



Department of Computer Science

Applying for Transfer to DPhil Status HT 2014

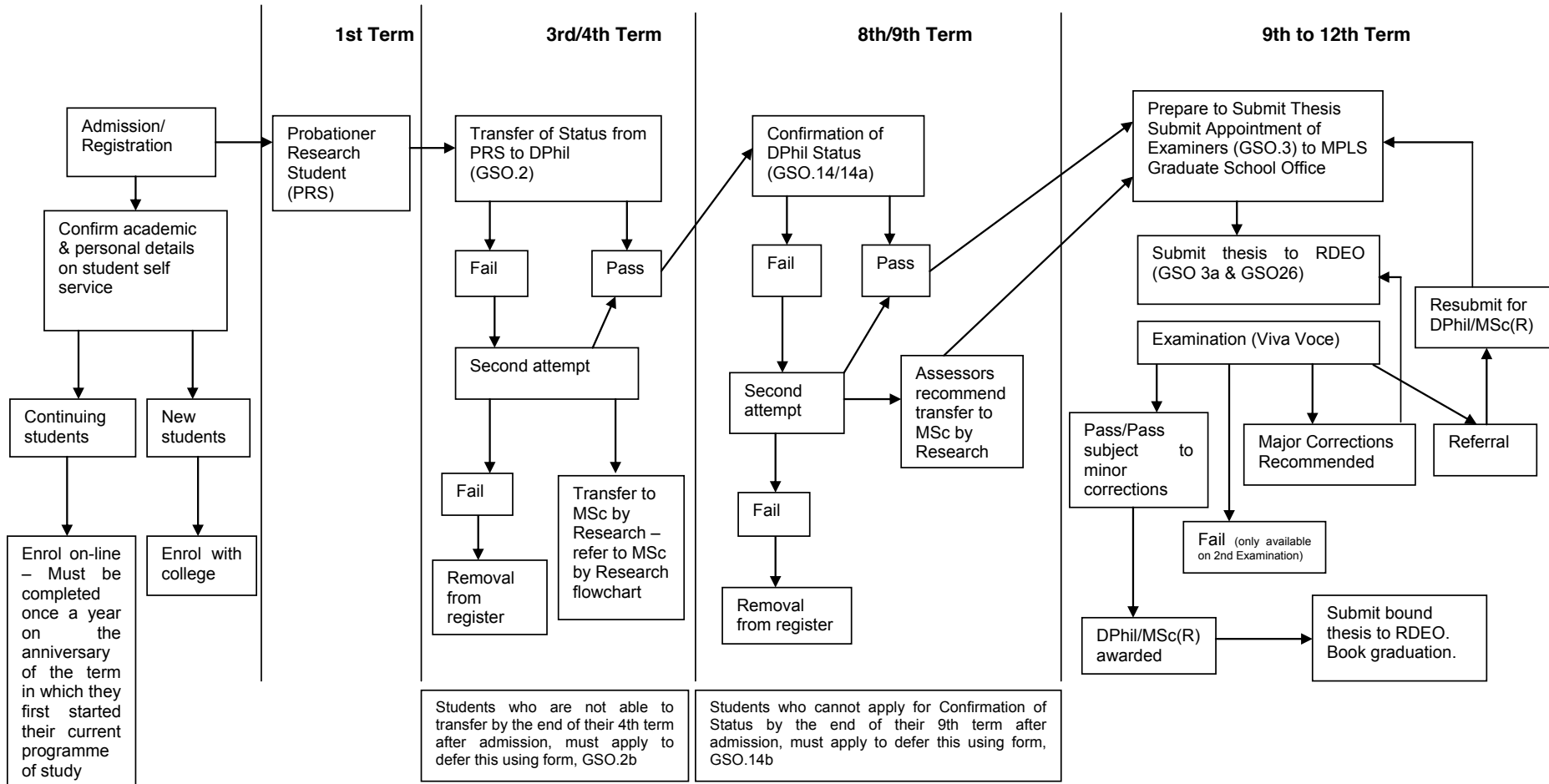
Luke Ong, DGS

Three Hurdles

1. **Transfer to DPhil status examination within 4 terms**
 - ▶ 3 requirements
 - ▶ 2 assessors (not supervisor)
 - ▶ Maximum two attempts, but must complete within 6 terms.
 - ▶ [*DTC students: must apply by Friday of 0th week of 6th term*]
2. **Confirmation of DPhil status examination within 9 term**
 - ▶ Progress report: thesis outline, timetable, completion plan, papers / chapters
 - ▶ 2 assessors (not supervisor, including one with experience of successful supervision to completion)
 - ▶ [*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)

Criteria of Transfer to DPhil Status

1. Knowledge of sufficient depth and breadth
2. Basic competence in independent research
3. Viable DPhil research programme

Transfer to DPhil Status

Must apply (i.e. submit documents) for transfer of status by end of 3rd term (in effect, 0th week, MT 2014).

Viva must be completed and all paperwork approved before start of 5th term.

Transfer of Status Requirements

- I. Portfolio of academic training
- II. Three pieces of assessed work
- III. Qualifying Dissertation

Transfer Examination (viva)

[DTC students: only required to submit qualifying dissertation]

Requirement I: Portfolio of Training

- ▶ A list of lecture courses and seminars attended and training received (with marks where available).
- ▶ *PRS expected to attend departmental seminars (and any research group seminars as directed by supervisor)*
- ▶ Brief account of a technical presentation.
- ▶ Any teaching and lab demo given.

Requirement II: Three Assessments

- ▶ An *assessment* is either a lecture course or a term paper.
- ▶ At least one assessment must be a term paper.
- ▶ Lecture (reading) courses: normally 4th year undergraduate or MSc (CS) or MSc (MFoCS) courses.
- ▶ Term paper: no formal word limit; guide length 12 LNCS pages (or 7000 words), normally marked by supervisor.
- ▶ PRS expected to achieve at least **65%** on average.

Term Paper Marking Scheme

- ▶ **90-100: Outstanding.** Publishable in first-ranked conferences in the field (e.g. LICS, STOC, FOCS, OSDI, POPL, PLDI, etc.)
- ▶ **80-89: Excellent.** Publishable in good conferences.
- ▶ **79-79: Very good.** Publishable in serious workshops.
- ▶ **60-69: Good.** The candidate has demonstrated a good understanding of some state-of-the-art ideas and techniques, and an ability to apply his or her understanding.
- ▶ **50-59: Adequate.**
- ▶ **0-49: Unsatisfactory.**

Requirement III: Qualifying Dissertation

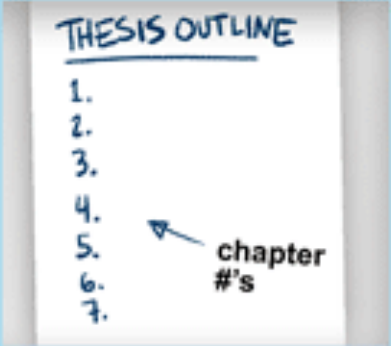
1. Extensive literature survey.
 - ▶ No formal word limit
 - ▶ Guide length is about 5000 words.
2. Thesis proposal (about 6 pages).

A Take on Thesis Outline

WRITING YOUR THESIS OUTLINE

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

STEP 1 Aim for a respectable number of chapters:

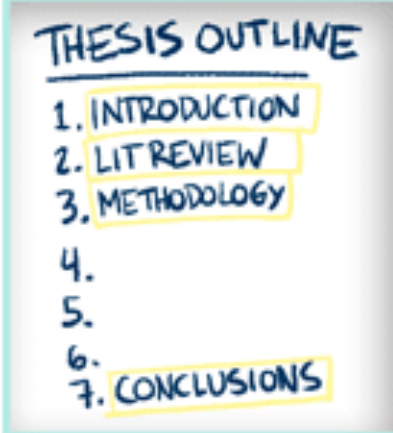


THESIS OUTLINE

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

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

STEP 2 Fill in the "freebies":

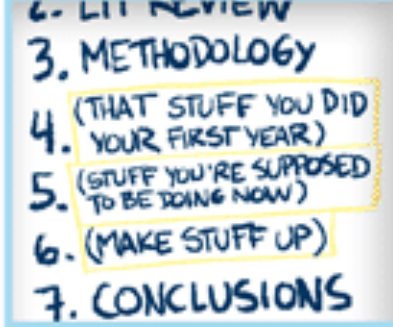


THESIS OUTLINE

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

You're half way done!

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



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

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

STEP 4 Voilà! You just bought yourself another two years



So, how's your thesis going?

i have an outline!

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Thesis Proposal

1. What is your research topic? What are the fundamental challenges?
2. What are you trying to do? Give a high-level description of your research goal, avoiding any jargon if possible.
3. What is the state of the art? What are the limits of current practice? Why is the problem you are trying to solve hard?
4. What is new in your approach? Describe your method with sufficient details to enable the assessors to form a view. Illustrate it using an example or two. Explain why you think it will be successful.
5. What difference will it make if you are successful? What are the risks?
6. How do you plan to evaluate your results? What is the scientific basis?

[Heilmeier's Catechism, Director DARPA, 1970s.]

Qualifying Dissertation and Examination

- ▶ Viva by two assessors - not supervisor(s)
- ▶ Must convince assessors that
 1. you are competent
 2. you have identified a problem worthy of a DPhil and
 3. you have a research plan
- ▶ If pass, proceed to confirmation
- ▶ 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