



Department of Computer Science

Hilary Term 2013

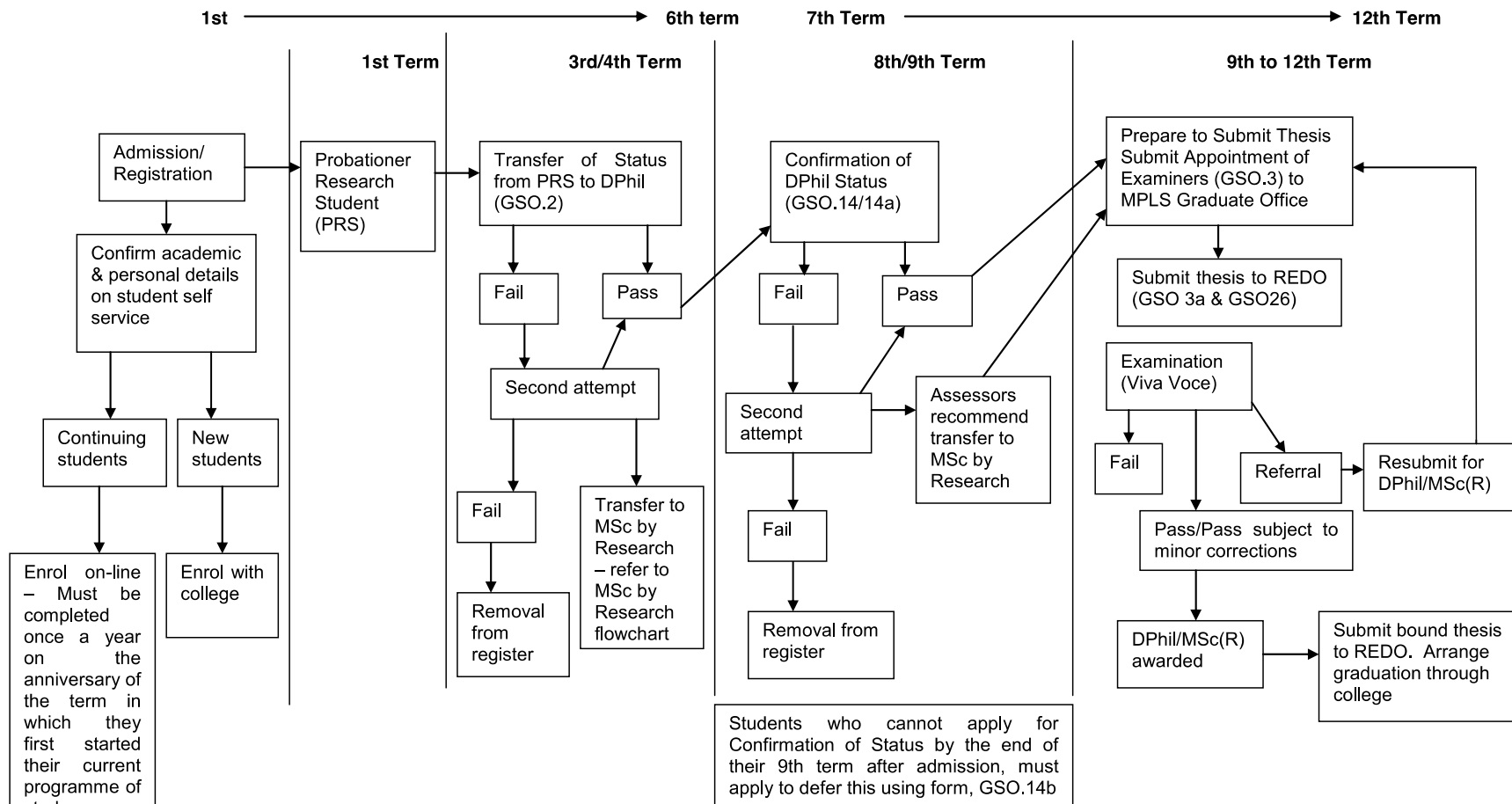
How to Apply for Confirmation of DPhil Status

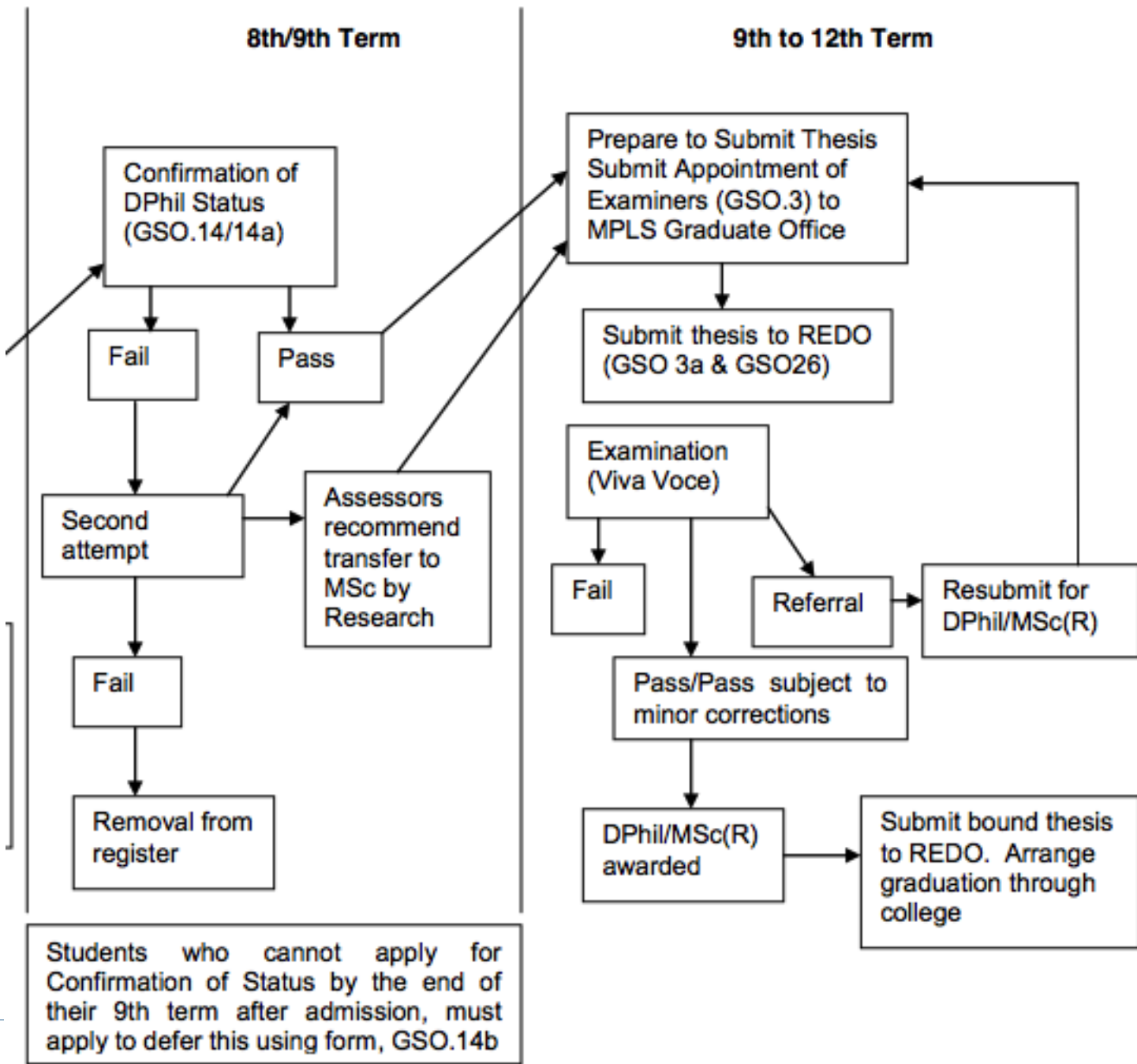
David Kay, Deputy DGS

Your Oxford DPhil: three Milestones

1. Transfer to DPhil status examination **within 4 terms**
2. Confirmation of DPhil status examination **within 9 term**
 - ▶ Submit progress report, thesis outline & timetable
 - ▶ 2 assessors (not supervisor)
3. DPhil thesis submission and examination **within 12 term**
 - ▶ External and internal examiners.
 - ▶ Viva voce, in subfusc.

MPLS Progress Flowchart for DPhil Students





DPhil completion rate: DCS improving but can do better...

The charts and tables show submission rates for students who have studied for 48 months or more. Students who started their programme less than 48 months before the snapshot date are excluded, whether or not they have submitted their thesis.

Note: because some students are omitted from the calculations, rates on this sheet are not "official". For submission rates that include the complete cohort, see Sheet 9a,b,c

N.S. = "Not submitted"

students (in Division chart)
20 1,490

students (in UAB chart)
8 210

Snapshot date

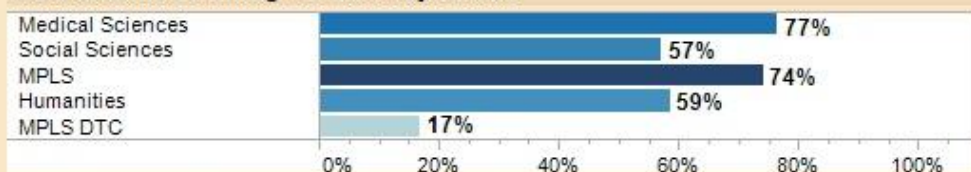
3 December 2012

Cohorts in dataset

2003-2012

2. Submissions: rates by Division and UAB (all cohorts)

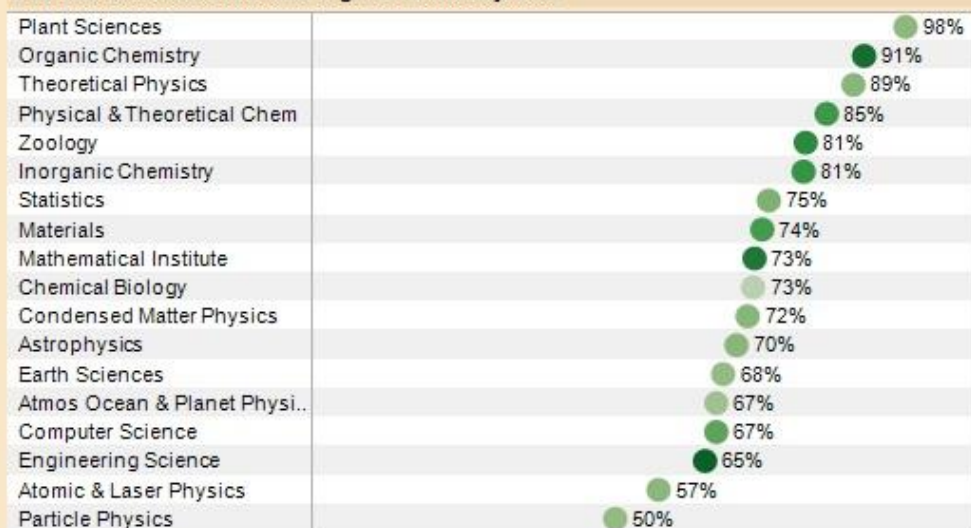
i. % of students submitting <48 months by Division



Select a division to update UAB chart below:

MPLS

ii. MPLS: % of students submitting <48 months by UAB



Detail (months)

<=48	>48	N.S.	Total
991	216	88	1,295
791	367	227	1,385
1,490	360	159	2,009
702	265	231	1,198
20	71	28	119
3,994	1,279	733	6,006

<=48	>48	N.S.	Total
46	1	1	47
183	11	7	201
50	4	2	56
101	12	6	119
127	21	8	156
107	16	9	132
58	16	3	77
98	23	11	132
162	36	24	222
8	2	1	11
51	14	6	71
49	18	3	70
40	12	7	59
30	8	7	45
82	28	13	123
210	81	33	324
48	29	7	84
40	29	11	80

Confirmation: Why & When

- ▶ Why confirm?
 - ▶ **Feedback** from assessors on the overall direction
 - ▶ **Address problems** before submission
- ▶ When to confirm?
 - ▶ Expected completion **within 9 terms (application due 0th week of 9th term)**
 - ▶ Exceptionally, supervisor applies to DGS for deferral
 - ▶ Ideally confirm **6–12 months** before submission
 - ▶ Can hold DPhil status for **maximum of 12 terms**
 - ▶ Status lapses & **formal review** by DGS panel if not confirmed within 12 terms
 - ▶ NB. can**not** submit without confirmation

Criteria of Confirmation

- ▶ Satisfactory progress to date e.g. **publications**
- ▶ Research activities and training e.g. seminar and conference presentations
- ▶ **Ability to submit within 3 terms**
- ▶ Evidence that thesis is “in the bag”: ability to write and talk about work with authority
- ▶ Evidence that it is your own work (must clarify your contribution to joint papers)
- ▶ ... does not matter if the research changed direction since transfer, assessors want to hear your story...

What to Submit for Confirmation

1. Progress report

- ▶ *Either* **brief report with publications as appendices**, *or* latest **draft** of dissertation
- ▶ List of **conference/seminar presentations**, etc

2. Table of contents of dissertation

- ▶ A statement of the thesis
- ▶ List of chapter and section headings: brief description of contents and status

3. Plan and schedule of completion

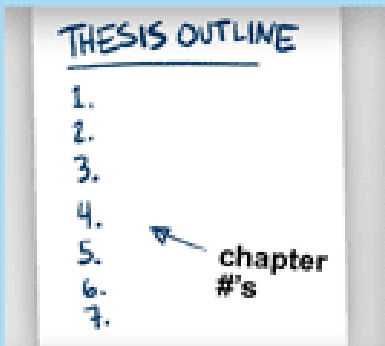
- ▶ Clear and feasible without open-ended problems
- ▶ Allow 6 months for write-up

A Take on Thesis Outline

WRITING YOUR THESIS OUTLINE

NOTHING SAYS "I'M ALMOST DONE" TO YOUR ADVISOR/ SPOUSE/PARENTS LIKE PRETENDING YOU HAVE A PLAN

STEP 1 Aim for a respectable number of chapters:

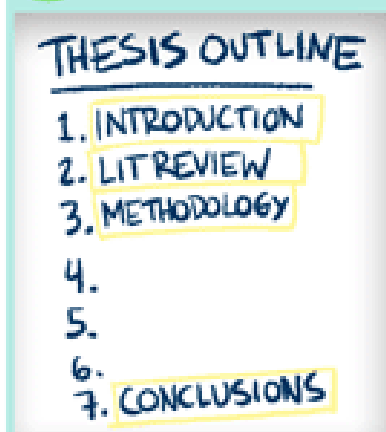


THESIS OUTLINE

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
4. ← chapter #'s
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

5 = "That's IT??"
6-7 = "Not bad"
8+ = "Are you crazy??"

STEP 2 Fill in the "freebies":

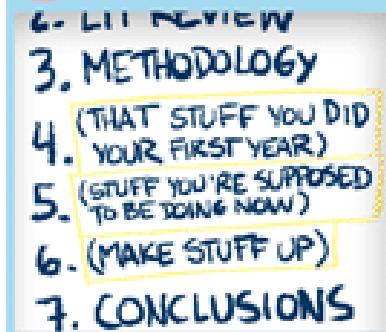


THESIS OUTLINE

1. INTRODUCTION
2. LIT REVIEW
3. METHODOLOGY
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
7. CONCLUSIONS

You're half way done!

STEP 3 Make up titles for the "meat" chapters:



2. LIT REVIEW
3. METHODOLOGY
4. (THAT STUFF YOU DID YOUR FIRST YEAR)
5. (STUFF YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DOING NOW)
6. (MAKE STUFF UP)
7. CONCLUSIONS

(It'll be years before you actually have to work on that later chapter, and by then your thesis topic will have changed anyway)

STEP 4 Voilà! You just bought yourself another two years



So, how's your thesis going?
i have an outline!

JORGE CHAM © 2006

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The Confirmation Process

- ▶ Submit DPhil confirmation forms & document
- ▶ Viva by two assessors
- ▶ Must convince them:
 - ▶ your research has yielded significant **original contribution** to knowledge worthy of DPhil
 - ▶ you have a feasible and clear **plan** to complete the research and write-up
- ▶ If pass, proceed to submission
- ▶ If fail
 - ▶ revise and resubmit, usually within one term
 - ▶ ... unlikely to fail if handbook advice followed
- ▶ If fail 2nd attempt
 - ▶ either outright failure or transfer to MSc by Research

Some Advice

- ▶ Your motivation and commitment essential
- ▶ Remember: confirmation is
 - ▶ A milestone that takes you to the final stage
 - ▶ **Insufficient** progress and **too much of a perfectionist** equally bad
- ▶ Seek advice of your supervisor(s) and DGS if necessary
- ▶ Consult regulations for process, deadlines and forms
- ▶ If you feel things are going wrong...
 - ▶ Talk to supervisor
 - ▶ Talk to department advisor / in-college advisor
 - ▶ Talk to Julie Sheppard and / or DGS

Sources of Information

- ▶ The Graduate Research Student handbook
 - ▶ DCS and Computer Science specific
 - ▶ Available on the DCS webpage
 - ▶ <http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/teaching/dphil/>
- ▶ MPLS handbook
 - ▶ Essential information about the process, forms to fill, deadlines, etc
 - ▶ <http://staging.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/sites/default/files/Handbook%20FINAL%202012-2013.pdf>
- ▶ The ‘Grey Book’
 - ▶ Authoritative, but MPLS handbook more detailed on regulations and code of practice