



Department of Computer Science

Hilary Term 2014

How to Apply for Confirmation of DPhil Status

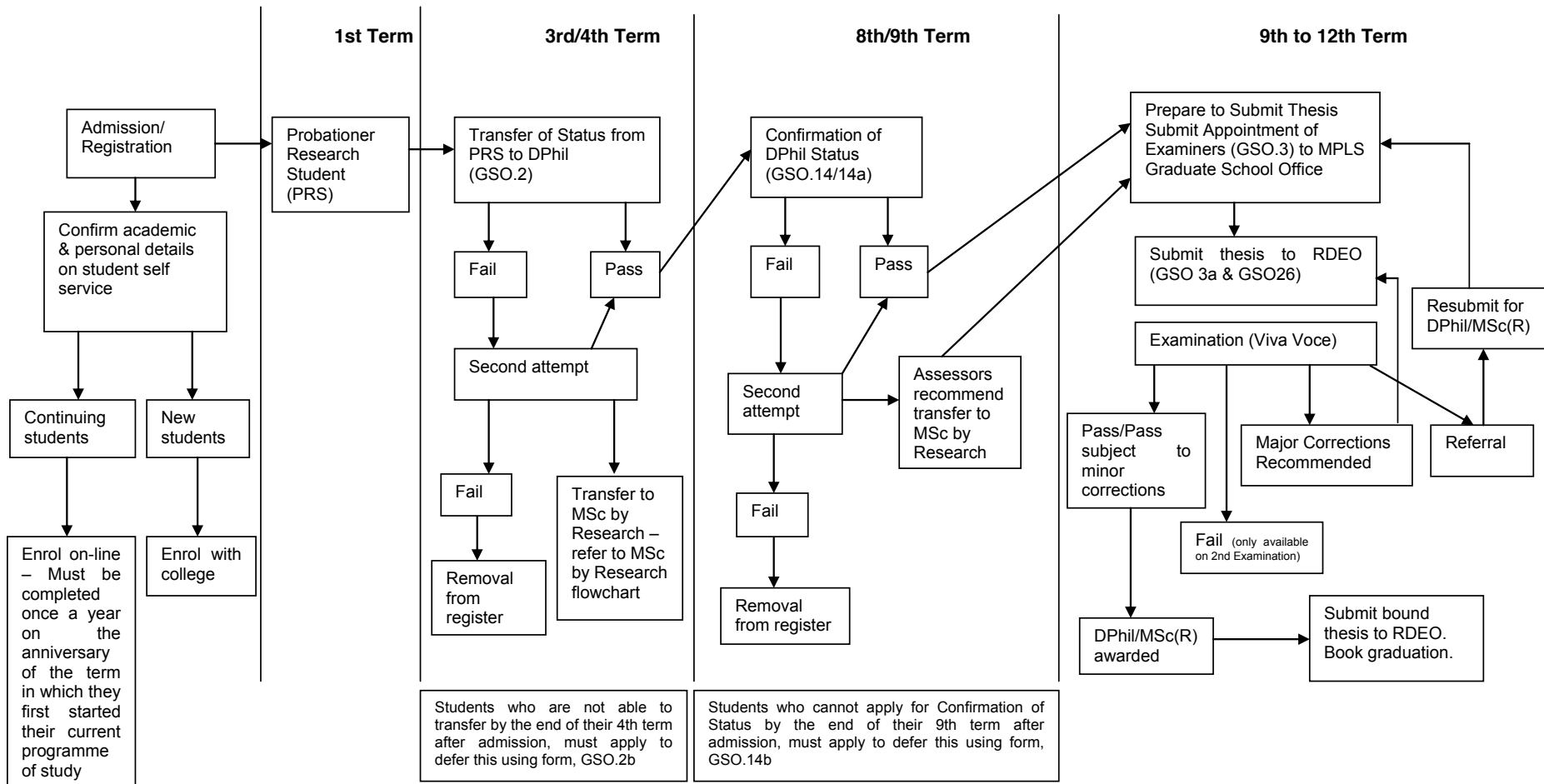
Luke Ong, DGS

Your Oxford DPhil: three Milestones

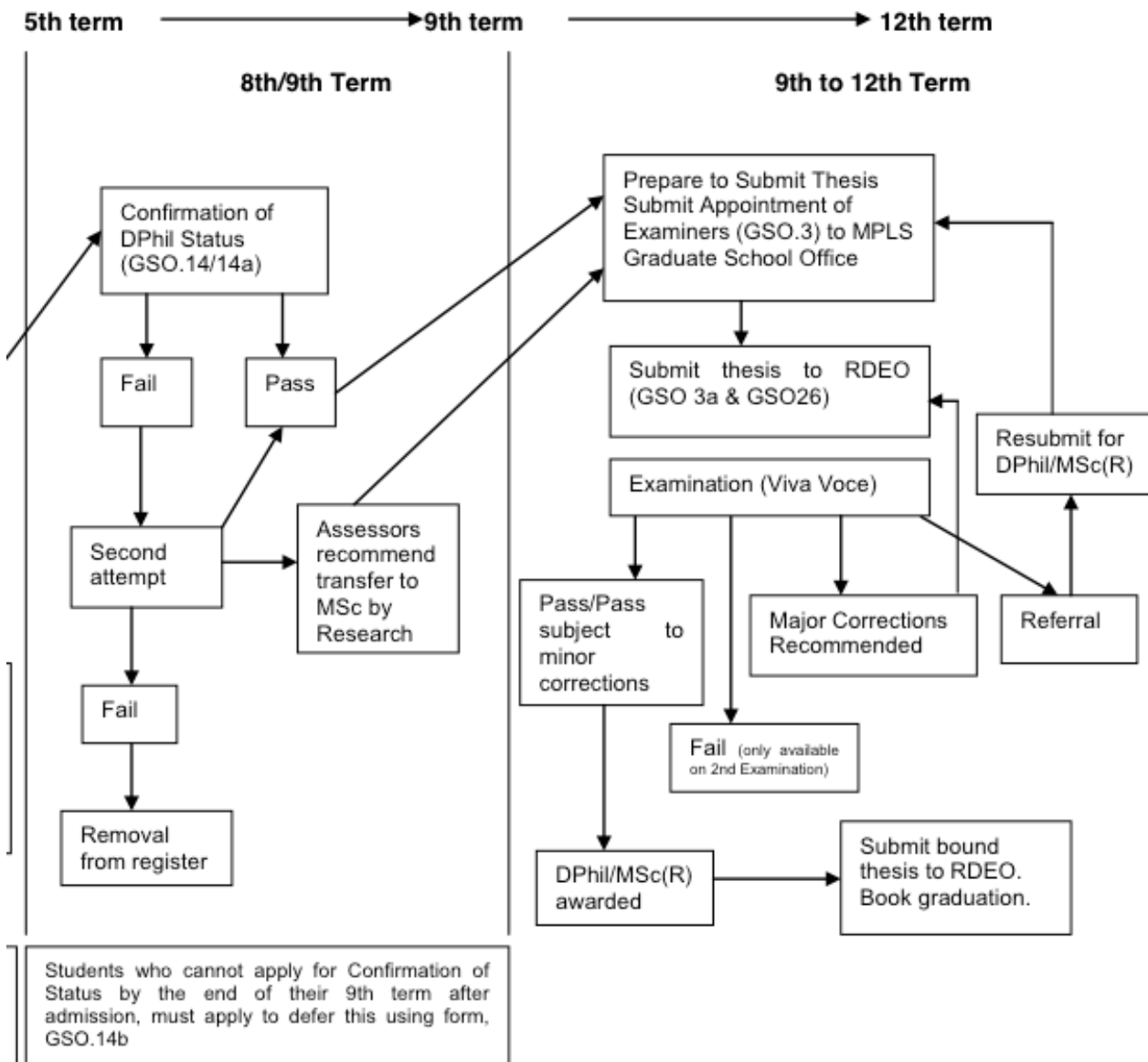
1. ~~Transfer to DPhil status examination~~ **within 4 terms**
2. Confirmation of DPhil status examination **within 9 term**
 - ▶ Submit progress report: thesis statement + papers / draft thesis, contents pages, plan of completion, and timetable
 - ▶ 2 assessors (not supervisor)
 - ▶ Same deadline for DTC students
3. DPhil thesis submission and examination **within 12 term**
 - ▶ 2 examiners: external and internal
 - ▶ Viva voce, in subfusc.

MPLS Progress Flowchart for DPhil Students

1st → 4th term 5th term → 9th term → 12th term



(Please note that only two attempts are permitted at transfer & confirmation of status
(NB: Time scales for DTC Students may differ please refer to Sections 16 & 17)



DPhil completion rate: DCS can do better...

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

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

N.S. = "Not submitted"

students (in Division chart)
14 1,196

students (in UAB chart)
6 169

Snapshot date

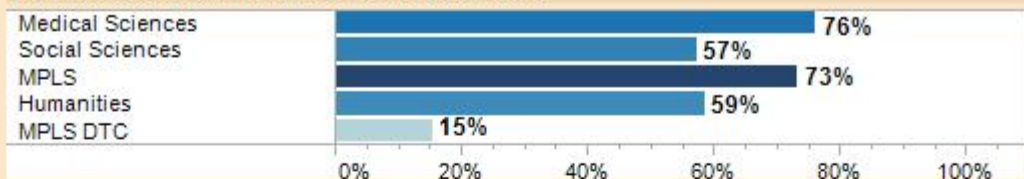
December 1, 2011

Cohorts in dataset

2003-2011

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

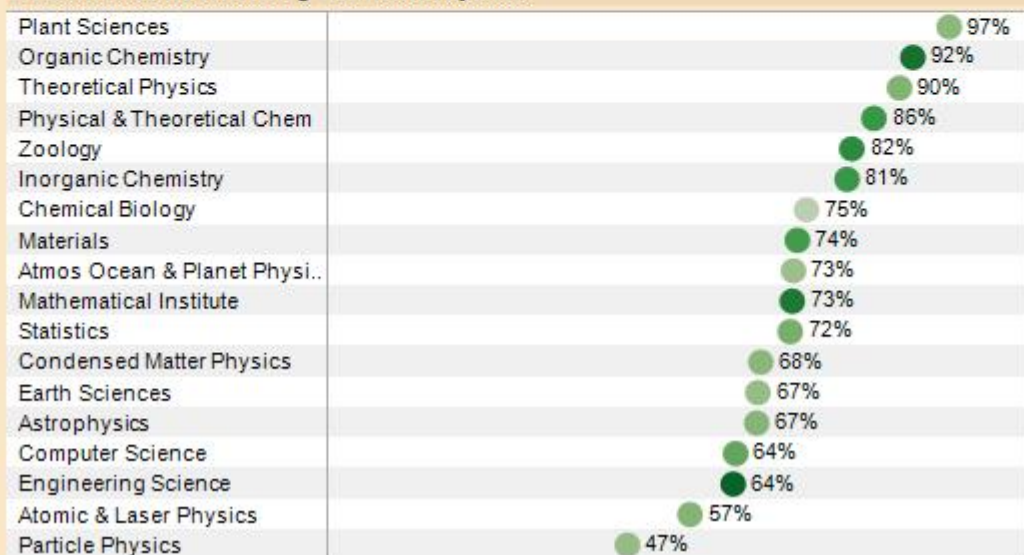
i. % of students submitting <48 months by Division



Select a division to update UAB chart below:

MPLS

ii. % of students submitting <48 months by UAB

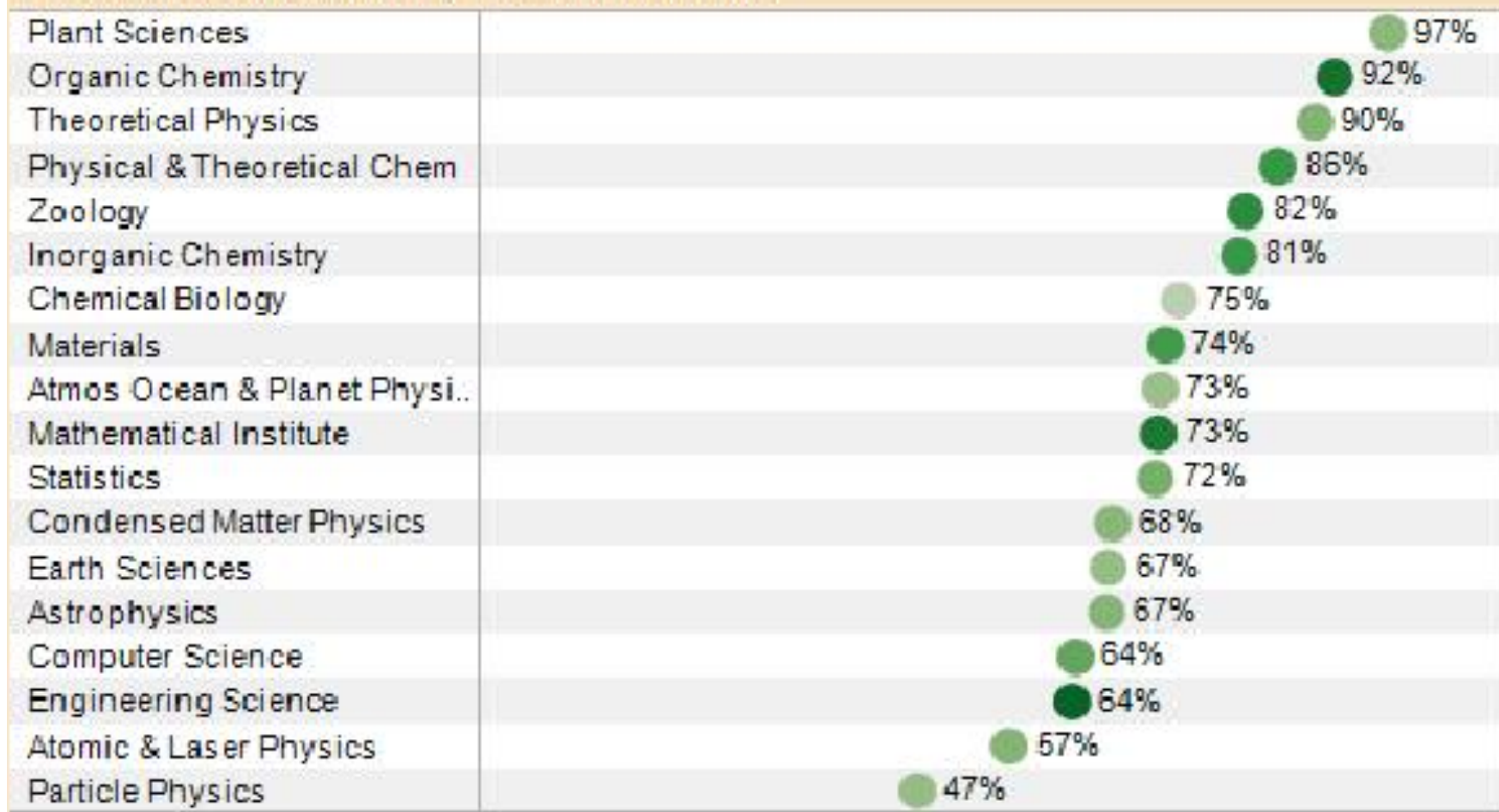


Detail (months)

<=48	>48	N.S.	Total
791	174	74	1,039
645	278	204	1,127
1,196	288	146	1,630
583	216	196	995
14	54	23	91
3,229	1,010	643	4,882

<=48	>48	N.S.	Total
37		1	38
143	8	5	156
43	4	1	48
83	8	6	97
101	16	6	123
83	12	7	102
6	1	1	8
78	18	10	106
27	6	4	37
131	28	21	180
50	13	6	69
38	11	7	56
31	10	5	46
41	16	4	61
62	22	13	97
169	71	26	266
42	20	12	74
31	24	11	66

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



Confirmation

- ▶ Why?
 - ▶ Feedback from assessors on the overall direction
 - ▶ Address problems before submission
- ▶ When?
 - ▶ Should confirm within 9 terms (application due 0th week of 9th term)
 - ▶ Exceptionally, can apply to DGS for deferral
 - ▶ Ideally confirm 6–12 months before submission
 - ▶ Can hold DPhil status for maximum of 12 terms; otherwise status lapses & formal review by DGS
 - ▶ NB. cannot submit thesis without confirmation

Confirmation of DPhil Status Examination

- ▶ *“The purpose of the confirmation examination is to indicate to the student whether submission of the thesis within the course of three further terms would appear to be reasonable, assuming that the thesis continues to develop satisfactorily. It therefore provides a second stage of formal progress review in the 3-4 years of the students overall research programme.”*
 - ▶ Excerpt from a guidance note to confirmation examiners

Criteria of Confirmation

Satisfactory progress to date. Indicators:

- ▶ publications
- ▶ Research activities and training e.g. seminar and conference presentations
- ▶ Ability to submit within 3 terms
- ▶ Evidence that thesis is “in the bag”: ability to write and talk about work with authority
- ▶ Evidence that it is your own work (must clarify your contribution to joint papers)
- ▶ It is ok if the research direction has changed since your transfer; assessors want to hear your story.

What to Submit for Confirmation

1. Progress report

- ▶ A statement of the thesis / preliminary abstract
- ▶ Publications or latest draft chapters of dissertation
- ▶ List of conference/seminar presentations, etc.

2. Table of contents of DPhil dissertation

- ▶ List of chapter and section headings: brief description of contents and status

3. A clean and convincing plan for research yet to be completed

4. A timetable of completion

- ▶ Allow 6 months for write-up

The Confirmation Process

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

Some Advice

- ▶ Motivation and commitment are essential.
- ▶ DPhil Transfer is a milestone that takes you to the next stage: **insufficient** progress and **too much of a perfectionist** equally bad
- ▶ If you feel things are going wrong...
 - ▶ Talk to supervisor
 - ▶ Talk to department advisor / in-college advisor
 - ▶ Approach Julie Sheppard or DGS

Sources of Information

- ▶ **The Graduate Research Student handbook**
 - ▶ DCS and Computer Science specific
 - ▶ <http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/teaching/dphil/docs/handbooks/Handbook2013.pdf>
- ▶ **MPLS handbook**
 - ▶ Essential information about the process, forms to fill, deadlines, etc
 - ▶ <http://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/ckfinder/userfiles/files/Handbook%202013-2014%20-%20Web%20version.pdf>
- ▶ **The ‘Grey Book’**
 - ▶ Authoritative, but MPLS handbook more detailed on regulations and code of practice