



DEPARTMENT OF  
**COMPUTER  
SCIENCE**

# **MSc COMPUTER SCIENCE**

## **COURSE HANDBOOK 2014**

<b>1</b>	<b><u>Preface.....</u></b>	<b><u>5</u></b>
<b>2</b>	<b><u>Introduction.....</u></b>	<b><u>6</u></b>
2.1	THE DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE, THE UNIVERSITY, THE DIVISION AND THE COLLEGES.....	6
2.2	SUPPORT STAFF.....	6
2.3	THE DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE.....	7
2.3.1	THE WOLFSON BUILDING	7
2.3.2	THE ROBERT HOOKE BUILDING	7
2.3.3	COMPUTING RESOURCES	8
2.3.4	COMMUNICATION AND ELECTRONIC MAIL	8
2.3.5	ACCESS TO COURSE MATERIAL PAGES FROM OUTSIDE OX.AC.UK	8
<b>3</b>	<b><u>Your Supervisor.....</u></b>	<b><u>10</u></b>
<b>4</b>	<b><u>MSc in Computer Science.....</u></b>	<b><u>11</u></b>
4.1	AIMS .....	11
4.2	COURSE SELECTION .....	11
4.3	SYNOPSIS .....	13
4.4	HOURS OF STUDY.....	13
4.5	TIMETABLES .....	13
4.6	TUTORIAL CLASSES.....	13
<b>5</b>	<b><u>Practicals.....</u></b>	<b><u>14</u></b>
5.1	PRACTICAL SESSIONS .....	14
5.1.1	TIMETABLE	14
5.1.2	ATTENDANCE	14
5.2	WRITING PRACTICAL REPORTS .....	14
5.3	SIGNING OFF PRACTICALS .....	15
5.4	ASSESSMENT OF PRACTICALS .....	16
5.5	LATE PRACTICALS.....	17
5.6	DIFFICULTIES.....	17
<b>6</b>	<b><u>Assignments and Written Examinations .....</u></b>	<b><u>18</u></b>
6.1	TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENTS .....	18
6.1.1	SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS	18
6.1.2	PREPARING ASSIGNMENTS	18
6.2	WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS .....	19
6.2.1	PREPARATION	20
6.2.2	PROCEDURE FOR WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS	20
6.2.3	ENTERING FOR EXAMINATIONS	21
6.2.4	NOTICES TO CANDIDATES	21
6.3	MARKING AND CLASSIFICATION.....	21
<b>7</b>	<b><u>Projects.....</u></b>	<b><u>22</u></b>
7.1	CARRYING OUT THE PROJECT.....	23
7.2	DISSERTATIONS .....	24
7.2.1	STRUCTURE	24
7.2.2	CONTENT	25
7.2.3	LENGTH AND EFFORT	26

7.3	WRITING SKILLS .....	26
7.4	SATISFYING THE EXAMINERS .....	27
7.5	FACTORS IN ASSESSMENT .....	27
7.6	VIVA VOCE.....	28
7.7	MARKING ASSESSMENTS .....	28
7.8	THE EXAMINATION SCHOOLS .....	29
<b>8</b>	<b><u>If things go wrong.....</u></b>	<b><u>30</u></b>
8.1	FAILURE AND RESITS.....	30
8.2	DIFFICULTIES.....	31
8.3	FEEDBACK.....	31
8.4	STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE.....	31
<b>9</b>	<b><u>Communications .....</u></b>	<b><u>32</u></b>
9.1	UNIVERSITY GAZETTE AND OXFORD BLUEPRINT .....	32
9.2	PUBLICATIONS .....	32
9.3	GENERAL INFORMATION.....	32
9.4	SEMINARS.....	32
<b>10</b>	<b><u>Careers.....</u></b>	<b><u>33</u></b>
<b>11</b>	<b><u>Holidays .....</u></b>	<b><u>33</u></b>
<b>12</b>	<b><u>Doing a Research Degree at Oxford after the MSc .....</u></b>	<b><u>33</u></b>
<b>13</b>	<b><u>Department of Computer Science - General Information .....</u></b>	<b><u>35</u></b>
13.1	ROOM NUMBERING .....	35
13.2	OPENING HOURS .....	35
13.3	ACCESS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE .....	36
13.4	RULES .....	36
13.5	TEACHING ROOMS, PARTICULARLY ROOM 379 .....	36
<b>14</b>	<b><u>Computers .....</u></b>	<b><u>37</u></b>
14.1	USING YOUR OWN COMPUTER .....	38
<b>15</b>	<b><u>Printing.....</u></b>	<b><u>38</u></b>
<b>16</b>	<b><u>Photocopying .....</u></b>	<b><u>38</u></b>
<b>17</b>	<b><u>Safety.....</u></b>	<b><u>39</u></b>
<b>18</b>	<b><u>Staff Members.....</u></b>	<b><u>39</u></b>
<b>19</b>	<b><u>Liaison with academic staff .....</u></b>	<b><u>39</u></b>
<b>20</b>	<b><u>Library.....</u></b>	<b><u>39</u></b>
<b>21</b>	<b><u>Harassment.....</u></b>	<b><u>40</u></b>
<b>22</b>	<b><u>University Club.....</u></b>	<b><u>40</u></b>

<b><u>A.</u></b>	<b><u>Safety Information .....</u></b>	<b><u>41</u></b>
<b><u>B.</u></b>	<b><u>Application for Computer Resources on Department of Computer Science Facilities .....</u></b>	<b><u>49</u></b>
<b><u>C.</u></b>	<b><u>Regulations Relating to the Use of Information Technology Facilities.....</u></b>	<b><u>52</u></b>
<b><u>D.</u></b>	<b><u>Rules and Regulations Concerning use of Department Equipment.....</u></b>	<b><u>52</u></b>
<b><u>E.</u></b>	<b><u>University of Oxford - Code of Practice Relating to Harassment .....</u></b>	<b><u>55</u></b>
<b><u>F.</u></b>	<b><u>University Policy on Intellectual Property Rights.....</u></b>	<b><u>56</u></b>
<b><u>G.</u></b>	<b><u>Equal Opportunities .....</u></b>	<b><u>56</u></b>
<b><u>H.</u></b>	<b><u>Notes of Guidance for MSc in Computer Science Students and their Supervisors .....</u></b>	<b><u>56</u></b>
	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SUPERVISOR: .....</b>	<b>56</b>
	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b><u>I.</u></b>	<b><u>Advice and Guidance on MSc Projects.....</u></b>	<b><u>58</u></b>
<b><u>J.</u></b>	<b><u>Plagiarism.....</u></b>	<b><u>61</u></b>
<b><u>K.</u></b>	<b><u>Complaints and academic appeals within the Department of Computer Science .....</u></b>	<b><u>65</u></b>

# 1 Preface

This Course Handbook is designed for MSc in Computer Science students. It also contains general information about the Department, people, facilities and safety. *Please pay particular attention to the safety pages.*

The information here is designed to be general and relevant throughout your time at Oxford; further information on courses, practicals and projects will be given to you and/or made available on our web pages at appropriate times. Whilst we have tried to make information about examinations as accurate as possible, the final authority on examinations and other academic regulations is *University of Oxford Examination Regulations* (the “grey book”),

See [http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/Computer\\_Science.shtml](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/Computer_Science.shtml)

Comments on the contents of this handbook are always welcome, so please do not hesitate to send a note to any of us if you can think of ways to improve the next issue.

Shoshannah Holdom (currently on Maternity Leave)  
Leanne Carveth (Maternity Cover)  
Academic Administrator

Stephen Pulman  
Director of Graduate Studies

Julie Sheppard  
Graduate Studies Administrator

James Worrell  
Director of M.Sc. in Computer Science

**Welcome!** You have chosen to study at one of the world's leading centres for the development, application and teaching of computer science. You join a rapidly expanding group of researchers, lecturers, visitors and students who have been attracted to Oxford from all over the world.

The Department of Computer Science’s reputation ranges from its fundamental research into computing methods and languages through to practical solution of engineering and scientific problems on the latest highly parallel computer architectures. Our wide-ranging collaborative work with leading industries in this country has been twice recognised by the rare honour of a Queen's Award for Technological Achievement.

During your study at Oxford, we hope to share with you some of the understanding which we have gained, both by our research into basic theory and by industrial collaboration. We hope too that you will be able to share with us - and with each other - our enthusiasm for the subject, and will enjoy developing your talents in this field. The development of computing at Oxford has been heavily supported by donations and sponsorship from our industrial partners. We have devoted our best efforts to the design of the courses you will take and to the perfection of our lecturing and teaching skills; when you leave, we are confident that you will have a sound basis for a productive and rewarding career.

This handbook aims to save time by giving you a certain amount of basic information which you would otherwise have to ask for or learn by experience, but it cannot tell you all you need to know. Do not be afraid to ask for further information or advice.

## **2. Introduction**

### ***2.1 The Department of Computer Science, the University, the Division and the Colleges***

The University of Oxford is organised both by department and by college.

The colleges are the oldest components of the University, some dating back to the twelfth century. Traditionally, the admission of students to Oxford and their academic and personal well-being is the concern of individual colleges. In arts subjects much of the teaching is organised on college premises and there is little need for divisional buildings or departments. For science subjects on the other hand, expensive equipment is needed and the University has the responsibility for providing common facilities for use by all students, particularly at the graduate level, just as it has always organised central examinations on their behalf. Thus the Department of Computer Science, like other Oxford science departments, is run by the University to provide central teaching and research facilities for members of all colleges.

The departments are grouped into divisions, which have responsibility for resource allocation, for academic policy, examinations, lectures and graduate admissions within a group of related departments. The Department of Computer Science belongs to the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division (MPLS).

Your college has allocated someone as your college advisor: this person should be your primary source of advice about college matters. Your college advisor may be a computer scientist, a mathematician or an engineer and should meet you each term to hear about your progress. Information gained from a personal contact is far better than any hand-out from an impersonal and central organisation, and it is to your college that you should, in the first instance, direct any queries or difficulties of a non-technical nature.

Most Tutorial Fellows of the colleges are also employed by the University as lecturers. Consequently our relationship with the colleges is a very close one and you may well meet your college advisor giving lectures or organising classes in the Department of Computer Science.

### **2.2 Support Staff**

The Academic Administration team at the Department of Computer Science are responsible for supporting all aspects of teaching and examinations and work closely with the academic staff to do this. You will receive communications from them from time to time throughout the year, usually with regard to lectures, classes, practicals, examinations and projects. Please ensure that you read these emails and memos and respond where necessary. They are also available should you need assistance and so if you think they can help you please contact them by email.

Academic Admin Team:

Shoshannah Holdom – Academic Administrator – currently on maternity leave

Leanne Carveth – Academic Administrator – maternity cover

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Brenda Deeley – Staff Secretary  
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Suzanna Marsh – Publicity and Schools Liaison Officer  
[suzanna.marsh@cs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:suzanna.marsh@cs.ox.ac.uk) Room 115

## **2.3 The Department of Computer Science**

The Department of Computer Science houses lecture theatres and seminar rooms in which most of the university lectures in Computer Science take place. It also runs a network of computers and other facilities devoted to teaching requirements and administers lectures, practicals, projects and some University-wide classes.

The head of the Department of Computer Science is Prof. Mike Wooldridge.

### **2.3.1 The Wolfson building**

The main building of the Department of Computer Science is the Wolfson Building which stands at the south-eastern corner of what is known as the Keble Road Triangle consisting of Keble Road, Banbury Road and Parks Road. All rooms on the basement floor are numbered with a number beginning with 0-, rooms on the ground floor (Level 1) with a number beginning with 1-, rooms on the first floor (including the Library) with a number beginning with 2-, and so on.

The reception desk is at the main entrance, which is on Parks Road. The Wolfson Building opens at 08:30 and the doors are locked at 17:15 Monday to Friday.

Lecture Theatre A is on the basement floor and Lecture Theatre B is on the ground floor: they can be reached through the door to the right of the main Parks Road entrance, as can the seminar room 051 and the Undergraduate Social Area (room 048). There are vending machines in the basement and a small kitchen which can be used to make hot drinks, but you are asked not to take food or drinks into lecture rooms, seminar rooms, computer rooms, or laboratories.

### **2.3.2 The Robert Hooke building**

The department has three seminar rooms in The Robert Hooke building; The Christopher Strachey Room, The Richard Bird Room and The Tony Hoare Room. These rooms will be used for classes and from time to time may be used for small lecture courses. The building is

located on Parks Road, to the right of the University Museum. The building can be accessed using your University card.

### **2.3.3 Computing resources**

The department's practical teaching resources are housed in room 379 in the Department of Computer Science and the Practical Laboratory (room 6.09) on level six of the Thom Building. You will be asked to complete an application form at the start of your course to use these computing facilities. You will be provided with this form in your induction pack,

You may have some prior knowledge of using computers; however you may not have specific experience with the type of systems available at Oxford. Therefore, at the start of the year, there are introductory sessions, designed to help you become more familiar with the systems and give you an opportunity to use the network and ask questions. Demonstrators are present at these sessions, giving you a chance to meet them and find out more about practicals.

Those courses which have practical work associated with them are supported by practical classes in the Practicals Laboratory throughout the term. These classes guarantee students exclusive access to the computing facilities they require to complete their work. Demonstrators are present at each class so that you can obtain help with the practicals as you are doing the work.

Although the computers are often booked for practical classes, there are times when these computers are available for students to use. This is mainly to facilitate work on projects. Many students also find it useful to be able to do further work on their practicals outside the normal practical times, or to take the opportunity to learn more about the facilities available.

### **2.3.4 Communication and electronic mail**

Oxford University IT Services automatically provide email facilities for all new students, at the same time as you are given a University Card. You will also register with the Department of Computer Science to use departmental computers for your course, and can use these accounts to send and receive e-mail.

E-mail is, generally speaking, a good way of contacting members of the Department of Computer Science and most of the other academic staff you will need to reach. Students will be expected to know how to use it and to check their e-mail frequently.

You will be allocated a pigeon hole in the post room which is just inside the main door of reception. Again, please check your pigeon hole on a frequent basis as there may be important information waiting for you.

Messages for staff may be left with the receptionist of the Wolfson Building or in their pigeon hole (Room 157)

### **2.3.5 Access to course material pages from outside ox.ac.uk**

There is a lot of course material on the Department web pages. This can be accessed from outside the Oxford domain, though it is password-protected.

If you try to access these pages from outside ox.ac.uk you will reach a page saying:



‘Teaching material pages are only accessible to registered students and staff of Oxford University connecting from a host in the ox.ac.uk domain’.

You should use your Single-Sign on username and password to access this material.

This material is made available for your use only (it is copyright of the authors). You should not pass it on to anyone else

### 3 Your Supervisor

You will be allocated an academic supervisor and an advisor both of whom are usually members of the academic or research staff in the Department of Computer Science. During term you are expected to remain in **close** contact with your supervisor. You should meet with your supervisor for at least half an hour once a fortnight. Guidelines for both student and supervisor can be found in Appendix H.

The following is an extract from the Graduate Studies Prospectus:

Whether you are taking a taught course, diploma or studying for a research degree, your academic supervisor will meet regularly with you to provide guidance and advice throughout your programme. A high degree of self-motivation is essential. Your supervisor will help you to construct a programme that allows you to optimise the benefits from the intellectual resources available but students should be prepared that the level of detailed teaching may be considerably less than they have experienced an undergraduate or graduate course taught elsewhere.

Each term your supervisor will prepare a report on your progress and a copy will be sent directly to you and to your college.

Oxford's approach to graduate study reflects an emphasis on the individual student's ability to work independently, to take the initiative in exploring a line of research, or in acquiring a new skill or in identifying and remedying a perceived area of weakness. Students pursuing degrees by research (MSc, MLitt, and DPhil) may attend such courses on specific research skills such as computer and statistical techniques, and supervisors will provide advice about the nature of research, sources available and the standards expected. Your supervisor will meet you at specifically agreed times if you encounter particular problems or difficulties that you need to discuss.

## 4 MSc in Computer Science

### 4.1 Aims

The MSc in Computer Science at Oxford has been designed to teach a range of advanced topics and a carefully selected core of foundational subjects to graduates of computer science and other numerate disciplines.

The course aims

- *To provide a challenging and supportive learning environment that encourages high quality students to reach their full potential, personally and academically.*
- *To provide the foundation for a professional career in the computing-based industries - including telecommunications, process control, business-, mission-and safety-critical fields.*
- *To enhance the skills of a professional who is already working in one of these industries.*
- *To provide a foundation for research into the theory and computing.*
- *To present knowledge, experience, reasoning methods and design and implementation techniques which are robust and forward-looking.*

Entrants to the course will come from a variety of backgrounds. Experienced programmers in industry and commerce will be motivated by the need for formal methods to overcome the problems of unreliable and inadequate software, or may wish to extend their understanding by studying new programming and development paradigms. Recent graduates in Computer Science will want to supplement their knowledge with the kind of sound mathematical basis which is not always found in undergraduate courses. Graduates in Mathematics, Science and Engineering will want to apply their training in the context of a rigorous application of the fundamental techniques of Computer Science.

On subsequent employment, graduates of the course will be able to select techniques most appropriate to their working environment, adapt and improve them as necessary, establish appropriate design standards and sound practices for both hardware and software, pass on these standards and sound practices to colleagues and subordinates, and keep abreast of research and development.

### 4.2 Course Selection

We hope that you will make a suitable selection of courses from among the many interesting topics that we offer. The choice should be related to the area of your subsequent dissertation but should not overlap with courses you have followed during your undergraduate degree.

It is typical for students to study three courses in each term and those intending to study four courses should exercise caution. It is recommended that you do not undertake more than four courses in any one term.

To assist you in choosing courses, please consult the document “Selecting Options 2014-2015”

<http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/files/4904/Selecting%20Options.pdf>

This lists the various options, grouped into themes. These are only meant to reflect natural associations of ideas among courses. When considering them you should bear in mind the requirements of the MSc as stated in the Handbook. Thus while you may want to do several courses from one theme, you can expect that you will need to choose courses from different themes to meet the MSc requirements.

You are required to complete at least 28 units but no more than 34 units of assignments with a maximum of 12 units from Schedule A. Students must attain an average of at least  $\geq 50$  (pass) in the assignments or written examination in their best 28 units of topics.

Choices have to be made in advance, when you have least information on which to base them, so it is important to consult your supervisor. However you need to have an average of  $\geq 50$  in their best 24 units by the beginning of Trinity Term otherwise they will be deemed to have failed and will not be allowed to continue the course in Trinity Term.

A number of courses recommend pre-requisites; please check the relevant webpages. If you are in any doubt you should consult the course lecturer or your supervisor.

Some of our lecture courses have upper and lower limits on the number of students: between five and twenty is a usual range. If numbers fall outside this range you may be asked to make an alternative selection.

It is therefore a good idea to start discussing the choices with your supervisor as soon as possible during your first week at Oxford. Your choices have to be approved by the Director of the MSc and, in this respect, there are certain deadlines laid down in the regulations to which you must adhere.

**Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October** (Michaelmas Term, week 3) - You are required to submit your course selection form to the MSc Course Administrator for the courses you are planning to take in Michaelmas Term.

**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> February** (Hilary Term, week 3) - You are required to submit your course selection form to the MSc Course Administrator for the courses you are planning to take in Hilary and Trinity Term.

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March** (Hilary Term, week 7) - Submit your project registration form.

**Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April** (Trinity Term, week 1) - You must submit an essay about the background and objectives of your project together with a plan of work. This is a strict deadline and must be adhered to. You will receive more information at the beginning of Hilary Term about the procedure for selecting your project. Your supervisor during Michaelmas and Hilary Terms will also provide you with advice. If you are experiencing particular difficulty, you should contact the MSc Course Administrator or the Academic Administrator.

### **4.3 Synopses**

Synopses of the courses being offered can be found on our web pages at: <http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/teaching/courses/>

### **4.4 Hours of study**

Typically a student would attend between 8 and 12 hours of lectures, 4-6 hours of practicals and 3 hours of classes a week. In addition it is likely that students would complete 15-20 hours of private study each week. Students will be working during the vacation on their assignments and in the summer on their project.

### **4.5 Timetables**

These will be sent to you at the beginning of each term but can also be found on our web pages at: <http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/teaching.html>

### **4.6 Tutorial Classes**

Each lecture course will have associated tutorial exercises and, in most cases, practical exercises as well. You are expected to attend the tutorial classes and any practical sessions for the courses you wish to follow.

The lecturer will provide you with the tutorial exercises. Your work on these exercises must be handed in by the required deadline for assessment by the person running the tutorial classes for that subject.

The timetable for these classes (and the associated deadlines) will usually be published on the Minerva database, sign-up for classes is done entirely online at <https://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/minerva/>

There is usually one class per subject each week starting in week 2 or 3, so you are likely to be attending 3 or 4 tutorial classes a week from week 3 onwards. It is also likely that you will have to hand in the first set of work for each of these subjects early in week 2.

The marks from the tutorial exercises will be passed to your supervisor for information. A record will also be held centrally to provide the Examiners with information on the extent to which each candidate has pursued an adequate course of tutorial class work.

## **5 Practicals**

### **5.1 *Practical Sessions***

Practical classes for courses organised by the Department of Computer Science take place in the Practicals Laboratory on level six of the Thom Building or in room 379 in the Department of Computer Science, where demonstrators will be present to assist you in overcoming any difficulties. The purpose of practical exercises for the Computer Science courses is to help you make sure you understand the application to practical programming of the theory that is taught in lectures; demonstrators at the practical classes are there to help you get the most from the sessions.

#### **5.1.1 *Timetable***

Practicals usually start in week 2 of the term and there are normally four 2-hour sessions for each course during the term. During the first 2 weeks of the term you will be required to sign-up for a practical group. Most courses have 2 groups at different times in the week; you should choose the session that fits best with your timetable. Sign-up is done online using the Minerva database; you will be informed through the termly notices of how to sign up for classes and practicals. Sign up is on a first-come-first-served basis: there is a limit to the number of students in any group, which may mean you don't get your first choice of group.

There will usually be a number of exercises that you will need to complete for each course. For example, a course with two practical exercises might have a practical timetable as follows:

Weeks 2, 4    Classes for first practical exercise

Weeks 6, 8    Classes for second practical exercise

A similar pattern will be followed for each lecture course.

You might also need to work on the practicals in your own time, outside the scheduled practical sessions.

#### **5.1.2 *Attendance***

Attendance at practical classes is compulsory if you are to get full credit for practical work in the examinations. When you attend a practical class, you will find that specific machines have been reserved for the practical, and there will be a register for you to record your presence. You are expected to attend all the classes for each practical until you have completed it.

If you are unable to attend a practical session, for example because of illness, you should inform the demonstrator in charge; if possible before each session (the course web pages will tell you who is the demonstrator in charge.)

### **5.2 *Writing Practical Reports***

Each practical requires a report to be submitted for assessment. The report should not be a major burden: it is simply to provide evidence that you have done the work properly. Practical exercises usually give specific instructions as to what should be included in the practical report. In any case the following guidelines should be followed.

In many practicals, most of the report will be in the form of a program. Of course, you are expected to follow good programming practice:

- \* In a multi-module program, you should include some text explaining the role of each module, and the relationship between them;
- \* You should include suitable comments explaining the purpose of variables and procedures;
- \* You should also include comments to explain any interesting algorithms you have used: writing down an invariant will often help;
- \* You should make the code easy to read, for example by following standard indentation conventions, and by suitable use of white space;
- \* You should also include some evidence that the program works, for example by including sample output or screen shots: testing is a very important programming skill, and so you should show that you have considered suitable tests.

Many practicals will include specific questions for you to answer. Make your answers concise and relevant.

If the aim of the practical is to produce some experimental results, then you should present and discuss those. Do not just include pages and pages of numbers spewed out by the program. A concise summary is better, perhaps using another program to show the results are correct (by making a graph, say).

Try to avoid reproducing large volumes of code from the practical materials or repeating program code that you have already listed in the report. If a second program has to include the same procedure definition (say), just write "Procedure Sort(x) defined as before."

You are encouraged to write up reports on practicals as you do them during the term. The demonstrators will happily look at your reports and give you advice about them at the practical sessions, and will mark them there and then. It is perfectly acceptable to have your report marked at one practical session, then do further work on the practical and submit an improved report by the deadline. Please note that you must turn up at the beginning of the session in which you wish your practical to be marked; the demonstrators will not have time and will not be willing to mark your practical if you turn up for only the latter part of the session.

You may want to produce the report using a text formatter like TeX or LaTeX, or a word processor running on your personal computer. Be careful that the time you spend in formatting the document prettily does not distract you from getting the content right. A cogent, concise, neatly hand-written report is preferred to pages of word-processed verbiage. If you do produce a typed report, please ensure that it is legible, with adequate margins and with type that is no smaller than 10 points. While working on your practical, keep a record of the tests you performed on your program, so that you can easily copy relevant data into your report.

Do not copy any other person's practical report. You may have general discussions with other students about the practicals, but the code, test data and report must be all your own work. Please see the section on Plagiarism in Appendix J in this handbook for more details.

### **5.3 Signing off Practical**

In order to have the demonstrator record that you have completed the practical, you must show them that you have done the work, perhaps by demonstrating a working program. In the ordinary way of things, you will have done the work in the lab with the demonstrator's

help, and he or she will be able to check quickly that you have finished. You may prepare your practical work in advance of a practical class and bring it for checking at the class, but the demonstrators will not check off your work unless you have been attending the practical classes.

#### **5.4 Assessment of Practicals**

When you have completed the work for a practical and the report on it, a demonstrator will check and mark your work at a practical session. The demonstrator will ask you first to show that you have done the work, leaving aside any optional parts, and will record this fact in their register, together with your attendance at practical sessions. If a practical turns out to be very long or difficult, the demonstrators (with the advice of the course lecturer) may record the practical as complete if you have done a reasonable amount of work, even if you have not finished it.

The demonstrator will also mark your report, either at the practical session if there is time, or by taking it away and returning it later. The practical report will be marked, taking into account whether you have done any optional parts, as well as the quality of your write-up, and the general difficulty of the practical exercises. As a general guide, even an incomplete report on each practical in the course gains more credit than one where some practicals are entirely missing. Extra credit is awarded for completing optional parts of practicals, but not to such an extent that it is worth spending many hours finishing every optional part.

The following scale of marks is used by the markers; the descriptions attached to each mark indicate the rough level of performance expected, but may be adjusted to take into account the degree of difficulty of the practical exercise.

- S+     The student has either completed the compulsory parts of the exercise and submitted an exemplary report, or completed all parts of the exercise and submitted an adequate report.
- S       The student has completed the compulsory parts of the exercise and submitted an adequate report.
- S-     The student has completed only part of the exercise, or has submitted an inferior report.

Practicals are assessed in two ways: first, the demonstrators keep a record of who has attended the practical classes and completed each practical exercise associated with a lecture course; and second, you write a practical report that the demonstrators mark, and which you submit to the examiners.

The following percentages are allocated to the grades shown above:

- S+     100%
- S       70%
- S-     30%

In examinations, the marks for practicals are treated separately from those for written papers. Practical marks do not affect the class of degree that you will be awarded, provided that you achieve a pass mark. However if you fail to reach the required standard in your practicals the examiners may deem you to have failed the examination.



All the practical reports must be submitted to the examiners at the end of the year. You must submit them to the Examiners, via the Academic Administrator in the Department of Computer Science, by noon on Monday of Week 5 of Trinity Term; full details will be given nearer to that date. Note that reports should be anonymous: they should contain your candidate number, but not your name.

### **5.5 *Late Practicals***

Practicals are intended to support the lectures and tutorial work on a course, to help to impress material on your understanding, and to connect theory with practice. Accordingly, it is very much better to be doing the practicals for a lecture course at the same time as the other work on that course. Deadlines are set to help you to resist the temptation of putting off practicals.

Another advantage of doing your practicals during the scheduled classes is that the demonstrators are often able to spot problems that are affecting several people and do something about them, perhaps clarifying the instructions or providing a piece of missing information. If you do not attend the practical classes, you will not have access to this help.

Under the rules specified in the Examination Regulations, the Examiners will not take into account practical reports unless they have been "signed by a demonstrator". The demonstrators will sign the reports when they mark them.

The Examiners will give you no credit for practical work that was not submitted for marking by the deadline and signed by a demonstrator, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Likewise, the demonstrators will not mark work that is late, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

### **5.6 *Difficulties***

If you are having difficulties in your practicals please make sure you speak to your supervisor or a member of the academic admin team as soon as possible.

## 6 Assignments and Written Examinations

Lecture courses are examined either by take-home assignment or by written examination.

### 6.1 *Take-home Assignments*

At noon on Friday of week 8 of each term you will be given assignments for each of the lecture courses for which you have registered that term and which are examined in this way. For courses that are shared with the MSc in Mathematics and Foundations of Computer Science, the assignments will be given out on Monday of week 8. Typically you will be given two to three weeks to complete all the assignments. The deadline for completion will be indicated on the assignment.

**Note that the duration between the distribution and submission of assignments may vary by several days from term to term.**

#### 6.1.1 *Submission of Assignments*

Answers to the assignments should be submitted to the Chairman of Examiners via the Examination Schools to arrive by the date specified. Unless the answers are delivered by hand, students are advised to use registered post or a courier delivery service.

#### 6.1.2 *Preparing assignments*

An assignment will normally take the form of a tutorial sheet containing several questions on the course, and will contain bookwork questions and new exercises. While you are free to work until the hand-in date, the expectation is that you will spend around 3/4 days per assignment for topics under Schedules A and B, and around 4/5 days per assignment for topics under Schedule C, including preparatory reading.

Although the assignments may be carried out while you are resident in Oxford, some may be prepared over the Vacation period. Students who wish to complete their assignments away from Oxford should make sure that they have access to a computer.

Your answer to an assignment should not normally exceed 20 pages, (10 pages would be more typical). Write on one side of the paper only, and use standard A4. Write legibly and allow time to polish answers. Illegible and poorly laid out answers will be penalised more severely than in a standard 3-hour written exam. Typewritten or word-processed answers are acceptable, provided the mathematical notation is clear, but do not waste your precious time in presenting your answers in Word format or in LaTeX-ing your answers (unless you are accomplished at this).

You should aim to do significantly more than half of each assignment. If you complete less than half of an assignment, you should still hand it in. Even if you fail in that subject, the work will earn you credit in the overall assessment. Furthermore, your work may suggest remedial action to your supervisor.

If prior to submitting your exam entry form you think you will have trouble with completing all the assignments, consider dropping one of them altogether; discuss this with your supervisor. If you do decide to drop an assignment you must make sure you advise MSc Course Administrator. **However, you cannot withdraw once you have submitted the exam entry form.** If you fail to submit an assignment for one of the topics listed on your

Exam entry form, the Examination Schools will notify the Proctors that you have failed to submit an assignment. As a result, the Proctors may deem you to have failed the entire course.

When submitting your assignments you will have to complete a Declaration Form attesting that they are your own work, except where indicated. Failure to correctly acknowledge your sources is plagiarism, which is treated as a very serious disciplinary offence. The consequences of copying can never be remedied. Please consult (a) the University web site regarding plagiarism (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/epsc/plagiarism/index.shtml>), and (b) your supervisor if you are worried about possible suspicion of irregularity in examination procedures.

**You should not** show your assignment to, or discuss it with, any other student. **You should not** ask or seek to look at anybody else's work.

If you use material from any other source such as textbooks, lecture notes or the web then you should reference it explicitly at the relevant point. Your supervisor can give you guidance on proper referencing, or for more guidance see <http://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/200232/referencing>

You will not receive any credit for simply copying information verbatim because that displays very little understanding. The assessors will be more impressed if you synthesise information from a number of sources (properly cited, of course), and combine it with your own ideas.

If you fail an assignment, it is possible to remedy the situation later; but the consequences of copying can never be remedied. Please consult your supervisor or the Course Director if you are worried about any possible suspicion of any irregularity in examination procedures. The following link offers additional relevant advice:

<http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/goodpractice/>

When matters of plagiarism are reported to the Proctors, the investigations can be protracted and involve serious stress for the candidate(s) concerned. Penalties imposed can result in the assignment(s) being disregarded and this could ultimately mean failure of the degree course.

## **6.2 Written Examinations**

In 2014/15, the following courses will be examined by written examination at the following times:

Functional Programming	week 0, Hilary Term
Databases	week 0, Hilary Term
Object Oriented Programming	week 0, Hilary Term
Probability and Computing	week 0, Hilary Term
Intelligent Systems	week 0, Trinity Term
Computational Complexity	week 0, Trinity Term
Knowledge Representation & Reasoning	week 0, Trinity Term

### 6.2.1 Preparation

Your supervisor and the course lecturer will advise you about revision and practice. There will also be revision classes for courses examined in this way.

Past examination papers are a good guide to the sort of examination question that you might be set. A word of caution: the syllabus for examinations changes over time, and is certainly not determined by what has appeared in past papers.

Past papers can be found on the Web at:

<https://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/teaching/internal/papers/MSCinCS/2013/>

### 6.2.2 Procedure for Written Examinations

Your written examinations will be held in the Examinations Schools, on the High Street. Different papers take place in different rooms around the building, as detailed in the entrance hall.

***You must wear full academic dress (sub fusc, gown and cap) to attend public examinations, and you must bring your University card with you. Your College will advise you about academic dress. For further guidance, please see: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/guidance>***

You should make every effort to be on time for examinations. If you are not there at the start of the examination, attempts will be made to contact your College or the Department of Computer Science to find out why not. Generally speaking there is no insurmountable difficulty if you get there in the first half hour, although you will have less time to do the examination. For this reason, nobody may leave an examination until half an hour after it starts.

Desks are identified by your name and college, with the desks in alphabetical order of names, but you will need to know your candidate number so that you can write this (and *not* your name) on your script when you hand it in. For each paper that you sit you will be given a cover sheet on which you identify yourself by your candidate number, and the paper by its number and title. Although your college will provide you with your candidate number, it can also be viewed on Student Self Service. See the following for guidance and how to locate your candidate number: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/selfservice/>

The question paper will be on your desk when you go in to the examination. You should check that it is the paper that you have entered for, and you should carefully read the instructions on the cover, but you may not open it until told to do so. Read the wording of each question carefully, and make sure that you have not missed out any parts.

You will be provided with (probably) booklets of ruled A4 paper in which to write your answers. The Exam Regulations require that you write in ink, rather than pencil, although you may use pencil for any graphs and drawings. It is a good idea to use blue or black ink, rather than something more unusual, in the interests of anonymous marking. Please start each answer on a new page. (This makes it much easier for the marker.) If you do start part way

through a sheet, do not worry: just make a clear note of the fact so that the examiners can be careful not to be confused.

You must write legibly: if nothing else it will avoid annoying the marker; but there is a provision for illegible scripts to be typed *at the expense of the candidate*.

You will be given instructions at the examination about handing in your script. It is your responsibility to do this: anything left on your desk is liable to be thrown away by the person clearing the room. There will be treasury tags for you to use to attach booklets together. The rubric on the paper will tell you whether to bind everything in one bundle, or whether to hand in answers to different parts of the paper with separate cover sheets. If you do not attempt any questions from one part of the paper, you should still hand in a cover sheet for that part, so that the examiners can check that all parts of all papers are accounted for.

### 6.2.3 *Entering for Examinations*

Your College arranges for you to be entered for both the assignments and the written examinations, which involves the submission of an exam entry form from the College to the University detailing all of the papers which you are sitting. A few weeks before the examinations begin a timetable will be issued and sent to your College showing where and when each of the written papers will take place. Your College will pass on to you your timetable together with a randomly allocated *candidate number* which you will use to identify your scripts, instead of your name and College, so that they can be marked anonymously.

### 6.2.4 *Notices to Candidates*

Before your examination you will receive one or more letters of *notice to candidates* from the examiners which will tell you of any details of the examination procedure that are different from the usual. Notices to candidates will be sent to you by the MSc Course Administrator. These notices contain important information about your examinations and should be read very carefully. If you have any questions then please ask your supervisor; you should **not** contact the examiners directly.

## 6.3 **Marking and Classification**

The way in which the Examiners administer the examinations is described in the Examination Conventions which can be found at:

<http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/teaching/examconventions/MSKinCS.html>

## 7 Projects

A description of possible projects and supervisors will be made available during Michaelmas Term. You should discuss with your supervisor the general area of your project, because this may help in selection of appropriate lecture modules through the year. The sooner you choose a specific project, the sooner you will be able to start background reading and investigations.

You will be required to submit a project registration form in week 7 of Hilary Term (4<sup>th</sup> March); you will be given details of the specific date for the dissertation submission nearer the time.

Available projects can be found at:

<http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/teaching/studentprojects/MSCiCS.html>

You should submit the registration form with either a single project title, together with a signature of the supervisor, or a list of at least three projects for which you have (or are doing) the stated prerequisites. It is likely that your project supervisor will be different from your supervisor in the first two terms.

We would encourage you to talk to potential supervisors and select a specific project if possible. You need not do a project from the circulated list; you are free to construct your own project proposal in consultation with someone who would be prepared to supervise it. A good way to start is to draft a description of what you propose to do as though it were going to be part of the circulated list, then show it to staff who you think might be interested in supervising it.

However, if you are not able to identify a project supervisor, then the Director of the MSc will try to find a suitable person to supervise one of the projects you have listed. If you do supply a list of projects you are interested in, then please make sure that they are selected from at least two different possible supervisors.

Although some students do projects that are jointly supervised with another department or industry you should remember that the project has to be relevant to computer science and should demonstrate your understanding and ability to exploit and integrate the material you have learnt from the courses you have taken.

There is a formal requirement for you to submit a summary of your selected project to the Director of the course before the first Monday of Trinity Term. This must be accompanied by an essay of one to two thousand words describing the project, including

- Background: the theory or application areas.
- General open questions.
- Selection of particular question for study.
- Proposed method.
- Draft Timetable.
- Signature of Project Supervisor.

## **7.1 Carrying out the project**

During the project you should expect to meet your project supervisor for about half an hour per week, on average; however, this figure might vary, depending on the nature of the project. You should be pro-active in arranging meetings with your supervisor.

### **Context and Scope**

To decide on the exact scope of your project you first need to investigate the background and context of the area you are working on. Your project should address a well-chosen set of concerns that are appropriate to this context. Ideally, you should identify a small number of more difficult problems, and use your project as a vehicle to explore solutions to them.

For example, a program that allows human players to compete with each other in playing a game over a network might present a number of significant problems. The play will take place over a network that might be unreliable, or one or other player might quit the game before it is finished, and it would be important for the program not to become stuck if one of these things happened. For a multi-player game, players might be able to join or leave at different times, and it would be important that the program would continue to function. In a large game, it might become important to minimize the number of direct communication links that were used, and yet still have the program be robust to failure of computers or network links. Also, players may be able to act concurrently, and the outcome of concurrent activity must be determined by the program in an accurate and fair way.

It would not be necessary to address all these aspects in a project, but it would be good to show an awareness of most of them and concentrate on some of them in your implementation and testing. It would be a mistake to devote too much effort to polishing the GUI at the expense of addressing the more fundamental networking and concurrency issues.

An MSc project should contain an original contribution, although not necessarily to the level of a research paper. For example, a project that involves implementing an algorithm or technique should contain a clear explanation of the underlying theory, a significant amount of testing, as well as evaluation and assessment of the different methods chosen.

Similarly a project that contains an exposition of a recent development in theoretical computer science should contain an original presentation of the relevant theory, e.g., containing new illustrative examples and new, helpful, notation and terminology, and perhaps original proofs of certain propositions and lemmas.

### ***Choice of Technology***

The project should be implemented using appropriate technology. The report should contain a brief explanation of why the technical solution (such as a programming language and libraries) was chosen, but it's not necessary to give a long comparison of alternative approaches.

It is good to choose a technological basis that makes the programming easier, allowing you to concentrate on distinctive aspects of your problem area. For example, you could use a networking library that supports transmission of structured values instead of building the same functionality from scratch, and that would be sensible if the point of the project is some higher-level application. Or you could use a functional programming language to make a

prototype of a compiler and abstract machine and avoid the heavy work of implementing these in low-level code.

## **7.2 Dissertations**

### **7.2.1 Structure**

The project is required to “demonstrate in the dissertation an appreciation of the role of methods studied in the course”. What this means in practice differs from project to project. For example, if the project is devoted to constructing a substantial piece of software, it will probably involve the development of formal specifications of the more crucial parts of the structure, attention to good software engineering practices in building the system, and possibly some reasoning about the result. If the project involves mathematical modelling of an artefact or process, the ideas would have to be put into a general context, relating them to material studied elsewhere in the course.

The main body of the dissertation should be preceded by a table of contents listing chapters and sections. Every page in the main body should carry a header indicating the current chapter or section.

The main body of the text of a typical dissertation will contain:

- An introduction: the first chapter should introduce the subject of the dissertation and explain the structure of the text to the reader.
- An explanation of the problem: a second chapter should explain the problem to be studied, or the context in which the work takes place.
- A description of the method: a third chapter should introduce the method used to solve the problem, or the formal techniques employed.
- An account of the work: the following chapters should present the work carried out during the project, including any practical results and theoretical insights obtained.
- Conclusions: the final chapter should contain conclusions drawn from the project, comparisons which may be made between this and existing work or practice, and suggestions regarding the extension or continuation of the work.
- A bibliography, and/or list of references.

Material that is used to support the work but does not have a place within the body of the text may be included as an appendix. Typical examples include program code, mathematical proofs, and sample output.

The dissertation should be securely bound in such a manner as will facilitate reading and assessment. Students may wish to submit additional material in electronic form; this will not affect the formal assessment of the dissertation, but may prove useful to the examiners.

Two typewritten or printed copies of the Dissertation must be handed in by 12.00 noon on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2015 to the M.Sc. Examiners (Computer Science), c/o Clerk of the Schools, Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford. This must be accompanied by the declaration form about originality. You will also be required to submit an electronic copy of your dissertation to Turnitin, and also email a copy to the MSc Course Administrator.



For further guidance on the presentation of your dissertation, please refer to Appendix I.

The dissertation should be typed or printed - this wording is intended to allow LaTeX or another decent word processor. (LaTeX is the best choice if your dissertation involves a significant amount of mathematical notation.) Occasionally people like to include their working program on a disc, inside the front cover of the dissertation. This is acceptable, but you should not assume that the examiners will have an opportunity to run it, and the rest of your dissertation should be complete in itself.

### 7.2.2 Content

The regulations state that

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate in their dissertation an appreciation of the role of methods studied in the course.

Such a *demonstration of appreciation* can take different forms; it might consist in an application of the method, or an extension to the theory. Examples include:

- a specification produced using a language taught in one of the specification-oriented courses;
- a result about inductive arguments for data refinement;
- a technique for conducting hazard analysis using a process algebra.

Each of these involves a single method. Most application-oriented projects will involve more than one method: if the project requires the development of a piece of software, then the resulting dissertation could demonstrate understanding of methods taught on a variety of courses.

In some cases, it may be possible to see the project work in terms of a clearly-defined problem and an original solution. In others, key problems emerge only during the project itself, and the value of the work lies in its contribution to understanding.

The only part of your project work which is seen and considered by the examiners is the written dissertation. You should therefore allocate a substantial part of your time to writing it; unless you are a practised writer of technical prose, then plan to take around a month for this. Some dissertations show signs of having been spoilt by a last-minute rush. The dissertation should be a technical document designed to be readable by a person who is neither the candidate nor the supervisor, nor a research expert in the precise subject area.

The Department's Library contains many previous dissertations; you can also find these on the MSc Thesis Repository database at:

<http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/msctheses/>

You should look at some of these, in consultation with your supervisor, to get an idea of the appropriate length and style. Your supervisor will normally be happy to comment on a draft of your dissertation, but you must take care to allow time for this: some supervisors are likely

to be away in the period leading up to the submission deadline. It is also possible for the work reported upon to be a part of a piece of work being undertaken by several people, but the contribution of the individual project must be clearly identifiable, and clearly explained in the report. The report must be the work of the candidate alone (except for any clearly identified common material in joint projects). **Please see the Appendix on plagiarism at the end of the handbook.**

### 7.2.3 Length and effort

The regulations state:

*“Candidates shall submit a dissertation of not more than 30,000 words, plus not more than 30 pages of diagrams, tables, listing, etc., on a subject selected by the candidate in consultation with the supervisor and approved by the director of the course.”*

There is no minimum length. However, it would be unusual to see a document of less than, say, 35 pages in a font size no smaller than 11pt that contained an adequate demonstration of understanding and appreciation.

Although it is difficult to measure such quantities, the effort required for the project and dissertation should be roughly equivalent to that required for five subject courses, with the associated practical work and assignments/written examinations.

The dissertation should have a definite structure - a beginning, a middle and an end. In particular, there should be a final paragraph or two bringing all the material together. However, you should take care that the introduction, the brief project description and the conclusion are not merely repetitions of the same paragraph cast into the future, the present and the past tenses respectively. You might well include in the report a section on what was learnt from doing the project: this could perhaps include a technical discussion of approaches that were tried and did not work. The conclusions should be reasonably general, so that they could be relevant and useful for other people embarking on similar short projects, or perhaps a continuation of this one. An analysis of your personal development from doing this project is also appropriate (or otherwise) by doing the project is appropriate. If applicable, include source code etc. as an appendix (possibly in smaller type).

## 7.3 Writing Skills

In Trinity Term there will be a session on writing skills. All students are expected to attend as these will provide you with useful background for your dissertation.

Overseas students whose first language is not English are encouraged to investigate attending one of the courses on English for Academic Study given in the University Language Centre.

See <http://www.lang.ox.ac.uk/>

If you think this would be suitable for you, please discuss it with your supervisor or the Academic Administrator.

## **7.4 Satisfying the examiners**

The regulations state that the examiners must be satisfied that the candidate has attained an adequate level of achievement in the dissertation:

To satisfy the examiners for the degree of MSc in Computer Science, a candidate must attain an average of at least  $\geq 50$  (pass) in the assignments or written examination in their best 28 units of topics, pass in the dissertation, pursue an adequate course of practical work and achieve an overall pass in practicals, and unless dispensed under cl.3 (iii) above satisfy the examiners in the viva voce examination.

The decision of the examiners will be based upon two things: the standard set in previous examinations, and the stated aims of the M.Sc. in Computer Science.

Students are encouraged to examine previous dissertations, available in the library, but are reminded that many of these will be of a higher standard than would be expected of dissertations at the pass/fail borderline. A piece of documentation which is particularly relevant notes that:

The project is written up as a dissertation, which should give a clear account of an attempt to apply some of the principles taught in the course in practice. Students are encouraged to pay careful attention to the organisation of the material and the style of its presentation.

Although the expected standard is that of a good internal project report in industry, some past dissertations have reached publication standard, and others have been the starting points for research programmes.

Opinions may vary on what constitutes a good internal project report, but this remains a useful indication of intentions.

Each project will be read by at least one examiner, and an assessor on behalf of the examiners. Both readers will be asked to supply a brief paragraph describing the scope and achievement of the project, and will be asked to give a grade.

## **7.5 Factors in assessment**

The mark awarded to a dissertation will be based upon the examiners' overall impression of the work. To arrive at this impression, they will consider the following factors:

*Context:* The dissertation should demonstrate, as far as is relevant, a good understanding of the context in which the work was undertaken. It should be evident that the student understood both the problem and the problem domain, and that the choice of approach was informed and intelligent. The examiners would like to be convinced that the student has a good general knowledge of the field.

*Competence:* The student should demonstrate, in the text of the dissertation that they are able to apply the ideas and the techniques that they have studied. The examiners will look for

evidence of understanding, and appropriate application of techniques. They would like to be convinced that the student has shown competence in investigating the chosen topic.

*Contribution:* The dissertation should have some value in itself. This may arise in different ways: the dissertation may present a fresh application, an extension to a theory, a new solution, or a new approach to a problem. The value will depend upon the extent of achievement: the nature of the application, the utility of the extension, the elegance of the solution, or the coherence of the approach.

All of these are intangible, but the examiners' expectations will be framed in the knowledge that this is work undertaken by new graduates (it should be better than a third-year undergraduate project, but not necessarily comparable with that of a research student). Ideally, the examiners would like to be convinced that the student has made a worthwhile contribution to knowledge or understanding in the field.

*Clarity:* If the dissertation is to succeed as a demonstration of knowledge and understanding, and if the examiners are to be convinced of the competence of the student, then a certain degree of clarity and organisation is required. However, part of the value of the dissertation lies in its accessibility: if it is to make a worthwhile contribution, then it must be readable.

For these reasons, and because clarity of exposition may in itself reflect a greater degree of effort and understanding, the examiners would like to be convinced that the dissertation is presented in a lucid and scholarly manner.

## **7.6 Viva Voce**

The examiners have the right to require any student to attend for an oral examination on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2015. You will be expected to be available on that day. The oral examination is intended to help candidates whose performance in one or both of the other parts of the examination is questionable or not quite satisfactory. If you are required to attend, you should consult your supervisor on the best method of preparing yourself. Most candidates will be dispensed from attendance.

## **7.7 Marking Assessments**

Each band has an informal interpretation:

### **Distinction**

90-100: The candidate shows remarkable ability and extraordinary insights. Dissertations in this band will be worthy of publication.

80-89: The candidate shows outstanding problem-solving skills and outstanding knowledge of the material over a wide range of topics, and is able to use that knowledge innovatively and/or in unfamiliar contexts.

70-79: The candidate shows excellent problem-solving skills and excellent knowledge of the material over a wide range of topics, and is able to use that knowledge innovatively and/or in unfamiliar contexts.

Pass

60-69: The candidate shows good or very good problem-solving skills, and good or very good knowledge of much of the material over a wide range of topics.

50-59: The candidate shows basic problem solving skills and adequate knowledge of most of the material.

Fail

40-49: The candidate shows reasonable understanding of at least part of the basic material and some problem solving skills. Although there may be a few good answers, the majority of answers will contain errors in calculations and/or show incomplete understanding of the topics.

30-39: The candidate shows some limited grasp of basic material over a restricted range of topics, but with large gaps in understanding. There need not be any good quality answers, but there will be indications of some competence.

0-29: The candidate shows inadequate grasp of the basic material. The work is likely to show major misunderstanding and confusion, and/or inaccurate calculations; the answers to most of the questions attempted are likely to be fragmentary only.

## **7.8 The Examination Schools**

The Examination Schools are situated on High Street, to the east of University College. The full address is The Examination Schools, 75-81 High Street, Oxford. OX1 4GB

## 8 If things go wrong

The most common cause for failure is personal problems. If these begin to affect your health or your work, do not delay in consulting your medical advisor or one of the many supervisors or advisors allocated to you by the Department and your College. Almost no problem is unique, whether it is emotional, medical or psychological; and nearly all problems can be solved or alleviated by those who have the experience and expertise to advise, *provided that they know about it early enough*.

The second most common reason for failure is the undertaking of outside commitments or employment at any time during the academic year. **Do not do this.** It is incompatible with your status as a student of the University. In cases of exceptional pressure, you should discuss with your supervisor or the Course Director the options of withdrawing or delaying. This would be much better (financially as well) than failing the course and having to retake it.

A third possible reason for disappointment is a mismatch between the culture and content of the course and the experience and aspirations of the student. Every effort is made in course design, the provision of options, and the selection of students; but there is no way to avoid the occasional mismatch. This must be regarded as failure of the system rather than the student, and it is sensible to treat the problem without allocating blame. The best solution is to recognise the situation as early as possible, and avoid further waste of effort and disappointment.

### 8.1 Failure and Resits

The requirements that must be met to obtain the M.Sc. in Computer Science are set out in the Regulations, together with the consequences of failing to meet them.

Any candidate who has not achieved an average of at least  $\geq 50$  in 24 units of topics by the beginning of Trinity Term shall be deemed to have failed the degree course and will not be permitted to submit a dissertation.

To satisfy the examiners for the degree of MSc in Computer Science, a candidate must attain an average of at least  $\geq 50$  (pass) in the assignments or written examination in their best 28 units of topics, pass in the dissertation, pursue an adequate course of practical work and achieve an overall pass in practicals, and unless dispensed under cl.3 (iii) above satisfy the examiners in the viva voce examination.

The examiners may award a distinction for excellence in the whole examination.

A candidate who fails the examination will be permitted to retake it on one further occasion only, not later than one year after the initial attempt. Such a candidate whose dissertation has been of satisfactory standard may resubmit the same piece of work, while a candidate who has reached a satisfactory standard on the assignments or written examinations will not be required to retake that part of the examination. However a candidate who has not achieved an average of  $\geq 50$  in the written examinations will be required to retake that part of the examination in its entirety.

## **8.2 Difficulties**

If you have difficulty in understanding a lecture, please discuss it with your supervisor, or the class tutor for the course; at least one of them should be able to make an explanation that meets your needs. If you find the lectures unsatisfactory in any other way, please tell the lecturer or your supervisor; they are keen to make improvements where possible. If you find any aspect of your supervision unsatisfactory and you feel unable to discuss it with your supervisor, you should contact one or more of the following members of staff: your Advisor; the MSc Course Director; the MSc Course Administrator; or (in exceptional circumstances) the Head of Department.

## **8.3 Feedback**

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire for each lecture course you attend. Please take the time to complete this and return it as feedback is extremely valuable in helping us to continue to improve the course and your learning experience.

## **8.4 Student Representative**

You will be asked to nominate a student representative to sit on the M.Sc. Supervisory Committee which meets once a term on Thursday of week 2. Please make sure that the representative is aware of any concerns or comments you have regarding the course.

## **9 Communications**

### **9.1 *University Gazette and Oxford Blueprint***

The Gazette is published weekly, in term time and is the official publication for University business, regulation changes, meetings etc. It is available in all the University and College Libraries and in the Common Room on the ground floor.

Oxford Blueprint, a newsletter for University and college staff and students, is published in 0th, 3rd, 6th and 9th weeks of term. It contains news, interviews and features reflecting the diversity of activity across the University, and an events diary will be included.

### **9.2 *Publications***

Each group publishes a series of either Research Reports or Technical Reports and a series of Monographs. These are distributed within the Department and to the wider academic community, and provide a speedy way of publicising the work of the Department. Publication in these series can lead (and has led) to fruitful contacts with fellow-researchers and organisations who may wish to apply the research.

### **9.3 *General Information***

Information about the Department of Computer Science, its staff and courses is also available on World-Wide Web from the Department of Computer Science's home page:

<http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/>

Information about lectures, seminars, job vacancies, etc. will be placed on the relevant web pages.

### **9.4 *Seminars***

All Graduate Students are encouraged to attend departmental seminars.

The Departmental Seminars are held in the Department at 16:30 on most Tuesday afternoons in term time. They are frequently presented by distinguished speakers from outside the Department, and they are well worth the time to attend.

In addition, there are many informal seminars and discussion groups in the Department. Their meetings are usually publicised at relatively short notice on the notice-boards and electronic newsgroups and web pages. You should check

<http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/seminars/>



## 10 Careers

We are approached by many companies who are interested in employing our students and we frequently arrange recruitment talks here either in the lunch hour or early evening. The University has a Careers Service at No 56 Banbury Road which can offer you lots of help and advice and which provides information on jobs advertised. Additional information on jobs being advertised can be found at:

<https://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/industry/internal/vacancies.jsp>  
and  
<http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/admissions/dphil/newsindex.html>

Please check this site regularly as information is constantly updated. Lots of information can also be found on the Notice Boards in the basement and in the common room.

***Do not take up employment until you have completed your dissertation, i.e. not before the beginning of September.***

## 11 Holidays

Please note that this is a full time course and you will need to be in Oxford for most of the year. This means that you should not take on any other commitments during the year, e.g. it will not be possible for you to fit in any sort of employment. Also, before making any holiday arrangements please bear in mind that you will have to complete written assignments and possibly attend one-week options outside of normal term. You should seek advice from your supervisor or the Academic Administrator before booking holidays.

## 12 Doing a Research Degree at Oxford after the MSc

Some students undertake the M.Sc. course specifically as initial preparation for doing Ph.D. level research; others discover an interest in doing research during the course. If you wish to be considered for a research place in the Department, you will have to apply following the standard applications procedure. The process and deadlines are documented on the Department's web site, and you are encouraged to consult the information provided there.

You should be able to obtain a pre-populated form from OSS Student Self Service which will contain all the relevant information currently held. This application form should be available from November. You will need to submit the minimum supporting material, i.e. a transcript, two references and a research proposal. One of the references should be from your supervisor at Oxford.

If you wish to apply for Departmental or EPSRC funding you should indicate this on the application form with the appropriate studentship code.

**IF YOU ARE APPLYING FOR ANY FUNDING YOU SHOULD AIM TO APPLY BY THE NOVEMBER DEADLINE BUT MUST APPLY BY THE JANUARY DEADLINE.**

As you will see in the notes accompanying the application form, a *research proposal* must be included in your application. The proposal is important, so you should spend some time on

its preparation. We use this document to assign you a provisional supervisor, who acts as your advocate during the competitive selection process. A weak or inaccurate proposal may result in assignment of an inappropriate provisional supervisor or one who could not advocate you strongly. Your provisional supervisor also assumes responsibility for you initially, if you are offered and take up a D.Phil. place.

Your research proposal need not be long. It should not exceed about six pages, and between two and four pages is typical. It should contain the following items: a clear description of the proposed topic of research; why you think the topic is important; a little technical detail; a brief survey of relevant work and a short bibliography; and, if possible, a proposal outlining your plan of research towards the D.Phil.

Of course it's a good idea to have informal discussions with potential D.Phil. supervisors in the Department, before proceeding to a formal application. Perhaps you are thinking of a research proposal arising from your M.Sc. project, in which case you should discuss your ideas with your project supervisor. Perhaps you have become interested in the research area of one of your lecturers or another member of the Department; get in touch with them to talk about it. The Director of Graduate Studies or the Graduate Studies Administrator are also happy to talk informally about doing a D.Phil.

### **13 Department of Computer Science - General Information**

The Department of Computer Science is housed in a building specifically designed, constructed and equipped for it, largely funded through the generosity of the Wolfson Foundation and the Wolfson Family Trust. The Department's postal address is:

Department of Computer Science, University of Oxford  
Wolfson Building  
Parks Road  
Oxford, OX1 3QD  
England

This building stands at the south-eastern angle of what is known as the Keble Road Triangle consisting of Keble Road, Banbury Road and Parks Road. The Lecture Theatres on the lower ground floor (Lecture Theatre A) and on the ground floor (Lecture Theatre B) can be reached from the entrance to the right of the main Parks Road entrance, as can the seminar room 051.

Rooms have a telephone which can receive calls directly from outside as well as internally. The number to give people is "01865 2\*\*\*\*\*", where the \*s represent the extension number.

Please do not give people the general enquiries number or the secretary's number.

#### **13.1 Room Numbering**

The number system for rooms is made up of a three digit number which designates the floor level in the building as well as the actual room number. Hence room numbers beginning with 0 are in the basement, room numbers beginning 1 are on the ground floor, room numbers beginning 2 are on the first floor, and so on up to room numbers beginning 5 which are in the attic.

It is possible you may use the Practicals Laboratory (6.09) in the Thom Building which is the large glass sided tower block between Banbury Road and Parks Road. Entry is on level 2 from the walkway.

Please take note of any warning signs and ensure you know where the emergency escape routes are located.

Please note that various doors both in the Wolfson building and the Thom building have signs warning that the door is alarmed. These doors are **only** to be used in an emergency and not for any other reason.

#### **13.2 Opening Hours**

The Wolfson Building opens at 08:30 and the doors are locked at 17:15, Monday to Friday, excepting closed periods (i.e. Bank Holidays out of term time).

The Thom Building opens at 08:15. The doors are locked at 19:00 in term time and at 17:30 during vacations.

Detailed rules governing access to the Department of Computer Science are as follows:

### **13.3 Access to the Department of Computer Science**

An entry-card system controls access to the Wolfson Building outside normal opening hours. You will also need a card to be able to access your pigeon hole.

This applies to the main Parks Road entrance and the entrances on 6, 7 and 11 Keble Road entrance of the Wolfson Building. The front door of No.8 Keble Road has been alarmed and should only be used in an emergency.

The cards also control access within the building from the Lecture Theatre areas.

University cards, if you already have one, will be activated for the Department's entry card system, when you have signed the enclosed declaration (yellow sheet included in your information pack).

To activate your entry card you will need to take your University Card, to Brenda Deeley (106). You will need to select a four digit pin number.

### **13.4 Rules**

The rules for using this system are:

- A card and individual PIN will be issued to all staff and graduate students who require access to the Wolfson Building. In the case of graduate students, a University Card is required. Please complete the yellow form in your induction pack.
- The PIN must be kept secret and under no circumstances should be written on the card or in the wallet where the card is kept. (Should an entry card be lost, access cannot be affected without knowledge of the PIN. The card can be also be barred when it is reported lost).
- Each card will be set to operate for the period of the student's stay in Oxford.
- Cards will be issued on a personal basis and must not be loaned or passed on to another person.
- No-one should allow access to another person unless they are prepared to "escort" them throughout their stay in the building.
- When a card is used to gain access to the building, the system keeps a record of that use for a period of approximately six months.

### **13.5 Teaching Rooms, particularly Room 379**

You may use room 379 when there are no supervised practical sessions scheduled.

You may **not** use it when sessions are scheduled unless you are part of the group that was signed up for that session.

You may **not** use the kitchen adjacent to room 379.

You may **not** unplug the Department of Computer Science's machines in room 379, nor should you plug your own equipment into the sockets, unless this has been safety tested.

**It is forbidden to take food or drinks into lecture rooms, seminar rooms or computer rooms.**

## 14 Computers

The Department of Computer Science's teaching network comprises 83 PCs. 35 of these are located in room 379 of the Department of Computer Science where most of the graduate practical sessions will take place. There are also 48 PCs in the Practicals Laboratory (6.09) on Level 6 of the Thom Building, which is the main building of the Engineering Science Department. This is the tall building to the north-west of the Department of Computer Science. The machines in the Thom Building are mostly used for undergraduate practical sessions though MSc students may occasionally have a practical session scheduled here.

Additionally there is a server based remote access service available at all times from anywhere, such as personal laptop at home or through networked computers in college computer rooms (you should check with your college for information about the facilities they provide.)

Linux is used throughout the teaching network.

All students need to complete an application form to use Department of Computer Science computing facilities. A form is enclosed with your information pack (*see also Appendix D*).

Most students have some prior knowledge of using computers; however it is inevitable that not all of you will have specific experience with the type of systems available at Oxford. Therefore during your first week you will have an introductory session with the Departmental Lecturers and you will have the opportunity to attend a practical session to familiarise yourself with the systems available and give you an initial opportunity to use the network and ask questions.

Those courses which have practical work associated with them are supported by time-tabled practical sessions in the Practicals Laboratory (Level 6, Thom Building) throughout the term. These sessions guarantee students exclusive access to the computing facilities they require to complete their work. Demonstrators are present at each session so that you can obtain help with the practicals as you are doing the work.

Although the computers in 379 are often booked for practical use, there are times when these computers are available for students to use outside the arranged practical sessions. This is mainly to facilitate work on projects. Many students also find it useful to be able to do further work on their practicals outside the normal practical times, or to take the opportunity to learn more about the facilities available.

Oxford University IT Services (formerly OUCS) run introductory courses throughout the year. These courses will be helpful for those of you who have had less opportunity of hands-on experience with computers. They will also help you to explore facilities available at Oxford University which, although not required elements of any of your courses, may be of interest to you.

IT Services are based at 13 Banbury Road---opposite the Department of Engineering Science. You can find out about its courses here or at [www.it.ox.ac.uk/itlp/courses](http://www.it.ox.ac.uk/itlp/courses).

### **14.1 Using your own Computer**

You do not need a PC. The Department's computing facilities are all you will need during your graduate studies. However, some of you will have or will acquire a PC during this time. The practical work associated with some courses is flexible enough to enable you to do the work on a PC, provided it has the appropriate programming environments.

The Department's computing facilities can also be used remotely from personal computers attached to the University network or elsewhere on the internet, provided they have X server software and an SSH client (typically included in linux but not on Windows machines by default, where you need something like Exceed which is available from ITS for a nominal charge, and PuTTY which is available as a free download).

Before any personal computers may be used in the Department they must be tested for electrical safety and then checked for security patching and anti-virus software. Only after these checks have been passed will they be authorised for connection. These checks should be carried out in your college.

**Please note that you will not be allowed to plug in a laptop in either the Practicals Lab in the Thom Building or in the Department of Computer Science, unless this has been safety tested.** Wireless connectivity is available in these areas and most of the rest of the university as Eduroam. You self-register for this on-line with your university card and Single Sign-on (SSO), details from ITS - [www.it.ox.ac.uk](http://www.it.ox.ac.uk).

## **15 Printing**

No restriction on the use of laser printer output is made, but we do monitor individual totals. Please make only single copies of output and use the photocopiers to duplicate them if required. Multiple copies of documents cause delays for other users, so please do not abuse the privilege. We reserve the right to charge for excessive use.

## **16 Photocopying**

Photocopiers are available for use by staff and students on all floors of the Wolfson Building.

The copier in the Library is only available to copy articles etc. from journals (subject to copyright laws) and must not be used for general copying. The other copiers can be used by anyone, but please seek instruction from John Peachey (Room 14) and always report any faults or problems to Paul Hambidge (Reception) so that we can get the machines repaired. Private copying is monitored and maybe chargeable.

Copying in the Radcliffe Science Library or the Bodleian Library requires a special copy card. This can be obtained from Michael Neville (room 240) and will require you to pay an initial fee of £5 (for which a receipt must be obtained) to put a “credit” on the card during your first visit to the Radcliffe Science Library. Michael will refund this £5 on production of the receipt. When you leave the Department you should return the card to Michael Neville. If you lose your card, you will have to pay the cost of a replacement ‘credit’ so please look after it carefully.

## **17 Safety**

All students should read Appendix A carefully before the start of term. The Department of Computer Science is a very safe place but we need your full co-operation to keep it so.

## **18 Staff Members**

The Head of Department is Professor Michael Wooldridge. You will find a list of current academic members (and support staff you may come across) in Appendix B. To help you to identify staff, photographs can be found in on the Department of Computer Science website at <http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/people>

Academic Staff are in offices on levels 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the Wolfson Building although they are sometimes away in their respective Colleges, and occasionally at conferences and study trips abroad.

## **19 Liaison with academic staff**

There is a graduate student representative, currently Will Smith, on the Faculty of Computer Science which meets on the Thursday of sixth week. Please tell your representative of any matters or questions you would like raised at the Faculty meetings.

## **20 Library**

The Department of Computer Science Library contains books, monographic series, journals, technical reports and past theses covering the main research interests of the Department. It is situated on Level 2 of the building.

**Opening hours:** Library staff are normally available from 09:00 - 13:00 and 14.00 – 16.30. The library remains unlocked at other times.

**Registration:** you will be pre-registered but you must confirm your registration by bringing your University Card to the library before you begin to borrow.

**The Catalogue:** books and journals are listed on OLIS (the University-wide online catalogue).

**Borrowing:** members are limited to 12 books at any one time. Books may be borrowed for 3 weeks at a time with possibility of renewal for a further three periods of three weeks unless a book has been recalled by another reader. Books are borrowed using the automated self-issue

system. Please ask if you have problems using the machine. No journal or part of a journal may be borrowed.

**Short-loan Collection:** books in the short loan collection are held in the Library Office and may be borrowed for 5 days. The short loan collection is mainly composed of books listed on Reading Lists for the M.Sc. courses.

**Web Pages:** See <http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/internal/library>

**Other services:** The library also contains copies of the MSc and DPhil theses submitted by students attached to the Department and past examination papers.

**Contact the Library:** Michael Neville (Librarian), Aza Ballard-Whyte (Library Assistant), telephone 73837, e-mail [library@cs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:library@cs.ox.ac.uk).

## 21 Harassment

By University legislation, it is an offence for any senior or junior member of the University to harass any other member or any person for whom the University is responsible. Sexual and racial harassment are among the forms of harassment covered by this rule, but it also covers any form of intentional or unintentional teasing, embarrassment or bullying which causes you inconvenience or unhappiness, particularly if persistent.

The University has a code of practice for dealing with any such cases which may arise and this is included *Appendix G*. In addition, the Proctors have set up a panel of people with relevant expertise to act as advisers in particular cases. These arrangements complement the procedures which may exist in individual colleges.

## 22 University Club

The University Club provides a social and recreational venue intended to serve the University's academics, post-doctorates, staff, postgraduates, alumni and those who have retired from academic or staff positions. To apply to become a member of the University Club, please visit the Club's web site: <http://www.club.ox.ac.uk> and fill out the on-line membership application form (accessible via the "Membership" link). On-line applications are preferred, but if you do not have access to the Internet, please complete the application form in your graduate pack and hand in to the reception desk, or, send them to Reception at the University Club. Applications may take two weeks to process.

Once processed your University card will admit you to the club.



## A. Safety Information

These notes give some information about the Department's safety arrangements. For further information, please contact the Departmental Safety Officer.

### **ACTION IN CASE OF EMERGENCY**

**To summon the FIRE BRIGADE, AMBULANCE SERVICE and/or POLICE, DIAL 999.** Note that 999 can be dialled from any internal University telephone extension, even if it is otherwise barred from making outside calls.

For **SERIOUS ACCIDENTS** or **FIRES** on University premises, immediately after arranging for the emergency services, telephone again either the *University Safety Office* (ext 70810), or if the Safety Office is unmanned, the *Security Services* (ext 89999).

To summon the **SECURITY SERVICES**, dial 89999.

Remember that unless there is a continuing risk to others or to property, the law requires that in cases of serious accidents or fires the scene must remain undisturbed until it is examined by the Health and Safety Executive, the University Safety Office and Trade Union safety representatives. Some types of serious accident must be reported immediately. In those cases, the Safety Office is responsible for contacting the Health and Safety Executive.

### **First Aid**

The department arranges in-house first aid training for new research students, normally through a two hour session in the week before Michaelmas Term. Any other member of the department interested in attending such a course should contact the Safety Committee Secretary. Several members of staff have taken part in extended first aid training, and a list of Qualified First-Aiders is posted in the entrance hall of the Wolfson Building; their names are also marked on the departmental telephone list. First Aid boxes are located with each of the qualified first aiders

A list of qualified first aiders can be found at  
<http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/internal/admin/docs/Firstaiders.pdf>

### **Fire**

There are blue **FIRE ACTION** notices in each building. Please read these *before* there is a fire!

**If you discover a fire, immediately operate the nearest fire alarm call point** (these are situated in the stair wells and at each emergency exit), and then attack the fire, if possible, with the fire extinguishers provided *but under no circumstances putting yourself or others at risk*. The receptionist or the senior person present should call the fire brigade immediately.

**On hearing the fire alarm**, leave the building **immediately** - use the nearest available exit, close all doors as you leave, do not stop to collect personal belongings. Do not use the lift - if you are unable to use the stairs, please wait inside the stairwell nearest the lift for the fire brigade to rescue you. Do not re-enter the building unless authorised to do so. Familiarise yourself with fire exit routes from the buildings, and relevant assembly points. The assembly point for the Wolfson Building is on the south side of Keble Road by the chapel of Keble College - do not cluster at the exits to the buildings.

Fire alarms in the Wolfson Building are sirens. It is necessary to test the alarms every Monday morning at 8:30am the alarm sounds only for a few seconds - assume that any fire alarm sounding for more than five seconds is a signal that you must leave the building.

In the Wolfson Building/eScience, there are several sets of fire extinguishers on each floor - including a set near the lift, and one in the South West stairwell (8 Keble Road). Please take note of where the nearest fire extinguishers are to the rooms you normally use.

Fire extinguishers in the Wolfson building are now in the European standard colours: they are all red! Carbon dioxide extinguishers are now identified only by a black panel, foam extinguishers by a cream label, and any remaining water extinguishers by a white label. Do not use water or foam on electrical equipment: use the CO2 extinguishers with the black label.

## ***Escape routes***

Please check that you know the **escape routes** from the buildings you use - again, *before* you actually need to use one in an emergency evacuation of the building. These are sign-posted in each building.

Corridors, stairwells and exits must not be obstructed. Anything left in corridors, stairwells or exits will be removed. Bicycles which obstruct any of the exits or emergency exits will be removed.

## ***Smoking***

Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the University premises or immediately outside windows and doors. Smoke detectors linked to the fire alarm system are in operation in the Wolfson/eScience Buildings.

## ***Electricity***

**All electrical equipment (including personal property) must be tested for safety before it is used in the Department of Computer Science buildings.** Equipment must not be dismantled. If equipment is faulty, do not attempt to repair it - please email [technicians@cs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:technicians@cs.ox.ac.uk). Do not tamper with electrical supply equipment. Do not unplug equipment without express permission. Please report any problems to the Department's technicians.

## ***Equipment rooms***

Electrical power in the various equipment rooms (including the Teaching Laboratory in the Thom Building) can be cut by an "emergency stop". In the Thom Building, this is a white break-glass unit; in the Wolfson Building, it is a red button (either just inside or just outside the door to each equipment room); it is normally clearly labelled with a green "Emergency stop" sign. Please note that it will need the support staff to restart circuits.

## ***Lighting***

Do not switch off any corridor lighting at any time. Please report any faulty corridor or staircase lighting to the technical staff. Please advise the Administrator if there are any other areas which are poorly lit.

## ***Other Safety information***

A blue ring binder containing a Statement of the Department's Safety Organisation, a Statement of the University Safety Policy, and a collection of University and Departmental Guidance Notes, is available in the Library (room 240) and in the Common Room (room 103).

The University Safety Office has a library of safety publications and other material at 10 Parks Road. The Office also issues an occasional newsletter ("OUCH") which is available in the Common Rooms and on notice boards.

Minutes of meetings of the Departmental Safety Advisory Committee are published, and are available on the department's notice boards.

Hanno Nickau  
Departmental Safety Officer  
August 2014

***Statement of Health and Safety Organisation for the Department of Computer Science***

Statement by the Head of Department of the Department of Computer Science

As Head of Department, I am responsible for ensuring compliance with the University Health and Safety Policy in the Department of Computer Science. I am responsible for the entire premises of the Wolfson Building Parks Road, and the eScience Laboratory including those areas occupied by the Doctoral Training Centre and Oxford e-Research Centre, and 39A St Giles. Supervision of the University Health and Safety Policy in Engineering Science is the responsibility of the Head of Department of Engineering Science. Members of the Department of Computer Science who have rooms in, or use rooms in the Thom Building are required to familiarise themselves with the corresponding statements of safety organisation. My responsibilities are set out in Annex A. I have delegated some parts of these responsibilities to others and this document describes these and also describes the advisory arrangements within the Department.

***Executive Responsibility for Safety***

Every employee with a supervisory role is responsible for ensuring, in accordance with the law, the health and safety of staff, students and other persons in their area of responsibility and also anyone who may be affected by their work activities. In particular, the following responsibilities are delegated to such persons for their areas.

- I. To ensure adherence in all respects to the Health and Safety Policy of the University of Oxford and in particular to ensure that the Departmental Safety Advisory Committee is advised of resources necessary for implementation.
- II. To plan, organise, control, monitor and review the arrangements for health
  - a. and safety including the arrangements for any visitors.
- III. To carry out general risk assessments and specific risk assessments as required by health and safety legislation.
- IV. To ensure that all work procedures under their control are safe and without risks to health.
- V. To ensure that training and instruction have been given in all relevant procedures including emergency procedures.
- VI. To inform the Director of the Department of Computer Science, before any significant hazards are introduced or when significant hazards are identified.
- VII. To report immediately to the Administrator of the Department of Computer Science, all cases of ill health, accidents, hazardous incidents and fires, and to ensure that any serious or potentially serious accidents, incidents or fires are reported immediately to the University Safety Officer.

In all areas of the Department of Computer Science, the Administrator of the Department of Computer Science, (or Deputy) has overall executive authority for safety. All those with

executive responsibility should notify me and the Departmental Safety Officer, of any planned, new or newly identified significant hazards in their areas and also of those control measures needed to avert any risks involved. As it is my duty to ensure adherence to the University Health and Safety Policy, I instruct every employee with a supervisory role and the Departmental Safety Officer, to report to me any breach of the Policy. Where supervisors or others in charge of areas or with specific duties are to be absent, Health and Safety responsibility is delegated to the senior member of academic staff available. The following employees have executive responsibility throughout the Department to ensure compliance with the University Policy as it applies to their special function:

### ***Visitors and Contractors***

The Building & Facilities Manager (Joe Atherton) is responsible for making arrangements for visitors (including contractors). This will involve carrying out suitable risk assessments as appropriate.

### ***Electricity***

Work on the electrical distribution network can only be carried out on the authority of the University Electrical Engineer (see University Guidance Note S1/90 and Standing Orders). Requests for modifications should be made via the Administrator, who will make the necessary arrangements with the Surveyor's Office. See also section 2 for details of the Departmental Electrical Safety Supervisor.

### ***Computer Systems***

The installation or hardware modification of computers and peripheral equipment may only be carried out by a qualified technician, Research Support Officer or an authorised Service Engineer. Requests for such work should be made to the Computer Manager.

### ***Solvents***

The person responsible for ensuring compliance with storage regulations of flammable and highly flammable liquids is the Administrator. Any requirement to introduce solvents to the Department of Computer Science must be discussed and approved before their introduction.

### ***Abrasive Wheels***

No member of the department is permitted to change and dress abrasive wheels.

### ***Advisory Responsibility for Safety***

I have appointed those listed below to advise me on matters of health and safety within the Department. If their advice is not taken by any member of the Department, I must be informed. Exceptionally, if they discover danger which requires immediate action, they are authorised to take the necessary action and inform me subsequently.

### ***Departmental Safety Officer (DSO)***

The Departmental Safety Officer is responsible for advising me on the measures needed to carry out the work of the Department without risks to health and safety; co-ordinating any safety advice given in the Department by specialist advisors and the University Safety Officer; monitoring health and safety within the Department and reporting any breaches of the Health and Safety Policy to me. To assist in this work, the Department has the following specialist advisors:

### ***Departmental Fire Officer***

The Departmental Fire Officer is responsible for advice to the DSO on all matters relating to fire precautions and prevention to ensure compliance with the University Health and Safety Policy.

### ***Departmental Electrical Safety Supervisor***

The senior technician is responsible for advice to the DSO on all matters relating to electrical safety to ensure compliance with University Health and Safety Policy and in particular for the implementation of University Guidance Note S1/90.

### ***Departmental safety Advisory Committee***

In addition to the above arrangements I have set up a Departmental Safety Advisory Committee. The members are:

Departmental Safety Officer (Chairperson)  
Department of Computer Science Administrator  
Departmental Fire Officer  
Electrical Safety Supervisor  
Academic Staff representative  
Graduate Student representative  
OeRC representative  
SEP representative

The purpose of the Committee is to advise the Head of Department on all matters relating to health and safety within the Department of Computer Science. It will meet once a term.

### ***Trade Unions and Appointed Safety Representatives***

Employees in this Department who wish to consult their safety representatives should initially contact the senior safety representative of the appropriate trade union as listed in University Guidance Note S4/90, Appendix A. If you are unable to contact this person you should try to contact the nearest representative who will advise you further.

### ***Other Functions***

Display Screen Equipment Assessors

The following have undertaken training to be display screen equipment assessors:

Emanuel Apostolididis	142	73849
Shoshannah Holdom	107	73863
Sharon Lloyd	115	83668

### ***Individual Responsibility***

All Departmental employees, students and all other persons entering onto the Department's premises or who are involved in Departmental activities are responsible for exercising care in relation to themselves and others who may be affected by their actions. Those in immediate charge of visitors (including contractors) should ensure that the visitors adhere to the requirements of the University Health and Safety Policy as appropriate.

You must:

- a) Make sure that your work is carried out in the approved way and in accordance with University Policy.

- b) Protect yourself and others by wearing the personal protective equipment provided, and by using any guards or safety devices provided.
- c) Obey all instruction emanating from the Head of Department in respect of health and safety.
- d) Warn me [and/or the DSO] of any significant new hazards to be introduced or newly identified significant risks found in present procedures.
- e) Give your visitors (including contractors) a named contact within the Department with whom to liaise.
- f) Offer any advice and suggestions that you think may improve health and safety.
- g) Report all fires, incidents and accidents immediately to the Administrator or Assistant Administrator.
- h) Familiarise yourself with the location of firefighting equipment, alarm points and escape routes, together with the fire procedures.
- i) If you are in doubt about any matter of health and safety consult your supervisor, the DSO or, if necessary, the Head of Department.

Note: The University Guidance Notes can be found in the library (Room 240) and in the Common Room (Room 104) and are available for your consultation. The University Safety Office has a small safety library that may be consulted during normal office hours (telephone extension 70811).

### ***Specific Arrangements***

#### **Mechanical Workshop**

Only the following persons are authorised to enter the workshop (Room 016):  
S. Lloyd, J. Atherton, and P. Turner.

#### **Lift**

Under University rules no-one in the department is authorised to release anyone trapped in a lift. In the case of an emergency contact the University Security Services (Tel. 89999) using the telephone located in the lift and a lift engineer will be contacted to attend the site.

Please note that out of normal working hours there may be an extended delay if no engineer is available in Oxford.

#### **University Security Services**

The emergency telephone number for the University Security Services is 89999 and is manned 24 hours per day.

#### **Adjacent Building Site**

No member of staff or student may venture on to the building site without the express permission of the Site Manager.

It is my responsibility, as Head of the Department of Computer Science, directly, or through delegation (which is detailed and in writing), in accordance with the law:

- To ensure adherence in all respects to the Health and Safety Policy of the University of Oxford and in particular to ensure that the necessary resources for implementation are available.
- To plan, organise, control, monitor and review the arrangements for health and safety including the arrangements for any visitors (including contractors).
- To carry out general risk assessments and specific risk assessments as required by health and safety legislation.
- To ensure that all work procedures under my control are safe and without risks to health.
- To ensure that training and instruction have been given in all relevant procedures including emergency procedures.
- To inform the University Safety Officer before any significant hazards are introduced or when significant hazards are identified.
- To investigate and keep a record of all cases of ill health, accidents, hazardous incidents and fires, and to report immediately to the University Safety Officer any serious or potentially serious accidents, incidents or fires.

Signed: .....

1<sup>st</sup> July 2014

Professor M Wooldridge,  
Head of the Department of Computer Science.

Officers Referred to In the Health and Safety Policy Document

<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Room No.</b>	<b>Tel. No.</b>
Head of Department	Prof. M. Wooldridge	256	73859
Department Administrator	Sharon Lloyd	115	83668
Director of the SEP	Prof J Gibbons	461	73835
Departmental Safety Officer	Hanno Nickau	428	83588
Safety Committee Secretary	Jennie Charlton	106	83601
Departmental Fire Officer	Jennie Charlton	106	83601
Electrical Safety Supervisor	Terry Brown	140	73881
Graduate Student representative	Will Smith	369	10751

Unite Union Representative	contact:	nite@ox.ac.uk
Unison Union Representative	contact:	unison@ox.ac.uk
UCU Union Representative	contact:	ucu@.ox.ac.uk



## **B. Application for Computer Resources on Department of Computer Science Facilities**

The Department network connects dozens of real and virtual servers, several hundred workstations (mostly Linux but also Windows), and many other machines. Facilities elsewhere are accessed via fast connections to the Internet. Details of the facilities available on the network may be obtained from any of the Department's Computing Officers or on the web at: <http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/help/>

The University has formal regulations and a code of conduct which govern the use and misuse of Computers and Networks. In addition to this, members of the Department of Computer Science are expected as a matter of honour to respect the privacy of other users of the networks to which they have access, and to refrain from actions which will cause others' work to be damaged or delayed. Any member of the Department seeking to explore the letter, rather than the spirit, of the University regulations would be well advised to consult the Director of Graduate Studies beforehand.

For an account on the Department's own network you should complete the Application for Computer Resources form included in your induction pack, and bring it to the first practical class. If this is not possible, please consult the support team (user accounts), Room 142, Tel: 83589

If you experience difficulties in using any of the machines or networks, please send electronic mail to [support@cs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:support@cs.ox.ac.uk)

The following notes are to help you to complete your Application for Computer Resources.

### **The Data Protection Act**

The Data Protection Act 1998 defines "personal data" as data which "relate to a living individual who can be identified- (a) from those data, or (b) from those data and other information which is in the possession of, or is likely to come into the possession of, the data controller, and includes any expression of opinion about the individual and any indication of the intentions of the data controller or any other person in respect of the individual;"

The University has issued a statement on its Data Protection Policy, and you are requested to read and take note of this; a copy is appended. By signing the application form you are agreeing that you will not misuse personal data. If you are in any doubt about this, or other aspects of data protection, you should contact the support staff.

### **Other Notes**

These notes are to help you to interpret the Application for Computer Resources form. If you need any additional help or information, please contact the support staff at the Department of Computer Science, Wolfson Building, Parks Road, [support@csox.ac.uk](mailto:support@csox.ac.uk)

Nobody may use the resources of the Department of Computer Science without signing an application form, nor continue to do so once their account has expired.

Queries about the conditions imposed by particular software licence agreements should be addressed to the support staff.

Heads of University departments issue rules and regulations which apply to all whose use facilities in their departments. The use of Department of Computer Science facilities based in the Thom Building is governed by the rules of the Department of Engineering Science (as they apply to the Thom Building) and by the rules of the Department of Computer Science (as they apply to use of practical facilities). You must comply with any such rules which are brought to your attention. The University has issued a policy on data protection and computer misuse which you should read and take note of, copy attached. **By signing the application form you are agreeing that you will not misuse any of the resources.**

Referenced documents are available at or based upon:

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/dataprotection/policy/>

(University Policy on Data Protection)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/all?title=Data%20Protection>

(Data Protection Acts)

[www.ict.ox.ac.uk/oxford/rules](http://www.ict.ox.ac.uk/oxford/rules) (Regulations and Policies applying to all users of University ICT facilities)

### **Returning the application form**

Please bring the completed form to the Introduction to the Computing Facilities talk or one of the practical classes arranged for you during the induction week where you will be asked to hand it to one of the Departmental Lecturers in exchange for details of your username and password.

### **Declaration**

This is a copy of the declaration which each student who requires computing facilities is asked by the Department of Computer Science to sign:

I accept that all software systems and software packages used by me are to be regarded as covered by software licence agreement, with which I agree to abide, which unless specifically stating otherwise will prohibit me from making copies of the software or transferring copies of the software to anyone else, other than for security purposes, or from using the software or any of its components as the basis of a commercial product or in any other way for commercial gain. I indemnify the Chancellor, Masters and Scholars of the University of Oxford, and the Oxford University Department of Computer Science, for any liability resulting from my breach of any such software licence agreement.

I will not use personal data as defined by the Data Protection Act on computing facilities made available to me in respect of this application other than in the course of my work as per the University's registration. I accept that the Oxford University Department of Computer Science reserve the right to examine material on or connected to any of their facilities when it becomes necessary for the proper conduct of those facilities or to meet legal requirements and to dispose of any material associated with this application for access to its resources upon termination or expiry of that authorisation.

I agree to abide by any code of conduct relating to the systems I use and the University policy on data protection and computer misuse. In particular, I will not (by any wilful or deliberate act) jeopardise or corrupt, or attempt to jeopardise or corrupt, the integrity of

the computing equipment, its system programs or other stored information, nor act in any way which leads to or could be expected to lead to the disruption of the approved work of other authorised users.

## **C. Regulations Relating to the Use of Information Technology Facilities**

See: <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/196-052.shtml>

## **D. Rules and Regulations Concerning use of Department Equipment**

These are the formal conditions under which use may be made of Computer Science equipment in the Department of Computer Science and on level six of the Thom Building. Users *must* abide by the rules; anyone wishing to use the facilities of the Department of Computer Science must sign a declaration to do so.

Copies of the rules are displayed in Department of Computer Science buildings and in the Practical's Laboratory on level six of the Thom Building.

### **Definitions**

In these rules, 'users' are staff or students of the University who have been given accounts on the Department of Computer Science workstation network. The authorisation permits those involved to use the facilities of the department only for the subject of their course. Authorisation lapses on the completion of that course. A 'remote terminal' is any device that may be used to make a connection with the network. Any reference to equipment is assumed to include any Department of Computer Science equipment on level six of the Thom Building. A 'remote site' is any equipment, or building containing equipment, that is not covered by these rules. The 'Director' is the Director of the Department of Computer Science, the Head of the Department of Engineering Science or their agents.

### **Rules**

1. The submission of a completed registration form to the Department of Computer Science implies that the user has read, understood and has agreed to comply with these rules.
2. No work of direct commercial application may be carried out without the written authorisation of the Director who shall specify any conditions to be observed. In particular, a charge may be made for the use of some or all of the facilities and restrictions may be made on the use of certain items of software.
3. The University will not be liable for any loss or damage sustained by any user in any involvement with Computer Science
4. It is the responsibility of a user to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, and, in general, with all statutory and other provisions and regulations for the time being in force in the field of data protection and information privacy. Those whose work involves or may involve the storage of personal data as defined in the Data Protection Act 1998 are required to notify the Department of Computer Science in advance.
5. Equipment in the Practicals Laboratory on level six of the Thom Building is available to all users 09:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday of Full Term. Equipment is available at all times from remote terminals (such as college PCs).  
If at any time any undergraduate is requested by an authorised member of the Department of Computer Science staff or graduate supervisor to leave the Practicals Laboratory, he or she must do so immediately.  
Undergraduate labs are locked and alarmed outside normal working hours when there is no authorised supervisor present.

6. The times that the Department of Computer Science equipment is available may vary from time to time at the discretion of the Director. In particular, users should note that at certain times, certain equipment is booked for practicals and the like. At these times, such equipment may not be used by other users.

Users must comply with local rules of any building they use or that contains equipment that they use. In particular, users accessing the network through remote terminals must comply with the rules of the Computing Service and users accessing remote sites must comply with the rules of the site that they are connected to as well as the Computing Service rules.
7. Departmental equipment (including workstations, printers and network switches) must not be unplugged, disconnected or switched off. **Students are not allowed to plug in laptops in either the Department of Computer Science or the Thom Building.**
8. Children under the age of 16 years and animals are not allowed in the Practicals Laboratory without prior written permission of the Director.
9. Meetings of any kind, other than authorised classes and practicals, may not be held in the Practicals Laboratory without the written permission of the Director, who shall specify any conditions to be observed.
10. Notices or posters may only be displayed if they are clearly marked with the name of the person posting and are placed on an appropriate board according to content. The Director reserves the right to remove any notice or poster without advance warning.
11. In the interests of safety and to prevent damage to the equipment, eating and drinking are prohibited in all equipment areas. Smoking is also prohibited in all rooms and corridors.
12. Fire alarms and fire extinguishers may only be used in case of emergency. Any tampering with fire alarms, fire extinguishers, room alarms, locks, key boxes or cabinets will be regarded as an offence against the rules.
13. Students are not permitted to use departmental telephone extensions for external calls on the BT network except in case of emergency. There is a pay phone in the reception area of the Thom Building.
14. No person may make use of Computer Science facilities other than for an authorised course unless written permission is obtained from the Director.
15. No person may, by any wilful or deliberate act, jeopardise or corrupt, or attempt to jeopardise or corrupt, the integrity of the computing equipment, its system programs or other stored information. In particular, no user may:
  - a. attempt to store files in any manner whatsoever that could be considered an attempt to evade file quotas;
  - b. allow their password to become known to any other person (if a user suspects that some other person may know their password, they should change it immediately);
  - c. log in, or attempt to log in, to any computer as another user;
  - d. take on, or to appear to take on, the identity of another user or for their username to appear changed according to any process or piece of software;
  - e. send unwarranted unsolicited e-mail to others;
  - f. post inappropriate messages to newsgroups;
  - g. knowingly send, or facilitate the sending of, offensive material or knowingly download or store or facilitate the downloading or storing of offensive material;
  - h. send or propagate 'chain e-mail'.
16. No person may act in any way which leads to, or could be expected to lead to, the disruption of the approved work of any other user.
17. The Director may suspend any person who is believed to be in breach of these rules from use of all or specified departmental facilities. The Director may also make subsequent use of the equipment and/or facilities subject to such conditions as he thinks fit. The

Director may, at his discretion, report the matter to the University Proctors with recommendations for further action, except that if a suspension of greater than two weeks is imposed, the matter shall be reported to the University Proctors.

In the case of the user being a member of a University other than Oxford, or of some other such institution, the matter will be reported to the Director of computing facilities at that University or institution.

18. Failure to discharge a debt to the Department of Computer Science shall be a cause for suspension from use of the facilities.
19. The Director may make such general conditions on the use of Department of Computer Science equipment as he thinks fit from time to time.
20. Appeal against the actions of the Director under rules 16, 17 and 18 shall be made to the University Proctors.

### **Use of Department of Engineering Science Premises**

In addition to the rules of the University and of the Department of Computer Science, students using the facilities in the Thom Building should be aware of, and comply with, the following rules extracted from the Rules of the Department of Engineering Science:

5. Normal working hours of the department are Monday to Thursday, 08:15–13:00 and 14:00–17:15; and Friday, 08:15–13:00 and 14:00–16:45.
6. Undergraduate members of the department may use the buildings only during normal working hours except that during term, access to the library, staff rooms and lecture rooms are permitted during the following additional hours: Monday to Friday, after normal working hours up to 19:00; and Saturday, 08:15–13:00.
10. Except by permission of the staff member responsible, junior members may not remove tools or equipment from any part of the buildings.
12. Except by permission of the member of staff responsible, junior members of the department are not permitted to enter research laboratories, staff offices, stores, workshops (other than the staff/student workshop), roof areas, service areas, photographic darkrooms, the enquiry office and rooms carrying notices of special hazards. Except in the case of fire, junior members must not use the walk way round the outside of the Thom Building at the seventh floor level.
16. Permission must be obtained from the Head of Department before photographs or articles concerning the work of the department are communicated to the press.
17. Cars can only be parked in the university car parks in working hours if you hold a peak time parking permit. .
18. Motor cycles should be parked in the spaces provided and pedal cycles should be left in the racks, including those adjacent to the Department of Metallurgy and Science of Materials.
19. Those entrusted with a key or swipe card to any departmental building are responsible for ensuring that the building is properly locked if they leave outside normal working hours. The loss of a key must be reported immediately. The copying of keys is forbidden.

## **E. University of Oxford - Code of Practice Relating to Harassment**

The University Policy and Procedure on Harassment and Bullying can be found at:

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/harassmentadvice/policyandprocedure/>

### **Guidance on taking action if you believe you have been harassed - informal or formal resolution?**

If possible, you should attempt to resolve the matter informally; it may be that the alleged harasser does not know what effect his or her behaviour is having on you. If an informal resolution can be effectively achieved, this will in many cases be advantageous to you. It is however recognised that, in some cases, only a formal procedure would be appropriate.

Regardless of whether you succeed in resolving the matter informally, or decide to bring a formal complaint, try to keep a factual record of the offending behaviour. It is easy to forget details after the event and such a record will help you when seeking advice, in deciding whether to make a complaint, in formulating the complaint and in giving evidence at any subsequent hearing.

The harassment adviser will discuss with you what steps you can take to try to reach an informal resolution. The first step may be to speak with the alleged harasser and let him or her know that you object to his or her behaviour, explain why you object and ask that they stop. You should keep a factual record of what is said and done and of any witnesses present. Alternatively, or as a second step, you could put your objections and a request to stop in a letter addressed to the alleged harasser. Again, keep a copy. It is not advisable to communicate with the alleged harasser by email as these are easily copied and all too quickly sent without proper consideration of the wording.

The harassment adviser cannot tell you what you should say, or write a letter for you, but he or she can guide you, discuss the steps to take and review the outcomes with you.

If the behaviour continues regardless of your requests to stop, or, if attempting an informal resolution is not appropriate in the first place, the next stage will be to make a formal complaint.

The Harassment Advisors for the Department of Computer Science are:

Julie Sheppard Tel: 73817 Email: Julie.sheppard@cs.ox.ac.uk	Luke Ong Tel: 83522 Email: Luke.Ong@cs.ox.ac.uk
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And you should contact them in the first instance.

## **F. University Policy on Intellectual Property Rights**

Please see: <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/researchsupport/ip/>

## **G. Equal Opportunities**

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT: STUDENTS**

Please see:

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/missionstatement/integratedequalitypolicy/>

### **Departmental Disability Co-ordinator**

Shoshannah Holdom - tel. 73863, email: [Shoshannah.holdom@cs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Shoshannah.holdom@cs.ox.ac.uk)

## **H. Notes of Guidance for MSc in Computer Science Students and their Supervisors**

### ***Responsibilities of the supervisor:***

In agreeing to supervise an MSc student, the supervisor must recognise and accept the responsibilities both to the student and to the divisional board.

Supervisors should meet with their new students ideally in 0th week but no later than the end of week 1.

The supervisor is responsible for assisting the student in the selection of options and ensuring that the student has the correct background for particular courses. There must be no significant overlap with courses already completed either at Oxford or elsewhere. Students have to submit a form by Monday of week 3 committing themselves to courses they will definitely follow. This has to be countersigned by the supervisor. The supervisor is also responsible for advising the student about attendance at classes and requisite techniques (including helping to arrange special instruction where necessary).

The supervisor should meet with the student regularly i.e. a minimum of half an hour per fortnight. Times should be fixed to ensure that a busy supervisor does not inadvertently find that meetings are less frequent than the student would like, and to give sufficient time for the student to discuss the work and for the supervisor to check that certain things have been done. Informal day-to-day contact should not be seen as a substitute for formal scheduled meetings. The supervisor should also be accessible to the student at other appropriate times when advice is needed.

During meetings the supervisor should ask to see the student's class work and practical work and ensure that they understand the demonstrator's notes. If a student exhibits a consistent weakness and misunderstanding, supervisors should inform the Academic Administrator and the Director of the MSc as soon as possible so that the arrangement of extra special supervision can be authorised.



The supervisor should tell the student from time to time how well, in the supervisor's opinion, the work is progressing, and try to ensure that the student feels properly directed and able to communicate with the supervisor. It is essential that when problems arise, corrective action is clearly identified and full guidance and assistance are given to the student.

If the supervisor is unable to see a student due to unforeseen circumstances they should inform the MSc Course Administrator so that alternative arrangements can be made.

If a student regularly fails to keep appointments the supervisor should inform the MSc Course Administrator who will inform the Tutor for Graduates at the student's college and the Director of the MSc. This applies especially to project supervisions.

The supervisor is required to report on the student's work at the end of each term. Each report should state the nature and extent of recent contact with the student. The report should also make clear whether the student is making satisfactory progress. Report forms should be completed in a timely manner i.e. returned to the University offices before the beginning of the following term.

### ***Responsibilities of the student***

The student must accept his or her obligation to act as a responsible member of the University's academic community.

The student should take ultimate responsibility for his or her studies and develop an appropriate working pattern, including an agreed and professional relationship with the supervisor. The student should discuss with the supervisor the type of guidance and comment which he or she finds most helpful and agree a schedule of meetings.

The student should make appropriate use of the teaching and learning facilities available within the University.

It is the student's responsibility to seek out and follow the regulations relevant to his or her course, including faculty/departmental handbooks/notes of guidance, and to seek clarification from supervisors and elsewhere if this is necessary.

The student should not hesitate to take the initiative in raising problems or difficulties, however elementary they may seem. He or she should ensure that any problems regarding the project are drawn to the attention of the supervisor so that appropriate guidance may be offered.

If the student feels there are good grounds for contemplating a change of supervision arrangements, this should first be discussed with the supervisor or, if this is difficult, with the advisor, the Academic Administrator or the Director of the MSc course.

The student should seek to maintain progress in accordance with the plan of work agreed with the supervisor. Both the student and the supervisor should keep a record of all formal, scheduled meetings. They may wish to agree a record of what has been discussed and decided.

The student should recognise that the supervisor may have many competing demands on his or her time. The student should give adequate notice of unscheduled meetings. The need for adequate notice also applies to requests for meetings from the supervisor.

The student should be aware that the provision of constructive criticism is central to a satisfactory supervisory relationship, and should always seek a full assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of his or her work.

Where problems arise it is essential that a student gives full weight to any guidance and corrective action proposed by the supervisor.

Students should ensure that they allow adequate time for writing up their dissertation and should not take up employment before the submission deadline. Particular attention should be paid to final proof reading.

Students should make full use of the facilities for career guidance and development and should consult their supervisor for advice where appropriate.

## **I. Advice and Guidance on MSc Projects**

### ***Important Deadlines***

- **Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2015:** a [project registration form](#) must be submitted to us by this date and it should be handed to Sarah Retz (room 112).
- **Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2015:** a project proposal must be handed to Sarah Retz (room 112).
- **Monday 31 August, 2015, noon:** submission date for the dissertation.
- **Friday 2 October, 2015:** viva voce examination date.

### ***Available Projects and Registration Details***

Available projects can be found here:

<http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/teaching/studentprojects/MSCIinCS.html>

You should submit the registration form with either a single project title, together with a signature of the supervisor, or a list of at least three projects for which you have (or are doing) the stated prerequisites. We would encourage you to talk to potential supervisors and select a specific project if possible. However, if you are not able to do this, then the Projects Committee will endeavour to find a suitable person to supervise one of the projects you have listed. If you do supply a list projects you are interested in, then please make sure that they are selected from at least two different possible supervisors.

Although some students do projects that are jointly supervised with another department or industry you should remember that the project has to be relevant to computer science and should demonstrate your understanding and ability to exploit and integrate the material you have learnt from the courses you have taken.

Please note the regulations stipulate that you must demonstrate a link between your project and the taught part of the course.

In making your choice of project, you may wish to look at previous projects held in the Library.

Below are some that were awarded a distinction in the MSc in Computer Science.

- Sparsh Gupta - Web Content Recommendation Using Machine Learning on User Mouse Tracking Data - (2009)
- Muneeb Ali - Forecasting UK Housing Market Using Artificial Neural Networks - (2009)
- Edward Grefenstette - Analysis Document Similarity Measures (2009)
- Rachel Bailey - A Comparative Study of Algorithms for Solving Bishchi Games (2010)
- Theodore Bluche - Mathematical Formula Recognition Using Machine Learning techniques (2010)
- Stuart Bowyer - Segmentation and Classification of Magnetic Resonance Images (2010)
- Nurzhan Bakibayev - Query Evaluation on Factorised Representations - (2011)
- Di Chen - Complexity of Metric Bisimilarity for Markov Chains (2011)
- Ian Childs - Deductive theorem Prover Based on GADTs (2011)
- Constantin Daniil - OX Alert (2012)
- Vladimir Zamdzhiev - A Categorical Approach to Quantum Secret Sharing (2012)
- Julie Makelberge - Initial Investigations in Multitask Learning Applied to Steganalysis (2012)
- Nathan Hale - Network-based Content Recommendation for Social Interaction (2012)
- Laura Draghici - Updates in Factorised Databases (2013)
- Liyuan Lu - reCon: Web Document Analysis and Reconstruction (2013)
- Michael McLeod - Reasoning about Multi-stage Programming (2013)
- Stefa Saftescu - Visualising CSP Compressions (2013)

Please make sure that you also read the section in the MSc Course Handbook on dissertations.

Project proposals fall into two categories: there are specific proposals put forward by members of the department which can be discussed with the academic concerned, and some members of the department have put forward general areas in which they would be prepared to supervise projects.

If you have a project of your own in mind you can discuss it with the academic whose interests fall into this area.

*You should note that it is a requirement of the MSc in Computer Science that you must demonstrate a link between your project and the taught part of the course.*

### ***Guidance on Presentation***

The following guidelines have been produced for MSc in Computer Science students to refer to when completing their dissertation. Please note that the University's Examination Regulations govern the preparation and presentation of a research thesis (currently under section 13.6), and it is these guidelines that should be followed. Please consult the latest edition of the Examination Regulations when reading this document, and before you start to type up your dissertation.

Should any of the information be unclear, please contact Sarah Retz ([sarah.retz@cs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.retz@cs.ox.ac.uk)) for advice in advance of the submission deadline, and certainly before the dissertation is bound.

### *General*

- Two typewritten or printed copies must be submitted, this can include LaTeX, which is the best choice if your dissertation involves a significant amount of mathematical notation.
- The paper size must be A4 (210 x 297mm).
- Both copies should be securely bound with a cover that displays the title page. Both comb-binding and thermal binding are sufficient, and there is a comb-binding facility at the reception of the Wolfson Building.

### *Formatting*

- Size 11 or 12 font must be used.
- Single spacing should be used for the main text, quotations and footnotes.
- The margins of the page must not be less than 1.5cm, apart from the binding edge where the margin must not be between 3-3.5cm.
- Pages of the dissertation must be numbered throughout except for the title page.
- The dissertation can be printed single or double sided.

### *Title Page*

- The full title of the dissertation.
- The term and year of submission.
- The candidates name.
- The title of the degree the dissertation is being submitted under.

### *Contents*

- You should include a contents page.

### *Abstract*

- It is strongly recommended that a short abstract (of less than one page) be included at the beginning of the dissertation, separate from the Introduction.

### *Submitting programs on a disc*

- Occasionally people like to include their working program on a disc, inside the front cover of the dissertation. This is acceptable, but you should not assume that the examiners will have an opportunity to run it, and the rest of your dissertation should be complete in itself.

### *Training Session*

In Trinity Term there will be a session on presentation skills which will cover both writing skills and verbal presentations. All students are expected to attend as this will provide you with useful background for your dissertation.

## **J. Plagiarism**

The University's code of conduct concerning academic integrity is set out on the website at:

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/cops/researchintegrity/>

The following information and advice is of relevance and use to graduate students, particularly those with limited experience of academic writing. It is expected that most graduates will have mastered the rules and conventions of scholarly writing before arriving at Oxford, and therefore plagiarism is treated as a serious breach of academic integrity. However, even graduate students sometimes find it difficult to avoid unintentional plagiarism; consequently you must ensure that you understand fully what is meant by the term “plagiarism”, how to avoid it in your writing and the potential consequences of either deliberate or inadvertent plagiarism.

All graduate students must complete the University’s online plagiarism courses as part of their graduate skills training portfolio:

[https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/access/content/group/e34f4cf9-1ecb-4244-a62b-ba3e96472790/SkTK\\_WebPages/Tool\\_Ep\\_Plagiarism.html](https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/access/content/group/e34f4cf9-1ecb-4244-a62b-ba3e96472790/SkTK_WebPages/Tool_Ep_Plagiarism.html)

[https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/access/content/group/e34f4cf9-1ecb-4244-a62b-ba3e96472790/SkTK\\_WebPages/Tool\\_Ep\\_Plagiarism2.html](https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/access/content/group/e34f4cf9-1ecb-4244-a62b-ba3e96472790/SkTK_WebPages/Tool_Ep_Plagiarism2.html)

At the end of the course there is a quiz to test your knowledge; if successful you can print out a certificate for your records. The course also provides an accessible source of information and advice about plagiarism. You should use it in conjunction with the advice on these pages.

### **What is plagiarism?**

Plagiarism is the copying or paraphrasing of other people’s work or ideas into your own work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition.

Collusion is another form of plagiarism involving the unauthorised collaboration of students (or others) in a piece of work.

Cases of suspected plagiarism in assessed work are investigated under the disciplinary regulations concerning conduct in examinations. Intentional or reckless plagiarism may incur severe penalties, including failure of your degree or expulsion from the university.

### **What forms can plagiarism take?**

Verbatim quotation of other people's intellectual work without clear acknowledgement. Quotations must always be identified as such by the use of either quotation marks or indentation, with adequate citation. It must always be apparent to the reader which parts are your own independent work and where you have drawn on someone else's ideas and language.

Paraphrasing the work of others by altering a few words and changing their order, or by closely following the structure of their argument, is plagiarism because you are deriving your words and ideas from their work without giving due acknowledgement. Even if you include a reference to

the original author in your own text you are still creating a misleading impression that the paraphrased wording is entirely your own. It is better to write a brief summary of the author's overall argument in your own words than to paraphrase particular sections of his or her writing. This will ensure you have a genuine grasp of the argument and will avoid the difficulty of paraphrasing without plagiarising. You must also properly attribute all material you derive from lectures.

Cutting and pasting from the Internet. Information derived from the Internet must be adequately referenced and included in the bibliography. It is important to evaluate carefully all material found on the Internet, as it is less likely to have been through the same process of scholarly peer review as published sources. For guidance on how to use the Internet appropriately in your scholarly work, try the 'Internet Detective' online tutorial: <http://www.vts.intute.ac.uk/detective/>

Collusion. This can involve unauthorised collaboration between students, failure to attribute assistance received, or failure to follow precisely regulations on group work projects. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are entirely clear about the extent of collaboration permitted, and which parts of the work must be your own.

Inaccurate citation. It is important to cite correctly, according to the conventions of your discipline. Additionally, you should not include anything in a footnote or bibliography that you have not actually consulted. If you cannot gain access to a primary source you must make it clear in your citation that your knowledge of the work has been derived from a secondary text (e.g. Bradshaw, D. Title of Book, discussed in Wilson, E., Title of Book (London, 2004), p. 189). For more guidance on how to reference correctly, see <http://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/200232/referencing>.

Failure to acknowledge. You must clearly acknowledge all assistance which has contributed to the production of your work, such as advice from fellow students, laboratory technicians, and other external sources. This need not apply to the assistance provided by your tutor or supervisor, nor to ordinary proofreading, but it is necessary to acknowledge other guidance which leads to substantive changes of content or approach.

Professional agencies. You should neither make use of professional agencies in the production of your work nor submit material which has been written for you. It is vital to your intellectual training and development that you should undertake the research process unaided.

Autoplagerism. You must not submit work for assessment which you have already submitted (partially or in full) to fulfil the requirements of another degree course or examination.

The necessity to reference applies not only to text, but also to other media, such as computer code, illustrations, graphs etc. It applies equally to published text drawn from books and journals, and to unpublished text, whether from lecture hand-outs, thesis or other students' essays. You must also attribute text or other resources downloaded from web sites.

### **Why should you avoid plagiarism?**

Graduate students' work is expected to meet high academic standards and will be scrutinised carefully. The University must ensure that these standards are upheld and that its research degrees provide proper training for an academic career. In addition, the academic community has to be satisfied that those who obtain the D.Phil. are appropriately qualified to undertake

further unsupervised research. Plagiarism at this level is a serious breach of academic integrity and the consequences can be severe. In some cases a student may be expelled, or they may be stripped of their degree if their thesis is later discovered to contain plagiarised material. Some academics' careers have been ruined by the discovery of plagiarism in decades-old published work.

Far from being simply a disciplinary matter, plagiarism undermines the central tenets of scholarly discourse. Knowledge develops via a cumulative process as a result of years of research, innovation and debate. It is a principle of intellectual honesty that all members of the academic community should acknowledge their debt to the originators of the ideas, words, and data which form the basis for their own work. It is important to recognise that academic texts are multi-voiced, constructed from references to other texts; it is your responsibility as a writer to make it clear at all times whose 'voice' is speaking, whether your own or one of your sources'. This requirement for transparency of source use means that you must cite adequately, make it clear when you are quoting or paraphrasing, and establish the relationship between your source and your own text.

## **Citation**

Giving credit to the authors of the ideas and interpretations you cite not only accords recognition to their labours, but also provides a solid theoretical basis for your own argument. Your ideas will gain credence if they are supported by the work of respected writers. Transparent source use allows you to situate your work within the debates in your field, and to demonstrate the ways in which your work is original. It also gives your reader the opportunity to pursue a topic further, or to check the validity of your interpretations.

When writing you should consider the ways in which your work depends upon or develops from other research, then signal this with appropriate citation. Make clear your reasons for citing a source. When paraphrasing an idea or interpretation you must ensure that your writing is not too closely derived from the original, and you must also acknowledge the original author.

You will be provided with a guide to the referencing conventions in your discipline, and may wish to employ software which keeps track of your sources and automatically formats the footnotes and bibliography (i.e. EndNote, Reference Manager, ProCite). It is important to be meticulous when taking notes: include full citation details for all the sources you consult and remember to record relevant page numbers. It is far too time-consuming to go back to your books to find page numbers or citation details later. Citation practice varies but, depending on the type of text cited (book, chapter in an edited volume, conference paper, journal article, e-print, etc.), the elements of a reference include: author; title of the book or article; title of the journal or other work; name of the conference; place of publication; date of publication; page numbers; URL; date accessed. The conventions for citing web resources vary between disciplines. You should note as many essential items of information as possible, such as author, title, publisher, dates of publication and last revision, URL, and date of last access. When using e-print archives you should bear in mind that many contain articles which have not yet been submitted for peer review. It is good practice to review the later, published versions for important changes before submitting your dissertation.

## **Patchwriting**

Inexperienced writers, particularly those who are not native speakers of English, often develop their writing technique via a process known as “patchwriting”. If they lack the requisite skills of academic writing or self-expression, they may copy or heavily paraphrase their source material. Where the derivation is not made clear, this is plagiarism. However, it is recognised that many honest students employ mimicry and borrowed language as they learn to write in the academic style, and that patchwriting can be seen as a developmental stage. As students gain more experience at writing they must develop an independent voice and cease to rely on imitation. If work containing unattributed paraphrase is submitted for assessment, it will be treated as plagiarism regardless of the author's intentions.

## **Language skills**

Graduate students who are non-native speakers of English are entitled to take two free courses in English for Academic Studies at the University Language Centre at 12 Woodstock Road. These include a three-term Academic Writing Course, individual writing tutorials, advanced English language teaching, and modules on specific topics, such as pronunciation. Demand for places on these courses often outstrips supply so you should ensure that you book early by going to the Language Centre in person to register. There are also fee-paying courses available, including the intensive Pre-Sessional Course in English for Academic Purposes. This is either a four or eight week course taken during the period from the end of July to late September. It is open to students embarking on study at any English-speaking university, but students coming to Oxford will usually be accommodated by their colleges. Intensive one-week courses in Academic Writing are offered in the ninth or 0th week of some terms, which may be of use to those under severe time pressures. There are also ample resources for independent study in the Language Centre library, and a wealth of online English teaching tools.

## **Cultural differences**

Students who experience difficulties adapting to the culture of academic study at Oxford should not delay in seeking out sources of support and guidance. If you are not a native English speaker, you should take full advantage of the resources at the Language Centre. Do not hesitate to approach your course director or supervisor to discuss your needs. Develop your academic writing skills through practice and ask for detailed feedback on your work. Ensure that you follow scrupulously the source use and referencing conventions of your discipline, even if they vary from those you have used before. You should take the online plagiarism course as early as possible to ensure that you understand the issues involved. This web site and the sites it links to will also provide useful resources. If you have specific difficulties or questions, you should always ask for advice.

## **Disciplinary process**

Plagiarism in the work you submit for assessment is considered to be a breach of the disciplinary regulations regarding conduct in examinations. Full details of the disciplinary process are available elsewhere on this web site.



## **A last word**

Not only is plagiarism unethical, it also seriously undermines the value of your research and of any degree you may obtain. By extension, it devalues the work of your colleagues and the standards of your institution. It can also have far-reaching consequences, the effects of which may be felt many years hence.

However, you should not avoid plagiarism for fear of disciplinary consequences, but because you aspire to produce work of the highest quality. Once you have grasped the principles of source use and citation, you should find it relatively straightforward to steer clear of plagiarism. Moreover, you will reap the additional benefits of improvements to both the lucidity and quality of your writing. It is important to appreciate that mastery of the techniques of academic writing is not merely a practical skill, but one that lends both credibility and authority to your work, and demonstrates your commitment to the principle of intellectual honesty in scholarship.

## **A guide to citing and referencing for students**

This can be found at:

<http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/files/3161/Referencing.pdf>

## **K. Complaints and academic appeals within the Department of Computer Science**

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

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

Nothing in this guidance precludes an informal discussion with the person immediately responsible for the issue that you wish to complain about (and who may not be one of the individuals identified below). This is often the simplest way to achieve a satisfactory resolution.

Many sources of advice are available within colleges, within 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 department's committees.

## **Complaints**

If your concern or complaint relates to teaching or other provision made by the department, then you should raise it with the chairman of the Teaching Committee, Dr Mike Spivey or with the

Director of Graduate Studies, Professor Stephen Pulman as appropriate. Within the department the officer concerned will attempt to resolve your concern/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, etc.), and non-academic issues (e.g. support services, library services, university accommodation, university clubs and societies, etc.). 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 Proctors and Assessor's Memorandum [<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/proctors/pam/>] and the relevant Council regulations [<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/>]

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

## **Academic appeals**

An appeal is defined as a formal questioning of a decision on an academic matter made by the responsible academic body.

For undergraduate or taught courses, a concern, which might lead to an appeal, should be raised with your college authorities and the individual responsible for overseeing your work. It must not be raised directly with examiners or assessors. If it is not possible to clear up your concern in this way, you may put your concern in writing and submit it to the Proctors via the Senior Tutor of your college. As notes above, the procedures adopted by the Proctors in relation to complaints and appeals are on the web [<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/>].

For the examination of research degrees, or in relation to transfer or confirmation of status, your concern should be raised initially with the Director of Graduate Studies. Where a concern is not satisfactorily settled by that means, then you, your supervisor, or your college authority may put your appeal directly to the Proctors.

Please remember in connection with all the cases in paragraphs 8 - 10 that:

The Proctors are not empowered to challenge the academic judgement of examiners or academic bodies.

The Proctors can consider whether the procedures for reaching an academic decision were properly followed; i.e. whether there was a significant procedural administrative error; whether there is evidence of bias or inadequate assessment; whether the examiners failed to take into account special factors affecting a candidate's performance.

On no account should you contact your examiners or assessors directly.

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

This document can also be found on our web pages at: <http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/>