend-a-purchase>

Library outreach services

Your outreach librarian can offer help, advice and training on: literature searching, reference management, conducting systematic reviews, measuring research impact & open access publishing

Contact details:

Neal Thurley (neal.thurley@bodleian.ox.ac.uk), Cairns Library, Academic Centre, Level 3, John Radcliffe Hospital Tel: (01865) 222920

Further Training & Support:

- Bodleian iSkills programme for details of workshops and training sessions <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/using/skills>
- Support for disabled readers or readers with Specific Learning Difficulty <http://ox.libguides.com/disabled-readers>

Oxford LibGuides:

- Managing your references <http://ox.libguides.com/reference-management>
- Measuring impact using bibliometrics <http://ox.libguides.com/bibliometrics>
- Medical sciences: research resources <http://ox.libguides.com/medsci>
- Systematic Reviews <http://ox.libguides.com/systematic-reviews>

Tutorials:

- OvidSP – includes Medline, Embase & PsycINFO - <http://www.ovid.com/site/support/training.jsp>
- PubMed <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/disted/pubmed.html>

Communications, Events and Public Engagement

Newsletters, mailing lists & intranet

You will automatically be subscribed to a weekly bulletin which is emailed to the whole department on a Monday morning. This contains important departmental information as

well as administrative updates, training and events. If you would like something to be advertised in the weekly bulletin please email communications@ndcn.ox.ac.uk.

There is a departmental intranet (<https://www.ndcn.ox.ac.uk/about/professional-services>) which contains useful administrative information.

You will also be added to a mailing list called ndcn-postgraduateresearch@maillist.ox.ac.uk which will be used to circulate other notices of interest to you all as well as ‘the graduate newsletter’ once a term, signposting you to resources and opportunities specific to graduates.

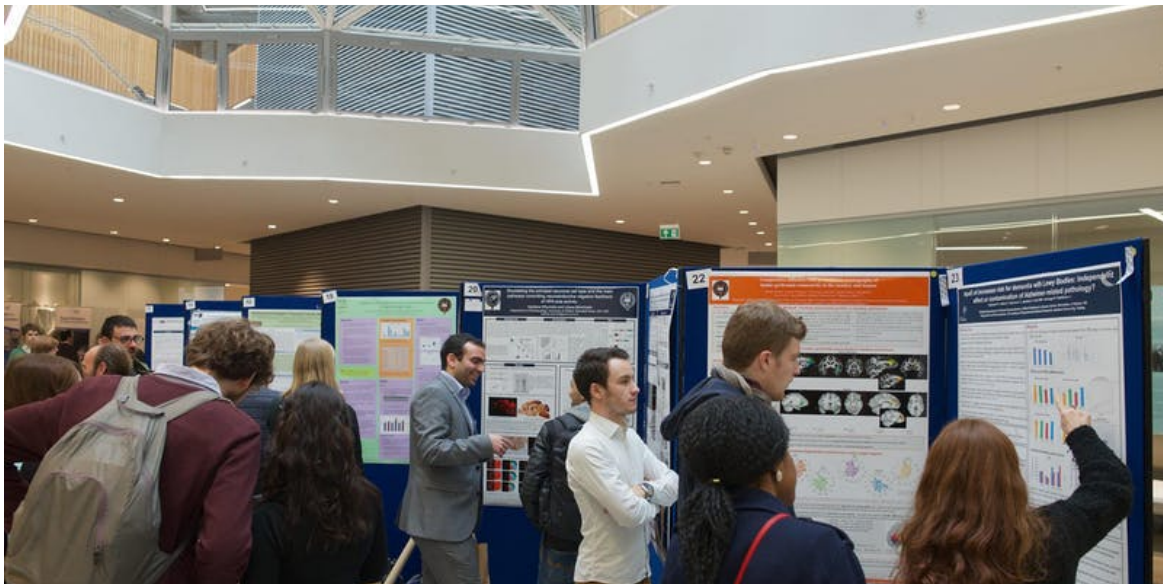
Social media

You may wish to follow the department on Twitter ([@NDCNOxford](https://twitter.com/NDCNOxford)) or connect with us on LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/nuffield-department-of-clinical-neurosciences-university-of-oxford/>).

Webpages

You are entitled to a profile page on the department’s website (www.ndcn.ox.ac.uk). To set this up, email communications@ndcn.ox.ac.uk giving your name, single sign on (e.g. ndcn1234) and division (BNDU, DCN, CPSD, NLO, NDA, or WIN). If you would like it to automatically display your publications and add any new ones as they come out, please follow the guidance at <https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/reporting/symplectic#/>.

Oxford Neuroscience Symposium



This event takes place annually in March and is the showcase for all the ground-breaking research from across our Oxford Neuroscience community. See www.neuroscience.ox.ac.uk for more information.

Thomas Willis Day

Our annual Thomas Willis Day, named after the 17th century English doctor, is a chance to celebrate the work of our Department, with a particular focus on our postgraduate students. Historically, the afternoon used to start with a poster competition where all current DPhil students present a poster detailing an aspect of their research. Since the pandemic we combine a number of posters on display with a '3-minute thesis' competition, with a prize awarded to the best presentation in each year group. This is followed by the Thomas Willis Lecture and the annual departmental prize-giving and drinks reception/party.

British Neuroscience Association membership

Annual membership of the British Neuroscience Association is available to all our DPhil students who wish to benefit from their services which include: access to information on funding, grants and travel bursaries, discounts on registration at several conferences and opportunities to network with senior neuroscientists and potential employers. A call for sign-ups will be circulated in the Michaelmas Term graduate newsletter so that we can bulk-buy discounted membership for our students once a year. If you miss this deadline, the department cannot pay for your solo membership.

Departmental Seminars

The department organises seminars during term-time, usually on a Thursday lunchtime, given by our Associate Professors.

Other Seminars

A weekly digest of all events taking place across the Division is sent out via email every Friday, listing the events for the following week. To receive the digest, please email msd_events-subscribe@maillist.ox.ac.uk (Subject: Subscribe).

You can also subscribe to the Oxford Neuroscience mailing list to receive information about events and other items of interest: email neuroscience@medsci.ox.ac.uk.

Public Engagement & Research Communication



Be an Ambassador

Public engagement (including patient and public involvement) is central to NDCN's work. You can find more information on our website and intranet: <https://www.ndcn.ox.ac.uk/about/professional-services/communications-and-events/public-engagement>. There are lots of opportunities to get involved, particularly during Brain Awareness Week in March. You may also wish to apply to be one of our Public Engagement Ambassadors. Email communications@ndcn.ox.ac.uk if you'd like to know more.

Please also email communications@ndcn.ox.ac.uk if you have a significant paper published or with information about anything which you think might be newsworthy.

Publications database

As a measure and celebration of the department's success, the academic administration team keep an Endnote database of publications to which our students have contributed, either during their time with us or up to 5-7 years after leaving if it results from their research during their time with us. Please email us the DOI for any article you may publish while on course, therefore.

Student Club

The NDCN student community is comprised of approximately 120 postgraduate students across the six divisions of NDCN. The club aims to facilitate a central point of communication for all students in the Department, organising regular academic and social

events including guest speakers, coffee mornings and student talks, as well as implementing initiatives all aimed at improving inclusivity and increasing graduate support. Feedback and suggestions to the committee are always welcome.

The committee looks for new members every year and encourage all who are interested to contact graduate@ndcn.ox.ac.uk in the first instance.

It is important that you have an opportunity to express your views during your studies and there is student representation on the following committees:

- Graduate Studies Committee (GSC),
- the Medical Sciences Division's Joint Graduate Consultative Committee (MSD GJCC),
- the Clinical Neurosciences Committee and
- Staff Development and Athena Swan Committee

If you have any concerns or feedback on the DPhil. programme that you would like raised at the GSC or MSD GJCC, please contact the Student Club at student.club@ndcn.ox.ac.uk who will ensure that the matter is discussed.

This year's president and GSC rep is second year DPhil student Svenja Küchenhoff (<https://www.ndcn.ox.ac.uk/team/svenja-kuchenhoff>), with deputy and social secretary Jasmine Reese (<https://www.ndcn.ox.ac.uk/team/jasmine-reese>).

Academic Progression

Progress towards submission of your thesis is monitored in several ways:

- your main supervisor who provides continuous guidance and/or ensures that you have access to suitably qualified scientific staff within the laboratory;
- a recognised co-supervisor or post-doctoral advisor who will be formally identified to supervise your project, either within your group/Department or in another Department;
- the Director of Graduate Studies who will monitor your academic progression and broader skills training via milestone forms and the Graduate Self-Reporting system (see below);
- a college tutor who oversees general progress and can also offer advice independent of the Department.

At the start of your studies you will meet with your supervisor(s) to discuss your research project, identify key milestones that need to be met during your DPhil./MSc. and complete the DPhil./MSc. Supervisor and Student meeting form. Together, you should complete the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) form and identify workshops and seminars to support

progress. Termly reporting using the Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) system is crucial in keeping everyone informed. Your TNA form must be uploaded to GSR when you report on your progress during your first term

Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR)

Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) is used by graduate students, supervisors, college advisors, and Course Directors/DGSs to review students' academic progress 4 times per year (once per term and another window during the Long Vacation). Access to GSR for students is via Student Self Service <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/selfservice>. Students 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. Further information can be found at:

<https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/student-systems/gsr-reporting-evision>

It is strongly recommended that you complete a self-assessment report every reporting period. If you have any difficulty completing this you must speak to your supervisor or Director of Graduate Studies. Your self-assessment report will be used by your supervisor(s) as a basis to complete a report on your performance this 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. GSR will alert you by email when your supervisor or DGS has completed your report and it is available for you to view.

Use this opportunity to:

- review and comment on your academic progress during the current reporting period;
- measure your progress against the timetable and requirements of your programme of study;
- identify skills developed and training undertaken or required (via the TNA form in GSR for research programmes);
- list your engagement with the academic community;
- raise concerns or issues regarding your academic progress to your supervisor; and
- outline your plans for the next term (where applicable)

Students and supervisors are reminded that having a positive student-supervisor relationship is an important factor in student success. Research suggests that one of the strongest predictors of postgraduate completion is having expectations met within the student-supervisor relationship.

The student reporting window will open in 7th week, and will be open for three weeks. The supervisor reporting window will open in 10th week, and is only open for four weeks to encourage timely feedback.

The DGS will be able to add additional comments to a report where concerns have been flagged.

College advisors will be able to record how many meetings they have held with their students.

Research students will be able to complete the Divisional Training Needs Analysis (TNA) form in Student Self Service and add this to their GSR reports.

More nuanced flagging of concerns about academic progress (minor/major/severe) has been introduced.

Flagging concerns

Student concerns should relate directly to academic progress. If students are dissatisfied with any other aspects of provision e.g. their supervisory relationship or their working environment, they should raise these with the Director of Graduate Studies (or equivalent) in the first instance, and pursue them through the department's complaints procedure if necessary.

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

Directors of Graduate Studies should review all flagged concerns and take action as appropriate. A severe concern should result in a meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies and with the student and/or supervisor, as appropriate, without delay. Directors of Graduate Studies should briefly note any action being taken to resolve the matter.

- **Minor concerns** – Satisfactory progress is being made, but minor issues have been identified where further action may be required to keep progress on track.
- **Major concerns** – One or more factors are significantly affecting progress, and further action is required now to keep progress on track.
- **Severe concerns** – Progress is being seriously affected by one or more factors, and a meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies should be held as soon as possible to discuss further action to get progress back on track.”

Milestones

All students, DPhil and MSc (Res), are initially admitted as Probationary Research Students (PRS). There are two milestones that must be completed by DPhil students, Transfer of Status and Confirmation of Status; only Transfer of Status is required for MSc (Res) students who after that progress straight to submission.

The process for each is outlined below and in **figure 3** and more information can be found at <https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/courses/22105>.

We aim to hold virtual information sessions on both transfer and confirmation of status at appropriate times of the year; the date, time, and link will be circulated via the ndcn-postgraduateresearch mailing list. All relevant information is online, but it gives you an opportunity to ask questions of the DGS, the Academic Administration Manager, and sometimes (if we manage to find a volunteer) a student who has successfully completed the milestone.

Transfer of Status

Transfer of Status from PRS to DPhil./MSc.(Res) takes place before the end of the 4th term¹ and is a mandatory requirement. This important assessment procedure is to ensure that the foundations for your research project are in place. It consists of a written report and a viva with two assessors.

Process:

- 1) **Before** the transfer viva has been arranged obtain a GSO.2 MSD form (please ensure that you download the GSO.2 **MSD** form and **not** the standard GSO2 form). Students who started their course *after* 1 October 2016 are required to complete and submit an updated [Training Needs Analysis](#) (TNA) form as part of the transfer of status.
- 2) Your supervisor is expected to nominate two assessors and to ensure that they are willing to act. (**Note:** the supervisor is **not** permitted to be an assessor and **may not** be present at the transfer interview). The assessors must then be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies; at least one assessor **MUST** have seen an Oxford student to completion.
- 3) Ensure that the form is completed and signed by yourself, your supervisor(s), and your College. Then forward the form to graduate@ndcn.ox.ac.uk who will arrange for the DGS/Head of Department to sign it.

¹ Students on programmes hosted by the Medical Sciences Doctoral Training Centre have two years (six terms) in which to transfer to DPhil. status.

- 4) An assessors' report form will be forwarded to the assessors along with a copy of the Guidelines for Transfer of Status Assessors in the Medical Sciences.
- 5) You need to prepare a 5,000 word maximum (500 word maximum for MSc.(Res)) ($\pm 10\%$) written report outlining your project, including the abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, any appendices, and future plans, but excluding tables and references.
- 6) Please send a copy of your report directly to each assessor.
- 7) Arrange a suitable time for the viva with your two assessors. You will then undergo a formal appraisal with the assessors. Once the assessors' have completed their report and returned it to graduate@ndcn.ox.ac.uk, all the paperwork will then be forwarded to the Medical Sciences Board for approval. **The transfer procedure is not complete until this approval has been gained; you will be notified in writing by the MSD Graduate School Office once the procedure is complete.**

The possible outcomes are:

1. Transfer to DPhil./MSc.(Res) status without reservations
2. Transfer to DPhil./MSc.(Res) status if a satisfactory written response to this report is obtained
3. Student should make a 2nd attempt to transfer to DPhil./MSc.(Res) status in 1 term

If the outcome is (2) or (3) on your first attempt you will receive the assessors' written report explaining why you have fallen short of the standard required. You will be asked either to provide a written response within two weeks or to make a second attempt at transfer and will have an additional term to complete this (i.e. you will need to do this before the end of the following term).

After transfer from PRS to MSc. a student may apply for permission to supplicate for the MSc. degree at any time but not earlier than the 3rd and not later than the 9th term after the date of admission.

Confirmation of Status (for DPhil only)

The final milestone to complete as a DPhil. student before you can submit your thesis is Confirmation of Status. Confirmation of Status was introduced to give departments an opportunity to monitor the direction and progress of a DPhil. student's work in the period between transfer of status and submission of thesis. It is intended both to assess the progress of the research work and to support the work of a student and his or her supervisor(s) by ensuring that other members of the department with a responsibility for graduate students are aware of the state of the research in progress, and the likely timetable for submission.

This should ideally be completed in 8th term but **MUST** happen by the end of 9th term. It consists of a presentation followed by a *viva* with two assessors.

Process:

- 1) **Before** the Confirmation of Status examination a **GSO.14 MSD** form needs to be completed and must be signed by the student, supervisor(s) and College. The form should be sent to graduate@ndcn.ox.ac.uk who will arrange for the DGS/Head of Department to sign it. This should be accompanied by a detailed **Thesis Contents list** and a completed **TNA**.
- 2) Your supervisor is expected to nominate two assessors and to ensure that they are willing to act. (**Note:** the supervisor is **not** permitted to be an assessor and **may not** be present at the *viva*). The assessors must then be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies; at least one assessor **MUST** have seen an Oxford student to completion. If in any doubt they must check with Admin/DGS **before** completing the GSO.14 MSD and **before** arranging a date.
- 3) An assessors' report form will be forwarded to the assessors along with a copy of the completed GSO.14 MSD form, a detailed thesis contents list and TNA.
- 4) Arrange a suitable time with your two assessors. The assessment should be in the form of a presentation to a group with a session afterwards with the assessors.
- 5) **After** the assessment the assessors **must** email the completed assessment form to graduate@ndcn.ox.ac.uk.
- 6) It is then sent to the MSD Board for approval and the student is normally notified by email within 2 weeks of the outcome.

The possible outcomes are:

1. Confirmation of DPhil. status without reservations
2. Confirmation of DPhil. status with reservations – the student is required to submit a written response, complete a training course, or similar, as specified in the assessors report
3. Student should make a 2nd attempt to confirm DPhil. status in 1 term

If the outcome is (2) or (3) on your first attempt you will receive the assessors' written report explaining why you have fallen short of the standard required. You will be asked either to provide a written response within two weeks or to make a second attempt at confirmation and will have an additional term to complete this (i.e. you will need to do this before the end of the following term).

Note: You will usually only receive an assessors report if the outcome is (2) or (3).

Please ask if you have any questions at all as this is an important milestone and we endeavour to make it as stress-free as possible.

Submission of thesis

For candidates admitted to the status of Probationer Research Student, it is the University's expectation that a DPhil. thesis will be submitted within **twelve** terms (the work representing 'what may reasonably be expected of a capable and diligent student after three or at most four years of full-time study').

Candidates may apply for extensions of time beyond twelve terms, the maximum extension permitted for a DPhil. student is 6 terms, making 18 terms in all. The MSD Board will require such applications to include a full explanation of the reasons for the request, as well as the support of the student's supervisor, college and department. As a rule, the Board will not normally approve an extension of more than 1 term at a time, and if more time is still required, a further application would have to be made.

Candidates who are in receipt of Research Council awards must ensure that they know the date by which they are expected to submit. It is essential for the award of studentships to future generations of graduate students that every effort is made to submit by this date, or, if there are good reasons for suspension of status or extensions of time, these are **always** approved by the Research Council concerned as well as by the faculty or department. Such approval is necessary within the required submission period **even if a student is no longer receiving financial support.**

Students should submit the examiners' copies of their thesis online only, via Research Theses Digital Submission portal. A quick reference guide for Research Thesis Digital Submission can be found here https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/courses/22105/pages/the-thesis-and-submission?module_item_id=221321.

Hard copies of the thesis should no longer be submitted. Hard copies may only be requested by examiners from the Examination Schools, who will arrange for the thesis to be printed and sent.

Appointment of Examiners

The final form to be completed is a **GSO.3** form for the Appointment of Examiners. Notes on Guidance for Research Examinations' (**GSO.20a**) should be read before completing the form, which is now automated. The form should be completed by the student via the self-service system. It will then proceed through the automated system to the supervisor, the college and the DGS for signature. Finally, it will go to the Medical Sciences Board for approval. It is strongly advised to submit the form at least **six weeks prior** to the submission of the thesis. The examiners must be approved by the Medical Sciences Board

and then their formal acceptance needs to be received by the Examination Schools (who issue the formal invitations) before a thesis can be sent out.

Time specific viva

At the end of the GSO.3 form is section 8, Application for Time Specific Examination. Candidates may apply to the Board of the faculty or department concerned for the oral examination to be held not later than a certain date, provided that this date shall 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 agreed to act, whichever is the later. If the Board is satisfied that there are special circumstances justifying this application, it will ask the examiners to make arrangements to enable the oral examination to be held within the period specified.

In such cases the examiners, when invited to act, will be informed that the candidate has asked that the oral examination should be held not later than a certain date, and acceptance of the invitation to examine will be on the understanding that they would seek to meet this request. If it is not practical to meet the student's request, then the Board/department shall decide how to proceed.

Note: Students must ensure that they can be readily contacted by the Research Examinations Team so that, if examiners are unable to meet a request for a *viva* by a certain date, alternative arrangements can be discussed.

Where students wish to apply for a time-specific examination, the form should be submitted **BEFORE** the thesis so that the necessary approvals can be given in good time.

Viva Voce

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

The average length of time between submission and a *viva* is approximately eight weeks.

Deposit and consultation of thesis

Postgraduate Research students admitted on or after 1 October 2007 and who are granted leave to supplicate for the DPhil or MSc (Res) programmes are required to deposit a print and a digital copy of their thesis. The print copy of the thesis should be delivered to the Examination Schools for deposit in the Bodleian (or other appropriate University library) where it is intended to be available for consultation. The digital copy should be deposited by the author in the Oxford University Research Archive (ORA) see <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/> for details.

Progression forms

All forms can be found at

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

Please download the forms from here as they are always the most up to date, some are now online and are accessed via the Student Self Service portal; these are:

- GSO.2b: Defer Transfer of Status
- GSO.3: Appointment of examiners
- GSO.3c: Dispensation from consultation of the thesis
- GSO.4: Change of mode of study
- GSO.6: Change of title
- GSO.8: Dispensation from residence
- GSO.14b: Defer Confirmation of Status
- GSO.15: Extension of time
- GSO.29: Withdrawal

Exceptional circumstances

If you find yourself in exceptional circumstances and require appropriate adjustments to your study timescales and arrangements, following discussions with your supervisor and College Advisor, you will need to complete the appropriate form. Examples include deferral of milestones, extensions, suspensions, withdrawals and reinstatements.

Forms for exceptional circumstances can be found at

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

Useful Websites

Student self-service

www.ox.ac.uk/students/studentselfservice/

You will be able to register, view and update your personal and academic information throughout your studies at Oxford. You must register at the start of the course and each successive year.

You will be expected to use the Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) system to contribute to the termly reporting cycle by submitting a self-assessment report about your academic progress (see GSR section).

Students will also be able to complete a Training Needs Analysis form in Student Self Service.

You can log in to GSR from wherever you are, and it will work on mobile devices. When your reporting window opens, you will be sent an automated email notification, to remind you how to log in.

MSD Graduate School Canvas site <https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/courses/22105>

University of Oxford www.ox.ac.uk

NDCN www.ndcn.ox.ac.uk

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

MSD Graduate School www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/study/graduateschool

Colleges www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/colleges/college-listing

Examination Regulations <https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/>

Language centre <https://www.lang.ox.ac.uk>

The Language Centre is located in central Oxford and is a hub for all students, academic and professional staff who want to improve their language skills. Course, timetable and fee information can be found at the above link.

D.Phil. Student Career including submission and examination process

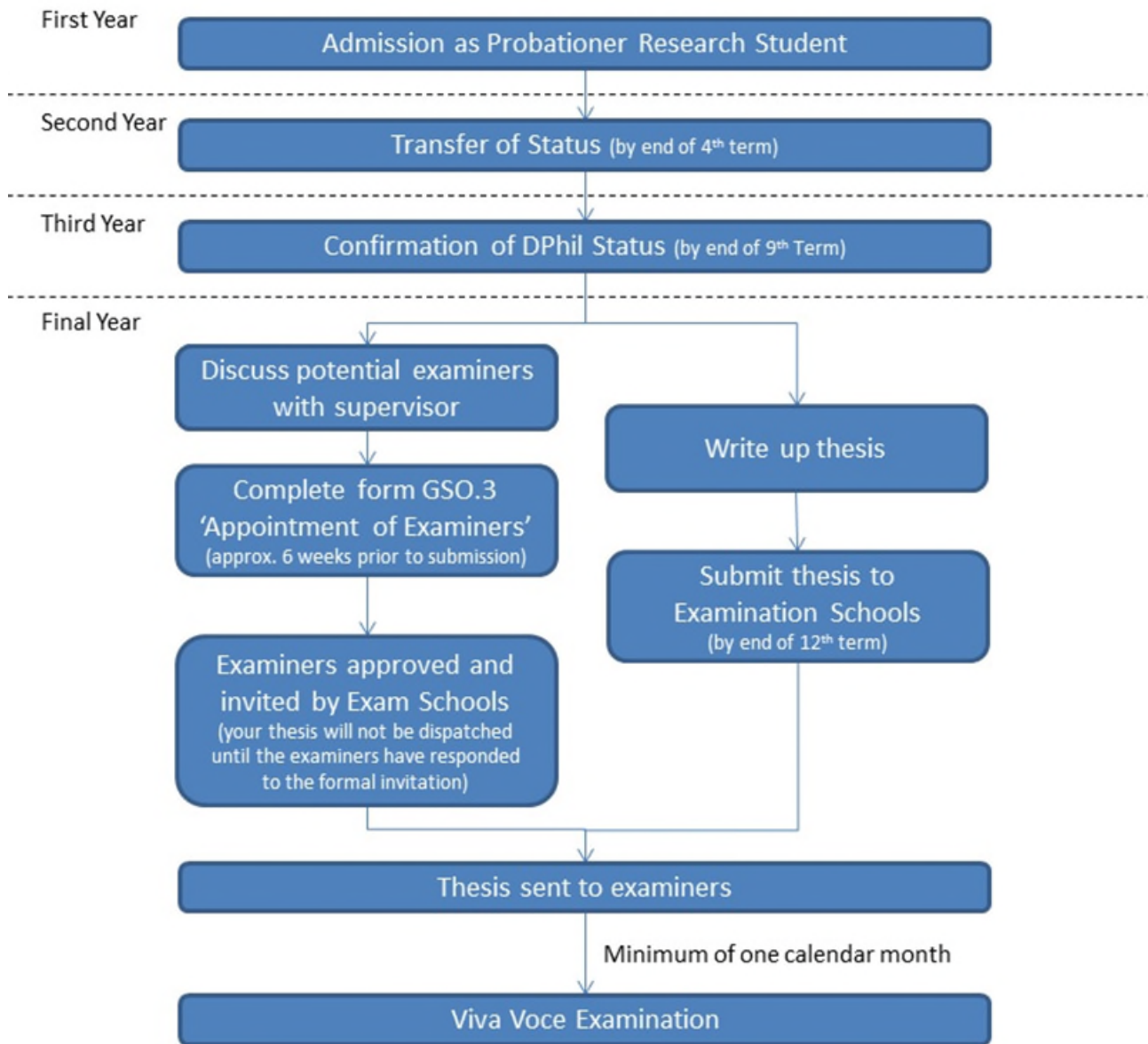


Figure 3 DPhil. Student Career

Teaching Opportunities

Students should normally have completed their transfer of status before participating in any teaching activities and it is the University's explicit policy that no PGR student should be allowed to teach without some form of initial training. At the very minimum, students should undertake a '[Preparation for learning and teaching at Oxford](#)' course, which is usually a half or full day in duration and is provided by divisions and departments/faculties. Students may also go on to complete the '[Developing learning and teaching](#)' course, which gives students (usually over the course of one term) the opportunity to: be assigned a teaching mentor; participate in teaching seminars; and undertake a limited number of teaching hours (advice is a minimum of seven contact hours) in order to compile a teaching portfolio for accreditation with the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA). These courses are generally hosted in the department, faculty or division with support from the Centre for Teaching and Learning (<http://www.ctl.ox.ac.uk>). Before participating in any teaching, students should first seek agreement from their supervisor.

There may be opportunities for 3rd or 4th year DPhil students to teach on the FHS/FHS Part II courses for undergraduate pre-clinical medics and biomedical science students. 3 of the 11 advanced option courses for finalists are neuroscience-based: Cellular Neuroscience, Systems Neuroscience, and Cognitive & Behavioural Neuroscience. Each of these options revolve around 4 themes; each theme contains six lectures and two seminars. Students are then expected to take a number of tutorials on topics they were particularly interested in. You can access a list of themes at [Themes 2023-24 \(11 options\).pdf: FHS Med Sci / FHS Part B Cell & Systems Biology and Neuroscience 2024 \(ox.ac.uk\)](#).

If you are interested in offering tutorials for any of these neuroscience options, please make email contact with the appropriate option organiser (Simon Butt, Trevor Sharp, or Simon Stringer respectively) to discuss your suitability. They can then refer you to the appropriate vetting/registration procedure to get you set up on the Tutorial Booking System. **Note that you should only do so if you have taken the [Divisional training on teaching tutorials](#) and are at least in the 3rd year of your DPhil.**

Project Supervision – Supervising lab-based research projects for students in the third year of the BA in Medical Sciences or the BA in Neuroscience/Cell and System Biology (or 4th year MBioMedSci students). It is common for a post doc or senior graduate student to be the day-to-day supervisor. For further details contact jo.valentine@medsci.ox.ac.uk.

Training

The Medical Sciences Division (MSD) aims to provide a full training programme for students undertaking DPhil. studies to ensure that you interact with people and experts outside the scope of your research project. Training is an essential part of your DPhil. studies and is monitored at both Transfer and Confirmation of Status.

Most of the initiatives and presentations provided by the MSD are optional and should be discussed with your supervisor. There are also Divisional and Departmental Seminars to attend and an Induction at the commencement of your studies.

Full details of the opportunities and courses available are provided on the MSD website: <https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/study/skillstraining>.

You can record evidence of your attendance at seminars, workshops, conferences, journal clubs, presentations or special events, in the back of this handbook. We suggest that you:

- Browse through the course catalogue and pick those recommended for your year of study
- Discuss suitable courses with your supervisor during your annual Training Needs Analysis
- Plan early as courses are run at different times of the year, and can get booked up
- Enrol via the website
- Make a note of any training you have completed in your training record

Compulsory courses

[Avoiding Plagiarism](#), [Research Integrity](#), and [Information Security](#) are mandatory courses that should be completed during your first term. You will be required to upload your certificates of completion to each of these tasks on the iPassport system.

You will also need to complete a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) form which should be uploaded with your first Graduate Supervision Report (GSR).

The TNA form is available from the Medical Sciences Graduate School Canvas site at https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/courses/22105/pages/training-needs-analysis?module_item_id=213344.

Careers advice and information

The University Careers Service offers a range of services, including seminars and training courses aimed specifically at DPhil students. The core programme includes:

- Career planning for DPhil students
- Networking skills for DPhil students
- CV and cover letter skills for DPhil students
- Interview skills for DPhil students

All seminars and one-to-one sessions are bookable through the Careers Service website using their Career Connect service: <https://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/using-careerconnect>.

The Careers Service also offers one-to-one advice sessions, which are held regularly in the Careers Service on Banbury Road, in the Science Area, the WIMM and the Old Road Campus. These are run by the dedicated [Careers](#) Advisor for Researchers.

A collection of profiles of people who have made the transition from academia to industry can be found here: <http://research-careers.org/>

You can find out more about the services the Careers Service provides on their website: <http://www.careers.ox.ac.uk>

Useful Oxford Acronyms

(Please see <https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/history/oxford-glossary> for some real eye-openers!)

Academic dress

Prescribed clothing to be worn on formal, official occasions, consisting of an appropriate gown/hood for the person's qualification and sometimes **sub fusc**.

See www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/48-012.shtml for full details of what form of dress is appropriate on which occasions.

Battels

Charges made to a member of a college (student or fellow) for accomm, meals, etc.

Confirmation

Confirmation of status – needs to be completed in 8th/9th term. For DTC students the requirement is by the 8th week of the 10th term.

DGS

Director of Graduate Studies. Member of a department's academic staff responsible for overseeing all aspects of graduate students' applications and study; separate from their academic supervisor

DPhil.

Doctorate of Philosophy. The PhD is known as the DPhil in Oxford.

Hilary

Hilary term, the second of the academic year's three terms - January to March.

Michaelmas

Michaelmas term, the first of the academic year's three terms – October to December.

MSD

Medical Sciences Division. One of the four academic divisions of the University.

OUH

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust: one of the largest NHS teaching trusts in the country, comprising the **Churchill** and **John Radcliffe** Hospitals and Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre in Oxford, and Horton General Hospital in Banbury. It provides a wide range of general and specialist clinical services and is a base for medical education, training and research.

Oxbridge

Oxford and Cambridge Universities.

PGR

Graduate student undertaking a course of postgraduate study via research, or such a course.

Postgraduate

Student who has already completed (at least) one university degree and is studying for another, higher degree. Often referred to as a **graduate** or graduate student.

Proctors

Two Proctors (Senior and Junior) are elected each year by colleges in rotation to serve for one year (cycle published in the **University Calendar**). The statutes provide that they shall generally ensure that the statutes, regulations, customs and privileges of the University are observed. They serve on the University's main committees and may receive papers and attend meetings of other committees. They have responsibilities under the statutes and regulations for aspects of student discipline, for ensuring the proper conduct of examinations and for dealing with complaints. They also carry out ceremonial duties at various ceremonies.

PRS

Probationary Research Students – all students are initially admitted as PRS.

Supplicate

Ask for a degree to be conferred at an award ceremony.

Transfer

Transfer of Status from PRS to DPhil or MSc (Res) student, should be completed by the end of 4th term. For DTC students, transfer is required by the end of a student's sixth term at Oxford.

Trinity

Trinity term, the third of the academic year's three terms – generally April to June.

UAB

University Admitting Body (the offer-making entity for graduates; this is NDCN for our DPhil and MSc (Res)).

Viva (*viva voce*)

Oral examination, especially that at the end of a **DPhil** course.

Student conduct

Students at Oxford are subject to two separate (but complementary) sets of disciplinary regulations: the rules and by-laws of your college provided in your college handbook, or equivalent document, and the University's conduct regulations. Details can be found here: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/conduct>.

Plagiarism

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

Guidance can be found at www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism and of course you will be required to take the 'avoiding plagiarism' course soon after you start. It will be assigned to you on iPassport.

Conflict of Interest

The University has a statement of policy and procedure on conflict of interest which can be found at:

<https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/integrity/conflict/policy>

We reproduce here the section on declaring a conflict of interest:

6.1. It is the duty of every member of staff or student to disclose any conflict of interest or any circumstances that might reasonably give rise to the perception of conflict of interest.

6.2. The general rule, with the exception of committee business (see paragraph 6.6), is that disclosure should be made at the time the conflict first arises, or it is recognised that a conflict might be perceived, in writing to the head of department (or equivalent). If the head of department (or equivalent) has an interest in the matter to be discussed, the declaration shall be made to the person at the next higher level of authority. In most cases this will be to the head of division. For University senior officers, the line of approval is noted in Council's Standing Orders.

6.3. Additional steps are required in certain circumstances. These are outlined in Appendix A (and relate to research students receiving support from a company in which their supervisor has a financial interest or where results or IP are related to company activity; biomedical/clinical research, as well as any other research carried out by staff or students

who have financial interests in a company working in the same area; involvement in spinouts and other external ventures; and the sale, supply or purchase of goods/services).

6.4. Undergraduate students should discuss the relevant issues with their tutor or senior tutor, who, where appropriate, will consult with the head of department before an approach for dealing with the conflict is agreed.

6.5. Postgraduate students should have this discussion with their supervisor. Where the conflict of interest arises between the interests of the supervisor and the student, the student should discuss the matter with the senior tutor or tutor for graduates in their college, or the director of graduate studies in their department.

6.6. Committee chairs and members: in addition to individuals acting in accordance with the Policy, governance of the University must also be conducted with close regard to the risks of financial and non-financial conflicts of interest. At their first meeting of the academic year, each committee within the University should have a standing item on their agenda about conflict of interest. This item should cover what a conflict of interest is and how the members of the committee should declare such an interest if and when such a circumstance arises. It is also recommended that committees adopt the practice of including a similar statement to the following in each agenda:

‘Members of [Name] Committee will be asked to declare any interest that could give rise to conflict in relation to any item on the agenda at the beginning of the item in question. All interests so disclosed will be recorded in the minutes of the Committee. If the chair of the meeting deems it appropriate, the member shall absent himself or herself from all or part of the Committee’s discussion of the matter.’

6.7. It is recommended that divisions and departments also adopt a version of the paragraph above for all relevant meetings.

6.8. Many situations will require nothing more than a declaration and a brief written record of that declaration, which must be held in the department’s records and which should be provided to the Conflict of Interest Committee on request.

Frequently Asked Questions

How long am I on the register as a graduate student?

Ordinarily, on admittance all students have four terms on the register holding “PRS” (Probationary Research Student) status. When a student transfers to **DPhil** status (no later than their 4th term) they are given another eight. When a student transfers to **MSc (by Research)** status they are given another five. Therefore DPhil students have twelve terms (and MSc by Research, nine terms) in total before they need to start applying for extensions. For some programmes, different time periods apply; for example, students on 4-year programmes in the Doctoral Training Centre have six terms on the register holding PRS. They should apply to confirm their DPhil status in their 9th term and not later than their 10th term; they have twelve terms on the register in total (including PRS status) before needing to apply for extensions.

Is there a residence requirement?

Yes. The University *minimum residence requirement* for **DPhil** is six terms (for MSc (Res) three). Therefore, you *must* spend six terms (MSc - three) in residence in Oxford. Students wishing to be dispensed from this requirement must apply to the University using form GSO.8. The minimum residence for a “term” is forty-two nights in Oxford within a specified period.

What is the minimum amount of time in which I can complete a DPhil / MSc (Res)?

DPhil - Six terms. MSc by Research - Three terms.

For how many terms do I pay?

Ordinarily, DPhil. students pay a *minimum* of six terms and a *maximum* of nine terms fees. Exceptions apply for some programmes – e.g. students on 4-year programmes in the Doctoral Training Centre. MSc. by Research students pay a *minimum* of three terms and a *maximum* of six terms’ fees. See <https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-for-postgraduate-research-students/finance>.

Do I pay fees even if I finish my research before the ninth term (for DPhil) or sixth term (for MSc by Research)?

DPhil. (and MSc.) students are liable for fees up to their maximum (see above) or up until the submission of their thesis (whichever is the sooner). A thesis submitted during a vacation is deemed to be submitted during the previous term. For example, a thesis submitted on Friday, 8 October 2021, will be regarded as a Trinity Term 2021 submission. A thesis submitted on Monday, 11 October 2021 will be regarded as a Michaelmas Term 2021 submission and the student is liable for fees for Michaelmas Term.

When does my registration with the University come to an end?

Once a student has transferred to DPhil or MSc (by Research) status you are registered for the DPhil or MSc until you are given leave to supplicate for the DPhil or MSc (Res) by the Medical Sciences Board.

To whom and how should I pay my fees?

This varies. If you have a funding package, it will usually be made clear in the award letter how this will get sorted (this could, but doesn't have to, involve the department). If you are self-funding, your College will invoice you. The University then invoices the College.

What help can I get with funding?

Try your department and college. Also, for scholarships and funding information, see <https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding>.

Hardship funds. The University's Committee on Student Hardship makes awards on the grounds of **unforeseeable** hardship and may provide help in the form of a grant or loan, depending on the applicant's circumstances. See <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding/assistance/hardship>.

What/how many milestones do I undergo during my graduate career?

Besides regular monitoring undertaken by your supervisor and department, the University checks your progress twice – your transfer to DPhil status (or MSc by Research) and, secondly, the confirmation of your DPhil status. **Please note:** a student **cannot submit a thesis** until their DPhil status has been confirmed.

How do I formalise a change in supervisor or the addition of a co-supervisor?

The Medical Sciences Board must approve any change in supervision arrangements. You will need to complete and submit a [GSO.25 form](#) to the Academic Administration Team at graduate@ndcn.ox.ac.uk.

How do I start to arrange my examination?

It is advisable to **apply for the appointment of examiners at least six weeks** before submitting a thesis to avoid delays in the examination process. See <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/research>.

When can I use 'DPhil' after my name?

You can only use DPhil after your name and Dr before your name when you have had the degree formally conferred either in person or in absentia at a degree ceremony. Speak to your College about attending a ceremony. You cannot attend a ceremony until you have been given leave to supplicate by the Medical Sciences Board and you have submitted a

copy of your thesis to the University. See more at <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/research>.

How do I go about getting/renewing my University card?

Your University Card will have been sent to your college once you signed and returned your student contract. You should collect it from your college on arrival. For University card matters, see <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/card/>.

Where can I get a certificate to prove I am member of the University?

Once your University registration is complete an enrolment certificate will be available to print from Student Self Service confirming your enrolled status at the University of Oxford for the current academic year. This certificate may be used for council tax exemption, opening a bank account, by international students who need to register with the police, and to confirm your student status for other purposes e.g. to show a financial sponsor or a landlord when renting private property.

Site map of the JR hospital



John Radcliffe Hospital site map

