Professional Masters Programme HANDBOOK

2021

Welcome to the Professional Programme at the University of Oxford

Welcome to the Professional Programme in the Department of Computer Science, University of Oxford http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/softeng/. The Department of Computer Science is one of the world's leading centres for research and teaching, with an international reputation built up over many years. Our current research ranges from exploring the fundamental issues of the meaning of programming languages to machine learning to the engineering of software systems at large-scale. The people that teach on the Professional Programme are cutting edge researchers and industry leaders. This deep expertise influences and informs the courses we teach, which are continually evolving.

The Professional Programme is designed to provide an advanced, part-time, course of study for working professionals looking to broaden and deepen their understanding of the state of the art in engineering modern information systems. Currently, two awards are offered:

- MSc in Software Engineering

- MSc in Software and Systems Security

Cognizant of the demands placed on working professionals, the Programme has specifically been designed with the following objectives in-mind:

- Part-Time: The teaching component of each module consists of an intensive week-long immersion into a particular topic.

- Flexible: There is no set path – students are free to choose modules, subject to the degree schedule, to customize their education.

This handbook is intended to act as a guide to the Department and the wider University. In addition to this handbook, you will find specific information on your course in a supplement on the Professional Programme website. If you think that the handbook could be improved in some way, please let us know.

Key contacts

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Disclaimer

This handbook applies to students starting on the Professional Masters Programme in Michaelmas Term 2021 and applies to the following degree courses:

- MSc in Software Engineering
- MSc in Software and Systems Security

The information in this handbook may be different for students starting in other years.
The information in this handbook is accurate as at October 2021.

Version	Action	Date
Version 21.0	Published start of MT21	

1. Sources of information

This handbook is designed to help you navigate the Department of Computer Science and the broader University of Oxford. It does not replace the official regulations relating to your degree. If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the Examination Regulations then you should follow the Examination Regulations.

The information in this handbook is accurate as at 1st October 2021 however it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges. If such changes are made, the department will publish a new version of this handbook together with a list of the changes and students will be informed accordingly.

In addition to this handbook there are some other important sources of information that you should ensure you are familiar with.

1.1 Examination Regulations

The *Examination Regulations* are the authoritative document on the regulations for the University degrees and examinations. The regulations are available online at https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/.

1.2 University Student Handbook

Each year you will have access to the latest version of the *University Student Handbook*. It forms part of your contract with the University and can be found at https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/student-handbook.

1.3 Oxford Students website

https://www.ox.ac.uk/students contains a wealth of information about anything concerning students – do have a look around!

Your college will probably also have detailed guidance about its own regulations and requirements. Your college advisor and your college office will be able to point you in the right direction.

1.4 Professional Masters Programme Course Handbook

This handbook provides guidance as to what facilities are available to you, how teaching and learning are organised, how your course is structured, and how to find help if you've got any problems.
The online version of this handbook can be found at: http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/pro/handbook/.

2. Finding your way around

Your academic life in Oxford will involve two intimately connected but distinct institutions.

You are a member both of a college and of the University; your supervisor is a member of the Department of Computer Science and possibly a member of a different college to you. Your college will also allocate a college advisor to you, with more of a pastoral role than an academic one.

In principle, the University enables you to study for a degree, monitors your progress, examines you at the end of that study, and awards you a degree. Your College exists to guide and advise you. Admission and supervision of graduate students to Oxford is the responsibility of the department, and their academic and personal well-being are principally the concerns of the colleges.

The Head of the Department of Computer Science in 2021/22 is Prof. Leslie Goldberg. For more information on who is doing what in the Department, you can consult the list of Academic Duties. For names and contact details of first aiders or anything else related to safety in the Department, please see the Department's intranet on Health and Safety.

2.1 The Department of Computer Science

2.1.1 Access to the Department of Computer Science

The Department of Computer Science is spread over several buildings. The biggest one is the Wolfson Building, which houses the teaching rooms you will be using.

It 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 teaching rooms are Rooms 478 and 479, and the Programme Office is Room 471.

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.

An entry-card system controls access to the Wolfson Building outside normal opening hours. This applies to the main Parks Road entrances and the No.7 and No. 11 Keble Road entrances of the Wolfson Building. The front door of No. 8 Keble Road has been alarmed and should only be used in an emergency. The Programme Office will arrange for your University card to be activated as the Department's entry card. You will need to select a four digit pin number. When entering the building you need swipe and enter your four digit code followed by the # key to gain entry.

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 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 also be barred when it is reported lost).
- Each card will be set to operate for the period of the student's course 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.

- 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.

2.1.2 Communication and electronic mail

The University IT Services automatically provides e-mail facilities for all new students, at the same time as you are given a University Card.

The Programme will use your University email address to contact you. If you regularly use a different email address then you must ensure that you have your emails forwarded to it. As a student it is your responsibility to read and respond to emails from the Programme in good time.

2.2 Matriculation

You must be members of one of the colleges of the University. Students who are already graduates of the University may request renewed membership of their previous college. Otherwise, students will become members of one of the colleges that admit students from the Professional Programme.

You will be required to attend a matriculation ceremony within two terms of starting on the Programme. Failure to attend may result in the offer of college membership being withdrawn, and the student's status as a student lapsing.

3. Understanding Oxford

As a student of the University of Oxford you will come across terminology that is unique to the institution and can cause confusion at first. In order to help you navigate these the University has produced a useful "Oxford Glossary":

https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/history/oxford-glossary?wssl=1

University terms

The three University 'full' terms are:

Michaelmas (October–December)
Hilary (January–March)
Trinity (April–June)

Each term lasts eight weeks. The Professional Programme runs modules throughout the year. Term dates set deadlines for submission of the dissertation and are used to calculate the length of time you have been registered in the Programme.

4. The University and you – guidance, responsibilities, reporting

4.1 Guidance for students and their supervisors

You will be allocated an academic supervisor, who is usually a member of academic staff in the Department of Computer Science. It is important that you remain in regular contact with your supervisor.

4.1.1. Responsibilities of the supervisor

The supervisor is responsible for assisting you in the selection of options and providing guidance about particular modules. Supervisors also provide guidance and feedback on the work undertaken by you in the project.

The supervisor is required to report on your work at the end of each term. The report should also make clear whether you are making satisfactory progress.

4.1.2. Your responsibilities as a student

You must accept your obligation to act as a responsible member of the University's academic community. You are ultimately responsible for your studies and need to develop an appropriate working pattern, including a professional relationship with your supervisor. You should make appropriate use of the teaching and learning facilities available within the University. It is your responsibility to seek out and follow the regulations relevant to your course, including faculty/departmental handbooks/notes of guidance, and to seek clarification from supervisors and elsewhere if this is necessary.

Don't hesitate to take the initiative in raising concerns or highlighting difficulties, however elementary they may seem. For administrative matters the Programme Office (pro@cs.ox.ac.uk) should be your first point of contact. You should ensure that any problems regarding the project are drawn to the attention of your supervisor so that appropriate guidance may be offered.

If you feel there are good grounds for contemplating a change of supervision arrangements, this should first be discussed with your supervisor or, if this is difficult, with the Office Manager for Professional Programme, the Head of Student Administration, or the Director of Graduate Studies.

4.1.3 Responsibilities of the Director of Graduate Studies

The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) is responsible for graduate studies and students. They manage the administrative arrangements for supervision, extensions of time, and dissertation submission. In the Professional Programme the DGS is Dr Alessandra Cavarra.

4.2 Graduate Supervision Reporting

Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) is used by supervisors to review and comment on their students' academic progress each term. Students are also given the opportunity to comment on their progress prior to their supervisor submitting a report. Access to GSR is via Student Self Service https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/selfservice. You will receive an email notification with details of how to log in at the start of each reporting window.

You will be given an opportunity to complete a self-assessment report every reporting period. Your self-assessment report will be used by your supervisor(s) when completing a report on your

performance, for identifying areas where further work may be required, and reviewing your progress. The GSR system will alert you by email when your supervisor or DGS completes your report and it is available for you to view.

Self-assessment reporting give you an opportunity to:
- Review and comment on your academic progress during the current reporting period;
- Measure progress against the requirements of your study programme;
- Raise any concerns regarding your academic progress to your supervisor;
- Outline your plans for the next term (where applicable).

If you have any issues with teaching or supervision please raise these as soon as possible so that they can be addressed promptly.

5. Your Course

5.1 Aims

The Professional Programme provides advanced education in the methods, principles, tools, and techniques connected with both Software Engineering and Software & Systems Security.

5.1.1 MSc in Software Engineering

Software Engineering is the use of engineering methods and scientific principles in the development of software systems. It is an interesting and challenging field of study: the methods are constantly evolving, and many of the principles start to make sense only when seen in the context of professional practice. It is an interdisciplinary endeavour, bringing together aspects of computer science, engineering, and management. Software Engineering is about developing software alone or within a team for use by other people; using appropriate tools and technologies, and allocating appropriate time and effort, at every stage of development; building systems that meet requirements and expectations of users, even when those requirements—or our understanding of them—may change.

5.1.2 MSc in Software and Systems Security

The systems of modern life are centred at the interface of physical, social, and technological domains. Ensuring their security requires strong technical measures, as well as an understanding of the behaviour of their users, together with an idea of the motives and methods of attackers. This field is variously called Cyber Security and Security Engineering: it aspires to be an engineering discipline, but necessarily incorporates theories, tools, and techniques which are still maturing. A central theme is the reduction of risk—through inhibiting unwanted outcomes or through lessening the impact of security events. This is often achieved through the careful design of hardware and software, but also depends on the construction of suitable procedures, training, and frameworks for regulation.

5.2 Induction Arrangements

You will be invited to attend an induction session in your first Michaelmas Term.

5.3 Length of Course

This is a part-time Masters course. You should complete the course in no less than 2 years, and no more than 4 years. You are required to attend 10 modules and submit assignments for them. You are also required to attend a project week which helps you plan your project in discussion with your supervisor. At the core of each module is a single, intensive teaching week, requiring the same period of absence from the workplace as a typical week-long training course. Modules are taught in small class settings with varying approaches to the design of each module.

5.4 Module Selection

You can choose freely from a wide range of courses and put together an individual programme of study that best reflects your own interests and experience. Your supervisor will be able to discuss the choice with you.

If you are enrolled in the MSc in Software Engineering, six of your ten courses have to come from Schedule I. If you are enrolled in the MSc in Software and Systems Security, six of your ten courses

have to come from Schedule II. The schedules are available at http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/softeng/courses/subjects.html. In either case, you have free choice of the remaining four modules.

If your commitments allow you to complete the course in two years, you should aim at completing five to seven modules in the first year and three to five in the second. You should set two terms aside for working on your project and dissertation.

If you aim at completing the course in three years, you should complete five modules in each of your first two years and set the last year aside for work on your project and dissertation.

If you plan to complete the course in four years, you should complete at least three modules per year, and set the last year aside for work on your project and dissertation.

Please discuss your plans for your course with your supervisor.

You must have a project proposal approved by the end of your third year. This proposal must include a timeline of when you plan to have completed each stage of your work.

Each subject is taught as a single, separate module, delivered at least once a year,. You can book a place on a specific module in advance, allowing you to plan your studies around other commitments. You are permitted to cancel bookings, but are required to give at least 4 weeks notice.

Module bookings are restricted to 5 registered and 5 waiting list bookings per student. This is inclusive of the project week.

Each module is examined by an assignment, for which the submission deadline is six weeks from the end of the module. More information about examinations can be found below.

You can attend modules before deciding to apply for postgraduate study, and still use these modules (up to a maximum of 2) as credit towards a subsequent qualification. This allows you to determine, in advance, whether the Programme is a good match for your requirements, experience, and circumstances.

5.5   Booking and availability

Modules can be booked via the Programme website. Full instructions can be found at: http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/softeng/courses/booking.html

The module fee is charged for each module attendance, and is payable strictly in advance. A set of terms and conditions for payment are published at: http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/pro/courses/terms.html.

To ensure the quality of course delivery, class sizes are limited, and we do not permit overbooking. You may join a waiting list and will be informed by the Programme Office if a space becomes available. The Programme monitors module demand on a regular basis. The Programme calendar can be found at: http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/pro/courses/calendar.html.

5.6   Teaching Arrangements

The current list of modules is posted on the Programme website at: http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/softeng/courses/subjects.html. Each module consists of three parts:

- pre-study: a period of preparatory study—this may entail reading chapters from a set text, studying relevant research articles, attempting preliminary exercises, gathering data, or preparing a brief presentation.

- teaching week: a single, intensive week—comprising lectures, classes, workshops, and practical sessions; the balance between different types of activity depends upon the subject being taught.

- assignment: a written assignment, completed during the six weeks following the teaching week, allowing students to develop and demonstrate their understanding of the material.

5.6.1 Pre-study

To get the most out of one of these weeks, some preparation is advised. A pre-study exercise will be sent to participants with confirmed registrations about a month in advance of the teaching week. Depending upon the subject, it may comprise a piece of recommended reading, some questions to answer, or a task to attempt. This part of the module represents a notional 10 hours of study time.

We will either send you electronic files, which maybe research papers or extracts from a text book, or we will ask you to use the online library system SOLO, for which you will need to use your Single Sign On (SSO) to gain access:

http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/primo-explore/search?vid=SOLO&lang=en_US&sortby=rank

5.6.2 Teaching week

The teaching weeks allow staff and students to explore a subject in depth, focusing exclusively upon a particular topic, and building up considerable momentum as the week goes by.

For courses in Oxford, please arrive at the teaching centre on the 4th floor of the Department of Computer Science before the start of the first teaching session: usually 9 a.m. on a Monday morning. Late arrivals should contact the Programme Office to gain admission, to be given a brief introduction to the facilities, and to be informed of any change in the module arrangements.

The schedule for the week includes 27 classroom hours which will be spent in the same, dedicated teaching suite. Teaching is normally from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Thursday, and from 9.00 to 12.30 on Friday. There are short breaks in the morning and afternoon, and a longer break over lunchtime—for courses held in Oxford, lunch is provided.

You are expected to attend every morning and afternoon session of each teaching week. Students who are absent for more than two sessions will not normally be considered to have attended that course. In exceptional circumstances, with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies, a longer period of absence may be allowed. Please approach the Programme Office in the first instance.

For most subjects, the activities during the teaching week are directed by academic staff of the Programme. For the others, the Programme employs an external, subject specialist: an authority on the specific topic. Attendance is limited to a maximum of between 12 and 20 students (depending on the subject), and assistants are employed to provide help with workshops and practical sessions.

Lecture or seminar sessions are used to structure the week, breaking the subject into a number of topics, and to introduce material for the first time. The small class size means that discussions can be conducted during lectures, and that each member of the class can be invited to participate.

The material introduced can then be explored through class exercises, workshops, and practical sessions. As well as promoting learning through application, these sessions provide feedback on individual progress; lecturers can then adapt their teaching to the needs of the current group of students.

At the beginning of the week, you will receive a copy of the course material. All other material will be made available on the Programme website. Students who attend will be able to download material at any time after the week begins. Any electronic resources, such as additional reading materials, reference documents, or software tools, will also be available from the website.

5.7 Written assignments

An assignment will be distributed to all attendees on the last day of the teaching week. This has a dual purpose: it continues the learning process of the week, allowing the student to test and extend their own understanding through application outside the classroom, in completing a personal "mini-project"; it also provides, through the subsequent submission, the basis for a formal assessment of ability and understanding.

The time required for the successful completion of an assignment should be no more than 25 hours. In many cases, you will be able to complete the assignment within a single weekend or the equivalent of about 2 days work. However the deadline for the submission will be set six weeks after the release date of the assignment.

If you have submitted work for an assignment, then you may not take a second assignment in the same subject, unless you withdraw your submission before the deadline. An exception to this applies in the case of failure to satisfy the Examiners in the first occasion of a final examination for an award.

You can find details on how assignments are marked in the Examination Conventions.

5.7.1 Submitting assignments

Assignments must be submitted via the Programme website no later than the deadline stated. If you submit up to 15 minutes late, a penalty of 10 marks will be applied. Later submissions will not be accepted. In exceptional circumstances, the Proctors can grant you an extension for the submission of the assignment. Your college office will be able to advise you.

You can view, replace, or delete any material you have uploaded at any time before the submission deadline. So you are advised to submit a draft early, and revise it frequently.

Submissions may be handwritten, although you must ensure that the text is legible and that any diagrams or illustrations are clear. The same considerations apply to typeset submissions: a font size of at least 10pt is essential, as are adequate margins.

The assignment itself will include a clear specification of the allowed extent, and will detail any additional material to be submitted. The word count or page limit does not include images and diagrams, or any code submitted as part of appendices. Please submit your assignment as a Portable Document Format (.pdf) document. Source code and similar supporting material can be submitted as plain text files.

You should keep a copy of any material that you upload to the system. If a document—as uploaded—is found to be unreadable, and you are unable to supply a readable version, then no credit will be awarded for the submission.

The use of the Programme website for this (and for any other) purpose is subject to the University's standard regulations on the use of information systems. In particular, you must protect your passwords, and take care that only appropriate documents are uploaded to the system.

Assignments are treated as examinations of the University of Oxford, even if the individual undertaking it is not currently a registered student. Participants are asked to sign a declaration of authorship to confirm that they will comply with the relevant parts of the University's examination regulations.

Specific guidance on the acknowledgement of sources is provided here https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism . The full text of the University regulations is available at: http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/

Assignments are distributed at the end of a teaching week you attend. If work pressures or other difficult personal circumstances do not allow you to complete an assignment before the deadline, you may withdraw from the assignment by emailing the Programme Office. You must then register to take the next assignment in the same subject, provided that another module in that subject is scheduled within your period of study, without the need to attend the teaching week for that module.

Please note that the Programme **cannot** guarantee that a future iteration of a module will occur within your period of study.

5.7.2 Assessment criteria

Detailed assessment criteria are published for each of the subjects taught in the Programme, and for the project and dissertation. Further details can be found in the examination conventions at: http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/pro/handbook/examinations.html

5.8   Good Academic Practice

You should not show your work 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 your own lecture notes then you must reference it explicitly at the relevant point. Your supervisor can give you guidance on proper referencing, or for more guidance see http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/files/3161/Referencing.pdf .

Please read the University's guidance on Good Academic Practice. Plagiarism is a serious disciplinary offence. Please do read the University's dedicated website.

6. Projects

To obtain either of the MSc awards available from the Programme, you must complete an extended project. This differs from the module assignments—each of which contains an element of project work—in two important ways:

- it affords an opportunity to formulate your own problem or challenge;
- it may involve the application and integration of ideas taught in more than one module, or drawn from the wider software engineering curriculum.

A condition of the BCS's accreditation of the two MScs is that dissertations cannot be "research only". That is to say, if the focus of a project is a survey or a questionnaire, it is insufficient to simply report upon the results; there is a requirement that the dissertation places those into a context by, for example, establishing a prototype design, some requirements, guidelines or principles on the basis of those results. This is discussed in detail during the Project Week.

This is a taught Programme, and although the project needs to be an original demonstration of ability and understanding, there is no requirement to advance the state of the art in the field. You need only choose and apply an appropriate selection of existing ideas and techniques—provided that your choice, the process of application, and any outcomes are properly explained. New ideas and techniques are welcome but they are not expected; it suffices to apply standard techniques in a fresh context.

You must seek Ethics approval if your project is concerned with human participants or involves complex ethical issues. Please find more information on the Departmental website on research ethics Please also see appendix E (Ethics) for more information about social, legal and ethical issues.

6.1   Project week module

The project component involves compulsory attendance at a project module in Oxford, at which you present and refine your proposal, and attend teaching sessions on: research skills; engineering in context; and social, legal and ethical issues. Six weeks later, you submit your proposal for formal approval.

6.2   Process

- You develop an idea for a project, discuss this idea with your supervisor, and book a place on a project week.
- The project week affords an opportunity for you to start work in earnest, to attend teaching sessions and workshops, and to have one-to-one meetings with your supervisor.
- Six weeks later, you submit your proposal for formal review. If this is approved, you may continue. If not, then you will need to revise the proposal, and submit it for assessment after the next project week.
- You provide your supervisor with further reports on progress as you complete the project and start to work on the dissertation.
- You prepare a final version of the dissertation, and submit it as soon as it's ready—which must be before the submission deadline pertaining to your current final term of study.

6.3   Extent

As a rule of thumb, the project should represent the same amount of effort, and achievement, as two taught modules, complete with assignments: that is, two weeks full-time—the equivalent of two

teaching weeks—plus 18 weeks part-time—the equivalent of two pre-study and two assignment periods. This work is usually undertaken over a period of at least two terms, or up to one year.

Dissertations should be submitted in A4 format, with a font size no less than 10pt and no greater than 12pt, and margins no less than 2cm and no greater than 2.5cm. As stated in the regulations, they must not exceed 20,000 words in length, excluding diagrams and appendices. For further information please refer to the examination conventions.

Normally, you will start work on your project after attending most, if not all, of your taught modules. The examiners will not consider a submitted dissertation until you have completed the taught part of the degree.

6.4   Subject

You may choose any topic that will allow you to demonstrate understanding of software engineering or software and systems security through the medium of a dissertation. The best way of doing this is usually to choose a topic related to one or more of the subjects taught on the Programme. Many students choose topics that are related to their current employment, allowing them to see how the ideas taught in the Programme may be applied alongside current practice.

6.5   Proposal

The work starts with a project proposal containing:
▪ a description of the subject matter: product, theory, application area, or problem domain;
▪ a brief account of the original contribution that the project work might be expected to make;
▪ a plan, or outline, of the dissertation, explaining how it will demonstrate your understanding;
▪ a list of resources that will be required.
▪ a suggested schedule of tasks and delivery dates; and
▪ an outline of any social, legal, or ethical issues relating to the work.

This should be prepared in consultation with your supervisor, and submitted to the Programme Office together with a completed project start form. Depending on the project topic, a change of supervisor may be appropriate, if there is another member of staff available with particular expertise in the area of proposed study.

While working on your project and dissertation, you should take care to keep your supervisor informed of progress. As the work progresses, there might be considerable variation from the original proposal: any significant change in topic will require approval. If this does occur, contact your supervisor in the first instance.

6.6   Report

The results of the project work are presented in a short report, of 15,000-20,000 words. This forms the basis for formal assessment of the project, just as the written assignments form the basis for assessment of the taught modules. The report should be submitted once the taught part of the course is complete.

6.7   Resources

If you wish to use software with an education license, the Programme's Office Manager will be happy to provide confirmation of student status should this prove necessary. Oxford University IT Services can provide licenses for some software products.

6.8   Confidentiality

Many students choose a product-based project in which they will construct a model of a system or component that they have already encountered, or developed, as part of their employment. Alternatively, they may choose a process-based project in which they analyse existing practices within their organisation.

The results of these projects will often be commercially sensitive: they may describe design features, or aspects of the development process that your employer would wish to keep secret. To make such projects possible—their educational value is considerable—Programme staff respect the confidential nature of each student's work.

A written confidentiality, or non-disclosure, agreement can be established between the University and you (or your employer). The Programme's Office Manager has a template for this agreement, and is the first point of contact for any student requiring reassurance. However, the University cannot accept financial liability for breaches of confidentiality.

6.9   Commercial exploitation

The University claims no rights to commercial exploitation of work submitted by students on the Programme.

6.10   Writing Skills

Overseas students whose first language is not English are encouraged to attend 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 Programme's Office Manager.

6.11 Proof Reading

Your dissertation must be your own work. You are responsible for the proof-reading of your work. Proof-reading by a third party is permitted, within narrow limits. Please find details on the University's website about third-party proof-readers.

6.12 Submission of the project dissertation

Submission of the dissertation is through the SSTL student portal www.cs.ox.ac.uk/signin/ . Upcoming submission deadlines are available after you log in, at the bottom right of the home screen is a link "dissertation deadlines". The dissertation must be submitted no later than the submission deadline for your final term. Work may be submitted in advance of the deadline if you choose. In doing this you will also avoid any issues that may arise due to IT problems and lead to late submission.

We recommend that you take time to ensure you are fully familiar with the procedures given on the submissions portal, well in advance of the submission deadline.

Please note the following:
- It is your responsibility to ensure that your work is submitted by the deadline.
- Failure to submit a dissertation on time as a result of IT problems (e.g. computer malfunction, slow internet connection) will not be accepted as a valid reason for late submission. You should make

regular back-up copies of all work and ensure that there is adequate time to submit your work. Do not leave submission until just before the deadline.

- Responsibility for the work rests with you at all times until issue of receipt, regardless of the method of submission.
- Once submission has been made, the dissertation cannot be withdrawn or altered.

All your work, including the project dissertation, will be marked anonymously. Your work will only be identified by your candidate number (available from student-self service). Please make sure not to include any material that could identify you (name, college, student number) in your submitted work.

7. Final Examination

The Board of Examiners meets every term to consider marks for assignments and final awards for students who have completed the taught part of the degree and submitted a dissertation.

An External Examiner is appointed for each award programme who attends the final meeting and provides a separate report to the University. Detailed information on how assignments and dissertations are marked can be found in the examination conventions.

The decision of the examiners may be contingent upon the results of a viva voce (oral) examination. In cases where there is any doubt as to a candidate's ability or the originality of their work, this part of the examination process is particularly important. You will be informed if you are required to attend a viva voce (oral) examination.

7.1   Examination Conventions: Marking and Classification

Examination conventions are the formal record of the specific assessment standards for the course to which they apply. They set out how your examined work will be marked and how the resulting marks will be used to arrive at a final result and classification of your award. They include information on: marking scales, marking and classification criteria, scaling of marks, progression, resits, use of viva voce examinations, penalties for late submission, and penalties for over-length work. They also list internal and external examiners. Please note that you must not under any circumstances make contact with internal or external examiners.

The Examination Conventions can be found online at:
http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/pro/handbook/examinations.html

7.2   Prizes

As set out in the Examination Conventions three prizes, each to the value of £200, may be awarded:

- The Hoare Prize for best overall performance in the examination;
- The Hoare Prize for best project; and
- The Richard Bird Prize for the dissertation that best presents a piece of software, an algorithm, or a mathematical theory pertaining to program construction.

If dissertations of sufficient merit are not submitted, the award may be withheld.

7.3   Examiners' Reports

You can use examiners' reports of the previous years to prepare for your upcoming examinations. Previous years' Examiners' reports can be found online through the SSTL student portal.
www.cs.ox.ac.uk/signin/

8. If things go wrong

The most common cause for a lack of progress on the course is the demands of professional employment. The Programme is designed for students who are in full-time employment and the staff involved in delivering the course understand the demands that this brings. We recommend that you discuss with your employer the commitment that the Programme requires from you and them ahead of starting the Programme. We strongly believe that you and your employer will benefit hugely from you being part of this Programme, but it is an investment of time as well as a financial one.

If personal problems begin to affect your ability to work, do not delay in consulting your medical advisor or one of the supervisors or advisors allocated to you by the Department and your College. Nearly all problems, whether emotional, medical or psychological, can be solved or alleviated by those who have the experience and expertise to advise, *provided that they know early enough*.

Each college has its own systems of support for students: please refer to your College Handbook or website for more information on whom to contact and what support is available through your college.

There is a wide range of sources of support available more widely in the University, including in relation to mental and physical health and disability: details are available from www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare.

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, 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.

If you have difficulty in understanding a lecture, please discuss it with your supervisor, or the lecturer for the course. 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 College Advisor; the MSc Course Director; Programme Office staff; the Director of the Programme; the Head of Student Administration or (in exceptional circumstances) the Head of Department.

8.1 Progression

8.1.1 Suspension of Status

If increased work commitments, ill health, caring responsibilities or other difficult personal circumstances make it impossible for you to get on with your academic work, a suspension of status might be appropriate. More information is available on the University's dedicated website. Please discuss any change in your personal circumstances with your supervisor, the Director of Graduate Studies or the Department's academic admin team as early as possible. Please note that you will have to provide supporting evidence.

8.1.2 Extensions of Time

If ill health or a serious and unexpected change in your personal circumstances prevent you from completing your studies by the end of your current final term, you may request an extension to your period of study. Please discuss any change in your personal circumstances with your supervisor, the

Director of Graduate Studies or the Department's academic admin team as early as possible. Please note that you will have to provide supporting evidence.

8.2   Failure and Resits

The requirements that must be met to obtain the MSc in Software Engineering and MSc in Software and Systems Security are set out in the examination conventions, together with the consequences of failing to meet them.

A candidate who fails part of the examination, either the dissertation or taught courses, will be permitted to retake that element (or equivalent) on one further occasion only, in the year following the initial attempt.

8.3   Supplicating for a Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate

If for some reason you decide not to complete the MSc award, then you may be eligible to supplicate for one of the awards above subject to the conditions in the Examination Conventions. Where you have reached your maximum number of terms but have not met the requirements for the MSc, the examiners will award you one of the above awards. If you decide not to accept this then you would leave the Programme without completing an award.

9. The Department and You

9.1 Feedback

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire for each module 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.

Students on full-time and part-time matriculated courses are surveyed once per year on all aspects of their course (learning, living, pastoral support, college) through the Student Barometer. Previous results can be viewed by students, staff and the general public at:
www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/student-engagement

9.2 Student Representative

You will be asked to nominate a student representative(s) to sit on the Professional Programme's Supervisory Committee which meets once a term in about week 2. Once confirmed, the names and email addresses of the student representative(s) will be circulated to the Cohort, and an additional reminder will be sent out prior to the Supervisory Committee each term. Please make sure that the representative is aware of any concerns or comments you have regarding the course.

9.3 Communications

Information about the Department of Computer Science, its staff and courses is available from the Department's home page (www.cs.ox.ac.uk).

9.4 Societies

The Computer Science Graduate Society (CoGS) provides a platform for the academic and social life of post-graduates in the Department. This covers both student representation on academic committees as well as organization of a variety of social events to give postgraduate and postdoctoral students the opportunity to mingle, from weekly 'coffee and cake' gatherings, to pizza and games nights.

The Oxford Women in Computer Science Society (OxWoCS) aims to support and promote women in computer science. The society exists for all women in computer science, be they students, faculty, or staff. OxWoCS runs a number of academic, social, and career events throughout the year, including weekly coffee meetings, talks by distinguished female speakers, and industry sponsored events. The society provides networking opportunities and a support network comprising role models, mentors, and peers.

The Oxford Computer Society (CompSoc) is a student-run society which organises social events, talks, and practical courses.

10. Appendices

[A] Regulations Relating to the Use of Information Technology Facilities

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

[B] University Policy on Data Protection and Computer Misuse

https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/universitypolicyondataprotection/

The University regards computer misuse as a serious matter which may warrant disciplinary action.

A policy statement, rules and guidelines on the use of the University's IT facilities are published by the ICT Committee with the approval of Council. They appear in the Proctors' and Assessor's Memorandum, and may also be found at http://www.it.ox.ac.uk/policies-and-guidelines

[C] Use of Department of Computer Science Equipment and Premises

The formal conditions under which use may be made of Computer Science equipment in the Department of Computer Science and users must abide by can be seen here: https://wiki.cs.ox.ac.uk/support

[D] University of Oxford Equality Policy

http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/

The University of Oxford is committed to fostering an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its staff and students are respected.

The University embraces diversity amongst its members and seeks to achieve equity in the experience, progression and achievement of all students and staff through the implementation of transparent policies, practices and procedures and the provision of effective support. The University recognises that equality should be embedded in all its activities and will seek to promote awareness of equality and foster good practice. The University is committed to a programme of action to support its equality policy, to monitoring its effectiveness, and to publishing information on progress towards its equality aims.

In exercising its policies, practices, procedures and other functions, the University will have due regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and to the protected characteristics (basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status1, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex, or sexual orientation) specified within it, as well as other relevant circumstances including parental or caring responsibilities, contract type, and working hours.

In particular, the University will:

Encourage applications for study and employment from the widest pool of potential candidates, especially where representation is disproportionately low; take steps to meet the particular needs of individuals from protected groups where these are different from the needs of others.

In respect of students, seek to attract applicants of the highest quality and potential, regardless of background. Decisions on the admission of students will be based solely on the individual merits of each candidate and the application of selection criteria appropriate to the course of study.

In respect of staff, ensure that entry into employment and progression within employment are determined solely by criteria which are related to the duties of a particular post and the relevant salary scale; and support career development and progression to ensure diverse representation and participation at all levels.

The University expects all members of the university community to treat each other with respect, courtesy and consideration and does not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment. It has a Policy on Harassment and Bullying, supported by a Harassment Advisory Service https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/university-policy-on-harassment

The Department's Equality and Diversity Committee meet once a term to ensure the university's policies are implemented at departmental level.

[E] Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research involving human participants and personal data

The University's aims:
The University of Oxford seeks to protect the dignity, rights and welfare of all those involved in research (whether they are participants, researchers or third parties) and to promote high ethical standards of research. The University achieves this by:

- fostering a culture within the University that embraces the principles set down in this policy and the obligations contained in relevant legislation to protect the rights, dignity and welfare of those involved in research;

- providing ethical guidance that communicates regulatory requirements and best practice, and offering ongoing support and training to staff and students to maintain high ethical standards;

- maintaining a review process that subjects research to a level of scrutiny in proportion to the risk of harm or adverse effect.

Full details of the policy can be read here: https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/committees/policy and https://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/research-ethics/