Policy and Guidance on undergraduate learning and teaching

Education Committee

Valid from Hilary Term 2017

Content

Version history

1.0	January 2017	Original publication (major rewrite of previous document which was last updated in 2013)	Approved by Undergraduate Panel of Education Committee Michaelmas Term 2016
1.1	June 2017	Extra material added to Workloads sub-section of Section 3: Teaching and Assessment Framework, to provide further guidance on University expectations on workload for undergraduate students	Approved by Taught Degrees Panel of Education Committee at its meeting of Week 7 Trinity Term 2017
1.2	September 2017	Minor revisions to update references to and quotes from Conference of Colleges' template on UG academic provision throughout the document, and to clarify departmental involvement in formative assessment in Formative assessment sub-section of Section 7: Examinations and Assessments.	Approved by the Chair on behalf of Taught Degrees Panel, September 2017
1.3	September 2018	Minor revisions to: provide guidance on the role of the main academic contact for joint courses in Section 1; reflect updated policy agreed by Taught Degrees Panel during 2017-18 on the provision of question-level marks and on permitting candidates who fail the FPE to see their examination scripts, in Section 7; update references to and quotes from Conference of Colleges' template on UG academic provision throughout the document; update references to the examination regulations throughout the document.	Approved by the Chair on behalf of Taught Degrees Panel, September 2018
1.4	Dec 2022	Minor revisions to: update out of date references; add statement on educational gain; expand information on transition support; expand information on study skills; update information on using Turnitin for formative assessment; update information on Educational Recordings Policy; expand information on inclusive teaching; update information on the Digital Education Strategy.	Approved by the Chair on behalf of Taught Degrees Panel, December 2022

Foreword

Oxford's undergraduate courses are jointly delivered by colleges and departments, within a framework for delivery provided by the University. This Policy and Guidance sets out Education Committee's overall strategy, expectations and responsibilities for undergraduate learning and teaching. Please note that this policy and guidance is for matriculated undergraduate students.

The document includes policy requirements and guidance on: induction and study skills; the teaching and assessment framework, University teaching; the intersection of research and teaching; digital education; examinations and assessment (complementing the Policy and Guidance for examiners and others involved in University Examinations); and recommendations on college teaching.

This Policy and Guidance will be relevant to all involved in undergraduate learning and teaching in colleges and in departments, but will be of particular importance to:

- Senior Tutors and relevant committees in colleges

- Directors of Undergraduate Studies (or equivalent) and academic committees in departments

- Divisional Undergraduate Studies Committees

The document sets out the University's policy as well as providing guidance on good practice.

This edition of the Policy and Guidance on undergraduate learning and teaching is valid from Hilary term 2017, following a major review of the previous version of the document, and will be regularly reviewed and updated; the Version History will record further updates.

The policy and guidance are provided in the following format:

- 'Must' or 'should' or 'required' indicates that the requirement has to be complied with, with no exceptions, by all relevant bodies or individuals.
- 'Strongly encourage' or 'encourage' indicates that this is agreed to be best practice and is expected, but not required of all relevant bodies or individuals.
- 'Normally' indicates that in most circumstances the requirement should be complied with, but the relevant body or individual may choose to make exceptions on clear and consistent grounds.
- 'May' or 'permitted' indicates that this is something that is permissible, but not required, and it is left to the discretion of the individual or body responsible to agree their position or practice.

1. Overall strategy, expectations and responsibilities for Undergraduate Learning and Teaching

1.1 Strategy

The University's Strategic Plan is expressly committed to providing, through the personal education of each student, a quality of education and experience which equips students with the values, skills, and intellectual discipline that will enable them to make a positive contribution to society.[1]

The detailed guidance which follows articulates some of the gains that students are expected to make through their undergraduate education, including:

    i.   becoming critical and independent learners (section 1)
    ii.   developing the academic and personal skills necessary to fulfil their academic potential within Oxford's distinctive educational system (section 2)
   iii.   opportunities for interdisciplinary thinking (section 5)
   iv.   gaining research skills and experience (Section 6)
    v.   acquiring digital capabilities (Section 6)

1.2 Expectations

Education Committee asks all responsible bodies to bear the following overall expectation in mind in formulating proposals for the development of course content and structures.

It is expected that new and continuing undergraduate courses should be able to demonstrate:

    i.   how a student's personal intellectual formation and study paths are underpinned by the individual attention possible through the tutorial system;
    ii.   how a student's learning benefits by being directed by those actively involved in research and scholarship;
   iii.   how the course enables students to become critical and independent thinkers.

1.3 Responsibilities

1.3.1 Respective roles of the colleges and the University

Undergraduate courses are jointly delivered by the colleges and departments. A clear framework for this delivery is provided by the University.

The University, through its departments, is responsible for determining the structure and content of the curricula for all courses, and for providing lectures and classes, laboratories and practicals. The University is also responsible for the setting and supervision of University ('public') examinations and for the award of degrees, and other qualifications. Both the University and the colleges provide learning resources, particularly in the form of world-class laboratories, libraries and museum collections.

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[1] https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/strategic-plan-2018-24/education

The student experience is in part defined by the existence of college communities working in tandem with departments. The link between colleges and departments is embodied in the joint appointment system.

The colleges admit undergraduate students studying for degrees in accordance with the Common Framework for Undergraduate Admissions[2] and present them for formal admission (matriculation) by the University. The colleges have a key role in a student's education through the provision of tutorial and small group teaching, which is co-ordinated and overseen by the Senior Tutor (or equivalent) within each college in conjunction with individual subject tutors. Colleges also provide welfare and pastoral care.

At college level, support and guidance can be tailored to individual students, and this is the principal benefit which students can derive from becoming a member of this academic and social environment, and the various opportunities to engage with it.

1.3.2   Role of the Senior Tutor

The Senior Tutor (or equivalent) within the college coordinates the organisation of teaching and learning for undergraduate students.

Each student has at least one college subject tutor who monitors the student's progress throughout their course. Senior Tutors in colleges have responsibility for monitoring students' overall progress and provide support to tutors and students where necessary. Colleges ensure that all undergraduate students have an opportunity to discuss their progress with subject tutors every term and with the head of the college and/or Senior Tutor at least once a year.

1.3.3   Role of Education Committee

Education Committee has overall responsibility for the educational philosophy, policy and standards of the collegiate university including admissions, course structure and design, teaching, learning, and assessment (including all aspects of the practical arrangements for examination, in consultation with the Proctors), approval of new courses, and the oversight of the standards of the degrees awarded across the University.[3]

1.3.4   Role of the division

The division[4] is responsible for the oversight of the organisation, development, and delivery of curricula, in collaboration with the colleges and permanent private halls (PPHs) and in consultation with the departments in the division.[5] It is also responsible for the maintenance of educational quality and standards in the broad subject area.

1.3.5   Role of the supervisory body

The University's regulations define a 'supervisory body' as 'a Board of the Division or Faculty or other university body which has supervision over a University Examination.' [Regulations

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[2] https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/decisions/common-framework?wssl=1

[3] Council Regulations 15 of 2002, Part 2: https://governance.admin.ox.ac.uk/legislation/council-regulations-15-of-2002

[4] With the exception of the Department for Continuing Education, which has oversight of its own courses.

[5] Council Regulations 17 of 2002: https://governance.admin.ox.ac.uk/legislation/council-regulations-17-of-2002

for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 1.] The supervisory bodies for each undergraduate examination are set out in Examination Regulations in the Regulations for the First and Second Public Examination. Supervisory bodies will, in general, delegate responsibility to academic committees in departments who will maintain oversight of particular undergraduate courses, reporting to supervisory bodies. In the case of joint schools, the regulations stipulate that the supervisory bodies will appoint a joint standing committee for the oversight of the examination(s) that report(s) to each of the supervisory bodies.

1.3.6 Role of Director of Undergraduate Studies

Directors of Undergraduate Studies (or equivalent post-holders) are the academic leads responsible for the oversight of undergraduate teaching, learning and assessment at department / course level. They are an important point of contact for both staff and students, and facilitate co-operation between departments and colleges with regard to various aspects of undergraduate education.

Complementary to the work of the colleges, Directors of Undergraduate Studies are in a position to direct support and guidance for individual students at departmental level.

1.3.7 Role of main academic contact for joint courses

For joint courses (whether joint schools or other courses taught across more than one department), there should be an academic contact with responsibility for oversight of the joint course across departments (this might be the Course Director, Chair of the Joint Standing Committee, etc.).

Complementary to the work of colleges and Directors of Undergraduate Studies, academic contacts for joint courses ensure that both students and colleges are provided with advice on the specific requirements of the joint course. Depending on the context of the joint course, they may also ensure that students are given the opportunity to meet others in their cohort as a group at an early point in the course (where this would not otherwise happen naturally as part of teaching). They may also arrange centralised joint course-specific advice sessions (e.g. on option choices) where appropriate.

1.3.8 Responsibilities of the student

The student is considered to be an adult participant in the pursuit of their academic development, operating within a context where highly intelligent students can take a measure of responsibility for developing both their own intellectual powers and for demonstrating them in highly structured assessment.

Students are expected to familiarise themselves with the course requirements and regulations. Their responsibilities in relation to their examinations are set out in the University Student Handbook.[6]

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[6] https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/student-handbook?wssl=1

The Oxford Transition Support[7] webpages set out the expectations in relation to students taking responsibility for their academic development, including:

  i.   Attending all scheduled teaching;
  ii.   Furthering academic studies beyond core parts of the course (e.g. visiting libraries and museums, attending departmental seminars);
  iii. Making use of feedback received on work;
  iv.   Reading course information such as handbooks
  v.   Proactively identifying any additional support needed.

2. Induction, Course Handbooks and Academic Skills

2.1 Induction

Induction information and activities should enable students to begin their studies with:

  i.   an awareness of the academic and social environment within which they will be working;
  ii.   the main skills (whether subject-specific or general study) which they will require for their particular degree course; and
  iii. clear signposting to sources of both academic and personal advice and support.

Oxford's educational focus on small group teaching and close academic relations between staff and students are key components for supporting students' transition and in developing their sense of academic belonging

Orientation programmes provide in-coming students with support, information and guidance designed to enable them to take maximum advantage of the academic opportunities available to them as quickly as possible, and to ensure that they begin to acquire or develop further skills essential to succeed in higher education.

It is important to the success of the collegiate University's access, widening participation and outreach initiatives prior to admission that these are followed by complementary induction programmes and on-course support for all students.

Bridging programmes also provide both academic and non-academic support for specific groups of new students (e.g. those who are identified in relation to access or widening participation initiatives or criteria during the admissions exercise, students with disabilities, international students) in subject areas such as physical sciences, where this is considered to be particularly beneficial for a smooth transition to university studies.

Whilst orientation normally takes place in Week 0 of Michaelmas term and is largely delivered by colleges, induction should be viewed as a continuum: from accepting an offer to study, through to the end of the first term.

The Conference of Colleges recommends that:

> 'Each College should have an induction programme which enables new students to gain a clear understanding of the tutorial method and of what will be expected of

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[7] https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/oxford-transition-support

them academically during their time at Oxford, facilitates integration into the College's social and academic community, and explains what range of pastoral / welfare support is available to them in the College and the University.'[8]

Departments also have a role in induction, via sessions on health and safety, practical training, learning spaces and resources (libraries and information technology) etc. as appropriate. This may also include the provision of initial guidance on, for example, how to approach studying the subject – particularly at Oxford, how best to learn from lectures, best practice in note-taking, guidance on the relationship between lectures, classes and other forms of department teaching, and tutorials, and their department's approach to assessment and examinations. Such guidance will often be communicated to students by the Director of Undergraduate Studies and other members of staff responsible for leading on specific areas of the course. This will be reinforced by information supplied by departments to incoming students within course handbooks and/or online (see below).

International students also benefit from orientation events organised by the University.[9] Greater use of online resources to enhance international student induction (e.g. podcasts) is also encouraged.

College and departmental resources and services to aid transition to undergraduate study should be linked from the Oxford Transition Support webpages.

2.2 Course Handbooks

Those responsible for the publication and revision of course handbooks (whether in hard copy or online) should ensure that the information provided is current and accurate, and is in line with the latest regulations applicable to the course, as well as University regulations, policies and guidance.

Course handbooks are a key source of information for students. The University's expectations with regard to the content and accuracy of handbooks can be found within the Education Committee's Policy and Guidance on course information.[10]

2.3 Academic Skills

Undergraduate students should be provided with:

  i.   clear signposting to support for academic skills development available from colleges, departments, and University support services;
  ii. information that makes them aware of the different types of study skills and subject-specific skills that they will need to develop across the duration of their course.
  iii. opportunities to develop academic skills as part of their department and college teaching.

Particular importance should be attached to ensuring that students are made aware of the full range of support services which are available to them.

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[8] Conference of Colleges Senior Tutors' Committee, Guidance and Questionnaire, College Undergraduate Academic Provision (2018-19), Recommendation 1.

[9] www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/international?wssl=1

[10] academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/course-information

Academic skills describe the essential skills which enable students to become effective learners in their discipline, to think and practice in ways appropriate to the discipline, and to meet disciplinary expectations and conventions of academic study. This includes study skills, English for Academic Purposes and subject-specific skills.

Academic skills development involves a combined effort from colleges, departments and University services. It is a normal part of academic life at Oxford which extends beyond induction, is built into college and department teaching and is complemented by specialist support.

A core element of undergraduate study at Oxford is to develop the academic skills that will enable students to continue studying the subject, should they wish, beyond undergraduate level.

The generic undergraduate study skills which are needed for students to study effectively include: literature searching and review (including appropriate IT literacy), reading and note-taking, learning from digital resources, good academic practice (including appropriate citation and referencing), critical thinking, essay-writing, problem-solving, argumentation (both oral and written), use of language, time management and revision. Extensive University resources are available to help students understand and develop these study skills.[11]

The acquisition and development of study skills form a normal part of tutorial teaching, which seeks to develop and refine students' abilities in written and oral communication. The tutorial framework allows tutors to adapt the presentation of the subject, including both the generic and subject-specific skills required to practise it, to take account of a student's aptitudes and prior experience. Discussion and feedback on the work completed for tutorials, including regular formative assessment (discussed in further detail in section 4), is used to address any challenges experienced by students during their learning. College teaching therefore plays a key role in supporting the development of a wide range of study skills.

Departments play a complementary role to that of the colleges. They provide introductory sessions which may focus on learning from lectures, note-taking, essay-writing, and problem-solving, but will also provide subject-specific study skills such as learning practical or experimental techniques in laboratories, studio, clinic or fieldwork environments, and using software tools and online learning aids etc.

Students also need training in the initial, specific skills relevant to acquiring knowledge, understanding and competence within their subject e.g. laboratory skills, language skills. This is addressed through a combination of college and department teaching, and students' own guided independent learning.

There are University services which work to support students' educational and personal development, such as the Language Centre, IT and Library Services, Student Welfare and Support Services (incorporating the Disability Advisory and Counselling Services) and Careers Service. These services provide help and support to enable individual students to reach their full academic and personal potential. Recognising that students at Oxford

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[11] www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills

navigate a complex ecosystem of educational and welfare provision across colleges, departments and professional services, it is vital that all services are clearly signposted. Links to further information about these services can be found within Annex A: Resources.

Where intervention is found to be necessary, this should be course-relevant and time intensive (i.e. there should be multiple points of contact between the student and those providing support – a single session or the sole provision of material online is likely to be insufficient). It is important to remember that the adjustment to tertiary education for international students may be greater than for domestic students.

2.3.1 English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

If international students are identified as needing language skills support, this is usually more relevant to developing their use of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) rather than their general English language skills. It is not necessarily helpful to provide isolated language development support.

Colleges are encouraged to copy applicant details to the Language Centre, where it is either a requirement (of conditional offers) or a recommendation (related to unconditional offers) for international students to attend pre-sessional language courses, so that attendance can be monitored more pro-actively.

2.3.2 Good Academic Practice and Avoiding Plagiarism

Course handbooks (and websites) should always include information about good academic practice and the avoidance of plagiarism. Department induction sessions should always incorporate separate sessions on good academic practice and the avoidance of plagiarism. Departments may provide students access to Turnitin for formative use under the supervision of their tutor/supervisor, for work that would not eventually be submitted for a University Examination.

Departments have a role in educating students in good academic practice, and raising their awareness of plagiarism. An extensive set of online materials is available, including video resources on academic skills such as note-taking and time management.[12] Providing access to Turnitin for formative assessment (where work would not eventually be submitted for a University Examination) can assist in the development of students' information literacy skills – identifying, finding, evaluating and synthesising resource materials – and emphasise good practice, rather than focusing on rules and penalties.

Divisions and departments should ensure that:

Course handbooks (and websites) include the following, as set out in the template for handbooks:[13]

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[12] Available via http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills

[13] Included in Education Committee's Policy and Guidance on course information*:* academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/course-information

    i.   the University definition of plagiarism given below and a link to the Oxford Students Website guidance on plagiarism (http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism);

> [Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition. Plagiarism may be intentional or reckless, or unintentional. Under the regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offence.]

    ii.   appropriate subject-specific guidance on plagiarism, including a range of relevant examples;

    iii.   specific guidance on academic good practice and topics such as time management, note-taking, referencing, research and library skills and information literacy and a link to the Oxford Students skills webpage (http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills);

    iv.   a style guide to inform students of good referencing practice;

    v.   expectations regarding good academic practice for online open-book exams.

In addition, department induction sessions should always incorporate separate sessions on good academic practice and the avoidance of plagiarism, which should include advice on note-taking, referencing practice and study skills. They should also emphasise how different university learning methods are from those employed at school. It should be made clear to students when it is and is not appropriate to re-use or draw closely on work already submitted for assessment. The Oxford Students Website guidance linked above sets out the different forms of plagiarism, including auto-plagiarism. Further sessions on plagiarism and academic practice should be organised as students prepare to undertake projects and dissertations.

The University has invested in an online course[14] and Education Committee has endorsed its use as part of department induction sessions.

Online learning works most effectively when it is reinforced with in-person teaching. Departments are strongly advised to direct their students to complete the course within the context of their academic induction.

Departmental guidance should also consider the particular needs of students who are non-native speakers of English.

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[14] Available at https://cosy.ox.ac.uk/accessplan/LMSPortal/UI/Page/Basket.aspx?coursedateid=227311

This co-ordinated University strategy for preventing and dealing with plagiarism on the part of students supplements the teaching, advice and guidance provided by tutors at college level.

3. Teaching and Assessment Framework

3.1 Course Design and Approval

The University awards framework (UAF)[15] relates the University's awards to the levels of the UK Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), and sets out the University's approach to credit and the naming of qualifications.

The responsibility for the approval of new courses and oversight of course design is delegated by Council to Education Committee. The Policy and Guidance on new courses and major changes to courses[16] provides the overarching framework for the development and approval of new course and major course change proposals at all levels.

Divisions play a key role in the formulation and presentation of plans for new courses or major changes to existing courses **developed by departments**, and put them forward for consideration by Education Committee. The process of undergraduate course development or major change will always involve consultation with colleges, and will require approval by the Senior Tutors' Committee.

Subject to University regulations and policies, and to approval by Education Committee and the relevant academic division (or Continuing Education in the case of its undergraduate provision), curriculum design (i.e. its fundamental content / syllabus) is a matter for the academic judgement of those responsible for designing and delivering undergraduate degree courses. The curriculum is mapped onto a flexible framework as set out below, which relates the pattern and type of assessment to the teaching and learning outcomes of the course concerned.

3.2 Commitment to Inclusive Design

The University has committed to developing the curriculum with diversity in mind. The design of the curriculum can play an important role in widening access and engaging a diverse student body more directly with the scholars and subjects they are studying. Departments are encouraged to review curricula bearing in mind the diversity of the student body that Oxford seeks to attract, support and successfully graduate.

By adopting the Common Framework for Supporting Disabled Students[17] in 2014 the collegiate University made an important commitment to seek to demonstrate exemplary inclusive practice. This commitment extends to design and delivery of the curriculum, and departments are expected to bear this in mind in reviewing the teaching and assessment methods, as well as the physical teaching spaces. The Centre for Teaching and Learning

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[15] academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/university-awards-framework
[16] academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/new-courses
[17] https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/common-framework-for-supporting-disabled-students

has developed resources to assist in this review.[18] Increasingly, digital education will also play a role.

3.3 Course Structure

Undergraduate courses at Oxford are designed to prepare students for two significant sets of formal examinations: the first public examination (FPE) and the second public examination (FHS) respectively.

The first stage of an undergraduate course (usually the first year, though this may vary according to the design of the curriculum) is designed to provide students with the requisite knowledge and understanding for their subject. This training provides students with the skills necessary to prepare them to study their chosen subject to an advanced level in subsequent years, and to specialise according to their academic interests.

The first stage of study prepares students to sit the First Public Examination, which takes place most commonly at the end of the first year, but can take place a minimum of two terms following the start of the course (e.g. Prelims in Psychology, Philosophy and Linguistics), and up to five terms after the beginning of the course (e.g. Honour Moderations in Classics). These differences illustrate the flexibility of the assessment framework according to the needs of the curriculum and its associated pattern of teaching.

The majority of first public examinations are known as Preliminary Examinations ('Prelims'), but in a small number of subjects they are known as Honour Moderations ('Honour Mods') or Moderations ('Mods').

The subsequent stages (years) of undergraduate courses lead to the second public examination, known as the Honour School (or Final Honour School – FHS), which concludes the degree. The second public examination may be split into distinct, formal Parts, spread over years two, three, and (where applicable) four. The rationale for splitting the assessment of Honour Schools into Parts will vary according to the needs of curriculum, and will also be reflected in the organisation of teaching. The Honour School is designed to assess the success with which students have mastered the overall body of knowledge, and gained the skills and understanding required by their course. In some sciences, students need to acquire a considerable amount of core knowledge, skills and understanding to enable them to study in depth and/or specialise in their field, as well as for courses to meet the requirements of relevant professional statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs). An integrated Master's degree structure and associated learning outcomes, including a substantial research component in the final year, can therefore provide for a more suitable course structure compared to a standard BA.

The University does not support the principle of modularisation of courses (modularisation here being defined as a system in which degree courses are assembled by the selection of building blocks of modules with quantitative credit ratings, levels and common examination conventions within an institution-wide framework). It considers that widespread

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[18] https://www.ctl.ox.ac.uk

modularisation of courses would necessitate a uniformity of examining structures and practices which is neither essential nor appropriate within the University.

3.4 Teaching Types

The distinctiveness and excellence of Oxford's teaching is recognised worldwide as deriving from a collegiate education system which supports students while challenging them to excel. The tutorial system is the cornerstone of this approach for undergraduates. We will ensure that senior academics provide general oversight of each undergraduate's educational development as well as providing the majority of [their] college teaching. ….We believe that this approach enables students to learn to think critically and independently and is the most effective way to prepare graduates for the challenges of operating in our information rich society.

At undergraduate level, teaching will most commonly take place in-person through lectures and tutorials, although departments are encouraged to use digital learning to supplement in-person teaching where this brings benefits. Undergraduate teaching at Oxford is characterised by the close contact undergraduate students will have through being taught by senior academics.

The collegiate University has made a firm commitment to the central role of the tutorial system within an Oxford undergraduate education.[19] The University also endorses the use of a rich range of other teaching methods to achieve learning outcomes that are appropriate to undergraduates and their subject, and which foster complementary skills such as collaborative and practical skills. Such skills are most appropriately developed in pedagogical settings such as laboratories, field work, studios and classes.

The monitoring, review and development of individual courses over time, as well as innovations in teaching practice, have led to a wide range of teaching methods being employed on Oxford undergraduate courses in addition to lectures, tutorials, and laboratory practicals in the sciences, including:

- Seminars and classes. Classes may operate in different ways according to their purpose, structure and subject, and the numbers of students involved: a class may be designed to be taken by the same student(s) over the period of (for example) a year, whilst having a different leader and topic for each session. Alternatively, classes may be scheduled by the same teacher over a set period for the benefit of larger groups of their students. Classes may be organised by individual colleges, or on an inter-collegiate basis, as well as by a department.
- Demonstrations
- Practical classes and workshops
- Computer Assisted Learning (CAL)
- Problem Based Learning (PBL)
- Supervision of a project or an extended piece of written work
- Studio / Workshop sessions
- Fieldwork
- Placements

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[19] https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/strategic-plan-2018-24/education

- External visits
- Exchanges
- Year abroad.

When students are not involved in scheduled teaching and learning activities (including those described above), they are expected to undertake their own, private study (i.e. independent learning which may be 'guided' and supported by supplementary digital resources). Guided independent study will include preparation for scheduled teaching and learning sessions, follow-up work, wider reading or practice, completion of assessment tasks (e.g. tutorial assignments or class-based work), revision etc.

3.5 Relationships between different teaching types; organisation of teaching

Departments are expected to provide clear guidance to students about:

i. the relationship between tutorials and other forms of teaching (such as classes and lectures) on their course;
ii. how these teaching methods and the relationships between them are intended to complement one another and support their learning; and
iii. how they can best take advantage of the teaching and learning combinations offered.

This information may be supplemented by material from individual colleges and should be interpreted by students in consultation with their college tutors, and in relation to their individual learning and development needs.

It is important to articulate clearly the relationship between teaching methods to students, as appropriate to their subject. Students need to understand and adapt to the different approaches to learning which are embodied in the variety of teaching methods employed.

Moreover, in a number of subjects (particularly, but not exclusively, in the Sciences) the growing provision of tutorial material by departments has led to the development of a more direct relationship between tutorials and other forms of teaching provided by the bodies responsible for these degree courses.

Therefore, it is important to ensure that there is an appropriate alignment of the learning content students receive from tutorials (delivered primarily by colleges) and from other forms of teaching (primarily provided by departments) to produce a coherent learning package. This is not a matter for direction or legislation at University level: this alignment must be determined according to the subject and pedagogy, although the University does expect this to be clearly articulated. A proper autonomy for tutorial provision is a valued and important aspect of teaching and learning within the collegiate University, which recognises that within a clearly defined syllabus and with due regard to the essential elements of the course, there should be scope for tutors to adjust the learning experience to the individual needs of students. Efforts should always be made by those organising the teaching to minimise any mismatch in timing between different types of related teaching provision where possible; this is particularly important for joint honours subjects, as consistently lower student satisfaction is reported in relation to the organisation and delivery of these courses when compared to their single honours counterparts.

3.6 Recommended patterns of teaching

All those bodies responsible for an undergraduate degree course must publish recommended patterns of teaching covering all forms of teaching including tutorials. These should be readily available to staff and students within course handbooks (and/or equivalent online material).[20] The balance of teaching types (including lectures, tutorials, and classes or seminars, and laboratory or fieldwork) within each course should be carefully and regularly considered by departments.

Recommended patterns of teaching are a guide to the number of hours of teaching of different types (e.g. lecture, seminar, tutorial etc.) to be provided for each subject component within a particular year of each degree course. Recommended patterns of teaching should be published by the department responsible for the degree within the course handbook.

The inclusion of recommended patterns of tutorial teaching is particularly important, as these are used by the colleges to shape their patterns and amounts of tutorial delivery, to complement other teaching types. Recommended patterns of tutorial teaching are published on the Senior Tutors' Committee SharePoint site,[21] for reference by colleges.

Recommended patterns of teaching and the balance of different teaching types, particularly those for tutorials, should be reviewed annually by the department responsible for the degree programme. Appropriate student workloads should be taken into account and any major change proposed to the balance of teaching types must be approved by Education Committee.

Education Committee considers it important to be in a position to monitor the amounts and patterns of different types of teaching, to ensure that any revised balance continues to maintain the tutorial as the central component of undergraduate provision.

3.7 Workloads

The University's expectation is that undergraduate students treat academic study as a full-time commitment during Full Term, with approximately 40 hours per week typically being spent on academic work. This is based on the expectation that these hours are spent on focussed work. Students should seek advice from their tutors if they find it impossible to meet their academic obligations without spending significantly longer than 48 hours per week on academic study on a regular basis.

Descriptions of the undergraduate working year within course handbooks should accurately set out the course-level expectations with regard to student workload. Such descriptions should cover student workload associated with teaching and assessment during both term time and vacations.

The University's terms during which students are required to be in residence (known as 'Full Term') are short compared to other UK and international universities: 24 weeks, consisting of

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[20] See Policy and Guidance on course information: academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/course-information
[21] https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/ADMN-SeniorTutorsCommittee/Key%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx

three 8-week blocks. Students receive teaching during Full Term and are also required to undertake formative, and in some terms summative, assessment during this time.

Potential and current students need to be provided with accurate descriptions of workload at undergraduate level, including guidance about what to expect when studying at university generally, and more specifically at Oxford, to enable them to manage both their academic and personal time productively and successfully.

It is expected that students will treat academic study as a full-time commitment during Full Term. Students should typically expect to spend approximately 40 hours per week on academic work during Full Term; this includes both scheduled contact time (tutorials, lectures, classes, practicals etc.) and time spent in private study. The expectation is that these 40 hours are spent on focussed, concentrated academic work. The balance between scheduled contact time and private study will vary between subjects.

It is recognised that workloads will vary from week to week, and students will sometimes need or wish to work for longer. If students find it impossible to meet their academic obligations without spending significantly longer than 48 hours per week on academic study on a regular basis (rather than occasionally, or for a limited time period), they should seek advice from their tutors.

It is expected that students will use time outside Full Term and during vacations to consolidate learning from the last term and to 'read around' their subject. They may also need to undertake pre-reading or work in preparation for the next term, or to revise for examinations (which may be college collections or University examinations).

In particular, within the overall range of courses offered by the University, each examination should require a broadly similar amount of work from candidates. Summative assessments should be balanced appropriately throughout each course, such that cohorts of students are not overwhelmed and therefore disadvantaged by the volume of assessment and associated performance required of them at key stages of the degree, particularly at Finals.

Consideration of student workload associated with teaching, learning and assessment relates directly to course design and structure (see above sections on course design and approval and on course structure).

Colleges will also set out their own expectations for students in relation to workload both during and outside term, and in relation to paid work.

Therefore, it is particularly important to ensure that course handbooks include clear and accurate descriptions of University and course-level study expectations (in addition to expectations specific to individual colleges), particularly during vacations. This should include course-level expectations regarding the balance between scheduled contact time and private study, and the typical and maximum amounts of work expected of students. Information should be provided on how students should seek support in relation to unusually heavy workloads. Students should also be made aware of the recommended approach to in-term study and assessment, which should be articulated clearly and consistently for each degree course. The University's *Policy and guidance on course information* provides further guidance on requirements for information in course handbooks.

4. College Teaching

Colleges provide tutorial and small group teaching, which is co-ordinated and overseen by the Senior Tutor (or equivalent) within each college in conjunction with individual subject tutors. Further information on the respective roles of the colleges and the University, and of the Senior Tutor in colleges, is provided in Section 1 of this document.

The centrality of the tutorial has to be reflected in the provision which is made for undergraduates in all courses.

Unless alternative arrangements are justified (and approved) on pedagogical grounds, all courses should contain a substantial tutorial element that has been approved by Education Committee, following proposals made by the department concerned and their consideration by the Senior Tutors' Committee.

It is recommended that as a minimum, at least half the tutorials received by a student should be delivered by a senior member of the academic staff.[22]

As set out in Section 1, the University is unequivocal in its commitment to the centrality of the tutorial method within its undergraduate courses.

The tutorial system is valued highly by students and tutors alike: the regular oral and written feedback on which tutorials are based provides students with invaluable opportunities for formative assessment and for development of the synoptic elements of their course, within the continuity of the tutorial relationship. Tutors (senior academics) are equally responsible for monitoring the progress of each of their undergraduates throughout their time at Oxford, and for supporting and fostering their intellectual and personal development.

4.1 Recommended size of tutorial groups

It is recommended that tutorials are conducted with pairs of students, although it is recognised that colleges might sometimes choose to vary this arrangement.

In setting out their recommended patterns of teaching, departments should be clear where in the course they would expect students to be tutored one-to-one or in other size groups.

A typical tutorial is conducted with pairs of students. In pairing students for tutorials, colleges will naturally consider which combinations will be best for the education of the students.

Departments are responsible for providing colleges with recommended patterns of teaching for each course. These documents should make clear where tutorials are envisaged as being delivered one-to-one (typically dissertation work), in pairs, or in other sized groups. Colleges will take account of this information.

A college may choose to organise one-to-one tutorials, outside the recommendations of departments, where they consider it necessary to accommodate the individual needs of students.

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[22] Senior academic staff include: those holding joint appointments between the University and a college, those appointed to teach by colleges, and those senior research staff teaching on behalf of a college or department.

In drawing up recommended patterns of tutorial teaching, departments should give consideration to staffing capacity, workload arrangements, the logistics of covering the curriculum, and the expected proportion of undergraduate tutorials to be delivered by senior academic staff.

4.2 Purpose of tutorials

All responsible bodies should include a subject-specific statement which explains the purpose of tutorials (and which takes the below formulation into account) within the relevant undergraduate course handbook.

The purpose of a tutorial is: to develop an individual student's capacity to think in depth about a subject area, and to operate with growing confidence within its techniques and methodologies, with the expectation that the process will promote increased understanding of the subject for both tutor and student.

Tutorials provide for a flexible form of small-group teaching, which includes opportunities to explore a subject beyond material delivered via didactic methods, and which can be tailored to the individual needs of students. They also allow tutors to monitor a student's academic progress and support them directly in their academic development.

Tutorials take different forms according to the subject concerned and to the particular needs of individual students, groups of students, and tutors. Typically, a tutorial involves a student preparing a piece of written work i.e. an essay, but in the sciences other forms of work might be required.

Tutorials are not intended to be a mechanism for delivering subject knowledge. It is expected that students will develop this through departmental teaching and guided independent study. Tutorials provide the opportunity to explore issues, to develop critical thinking, and to present ideas and analysis both orally and in writing (e.g. through tutorial essays). The tutor can also ensure that the student has acquired and is able to interpret and adapt core knowledge to new scenarios, as well as correct any misunderstandings. In tutorials, students are challenged academically about their existing views to encourage thoughtful response to criticism and to develop depth of understanding and the ability to coherently defend their point of view or offer alternative interpretations.

To supplement the general guidance in college handbooks, subject-specific statements in course handbooks about the purpose of tutorial teaching provide important guidance for both staff and students.

4.3 Reporting on tutorials

The University, in conjunction with the colleges, expects formal reporting on students' academic progress to take place on a termly basis at college level. Such reporting takes place normally via TMS[23] (Teaching Management System). This online reporting system provides both students and their colleges with invaluable feedback on progress, and provides a starting point for discussion at termly reviews (also known as 'collections').[24] The importance of such provision, monitoring and discussion of reports is emphasised within the

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[23] https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/teaching-management-system
[24] Note that the term 'collections' has two meanings – see Assessment section for the alternative meaning.

Conference of Colleges' Senior Tutors' Committee Guidance and Questionnaire on College Undergraduate Academic Provision.[25]

4.4 Centralised (departmental) tutorial provision

Within some subjects, tutorial teaching is organised "centrally" by the department on behalf of the colleges. This occurs more frequently in the sciences, where for logistical reasons it may be simpler to pool the available tutors from across the colleges. Alternatively, this may be a result of highly specialised advanced option / elective teaching in the latter stages of a course, where only a sub-set of tutors can provide the necessary tutorial teaching (e.g. Part II Advanced Options in Experimental Psychology).

Where this occurs, the University expects the regular and timely provision of tutorial reports to colleges to be maintained. The department is responsible for making clear where students should direct any queries or concerns about centralised tutorial provision, as the mechanics of such arrangements may not be so obvious to students. This is the responsibility of the Director of Undergraduate Studies or equivalent post-holder.

4.5 College provision of classes

Colleges may decide to teach through a combination of tutorials and classes, which may be organised on an inter-collegiate basis as well as within individual colleges.

Flexibility to vary the model at college level allows for a more dynamic approach to teaching, as well as an alternative use of teaching resources. For example, a series of classes can provide opportunities for students to discuss a topic or a series of topics from a greater number of perspectives with the same tutor than would normally be possible via a series of tutorials. Alternatively, classes can provide for a group of students over a period of, for example, a term, to be taught by a different leader for each session.

Reporting on individual students' academic performance arising from college class teaching takes place in the usual way via TMS (see 'Reporting on tutorials' above).

4.6 Feedback to students on tutorial learning and teaching

Feedback on student performance in tutorials is a key characteristic of tutorial teaching and a routine expectation.

Course handbooks provided by departments should include clear guidance for both students and staff as to the appropriate expectations of tutorials, which includes:

  i.   the various forms that tutorial feedback may take (e.g. the provision of oral and/or written feedback, which may or may not include marks at the tutor's discretion);
  ii.   promoting students' understanding of the purpose of the tutorial (see above);
  iii. the importance of regular reporting (i.e. the use of termly reports on academic progress – see above).

The level of detail and amount of feedback provided through tutorial teaching is a core element of the collegiate University's learning support for undergraduates. Tutorial teaching

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[25] https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/ADMN-SeniorTutorsCommittee/

provides regular and substantial feedback and formative assessment, although this will vary from one subject to another, and from tutor to tutor. It is important that tutors explain, in a way that students can understand, the individual approaches taken to the provision of feedback so that students may recognise when they are receiving it.

Tutors may take different approaches to the provision of feedback:

- written or oral feedback that does not include marks, which focusses at least as much on the growth of intellectual understanding as on preparation for future summative assessment;
- marks as part of a range of appropriate feedback, alongside specific comments and constructive criticism;
- marks have an obvious specific value in quantitative work, which tend to yield 'correct' answers;
- marks may be useful to students as an indicator of the level of their performance and encouragement to develop further, especially in the approach to examinations.

4.7 Opportunities for students to give feedback on tutorial teaching

Equally, it is important that tutors receive feedback from students on the teaching they provide on behalf of the college (whether this is organised by colleges or by departments on behalf of colleges). Feedback from students is used by tutors to consider both how to enhance students' learning and to develop their own teaching practice. As partners with the tutors involved in their education, students should have the opportunity to comment on the teaching they receive, and to be kept informed of any action taken (or not taken) arising from the feedback they supply.

The collation of feedback from students about college teaching is managed by individual colleges, based upon recommendations disseminated by the Conference of Colleges:

'Colleges should have in place monitoring and feedback systems for assuring the quality of all the teaching which they provide throughout a student's course.'[26]

'Colleges should make provision for feedback, online, in hard copy, or both, and provided anonymously on a regular basis (at least annually), and this provision should be well-publicised. Colleges should report back to students, or to a representative of the student body, that action has been taken in response to feedback received, giving details if appropriate.'[27]

5. University Teaching

5.1 Lectures

The University's schedule of teaching, including lectures, classes and practical work, should be available to staff and students no later than the beginning of each term, to assist in the scheduling of tutorial teaching.

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[26]Conference of Colleges Senior Tutors' Committee, Guidance and Questionnaire, College Undergraduate Academic Provision (2018-19), Recommendation 14.

[27] Ibid, Recommendation 20

Staff are strongly encouraged to facilitate attendance at lectures by students on other courses if space permits, in the interests of inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural learning.

Teaching delivered on behalf of the University via departments will consist primarily of lectures. The role of lectures will differ depending on the subject area: many lectures in the sciences tend to be core to the curriculum and obligatory in terms of attendance, whilst in the humanities lectures will tend to be elective. Lectures impart a significant amount of key subject knowledge to students, but they also enable students to hear first-hand the latest on-going research in their subject, and are valuable as scholarly resources to draw on alongside published work.

To ensure that University teaching (in all its forms) complements the scheduling of tutorial teaching, the relevant University timetables should be published no later than the beginning of each term.

To encourage inter-disciplinary thinking, students may attend lectures other than those for their course. However, they must obtain permission from the lecturer prior to attending, and to ensure that there will be sufficient capacity at the venue.

Although lectures are a traditional form of didactic teaching, staff are encouraged to make increasing use of interactive methods and technologies (see section 6 – Digital Education).

A link to the University's Educational Recordings Policy[28] should be included within course handbooks (whether in hard copy or online). (It is not necessary to reproduce the policy itself within individual course handbooks, or equivalent.)

The recording of lectures both by the institution and by students is becoming more common-place. The policy on educational recordings makes clear what is considered acceptable and unacceptable practice by students and the consequences of non-compliance. The policy is intended to be complementary to on-going work at institutional level in relation to the development of lecture capture.

5.2 Class teaching: assessment and feedback

Clear information about the framework for class teaching, which is offered, organised and delivered by departments and serves a function that would otherwise be supplied by colleges, is to be provided both to students and their colleges.

This information will include the purpose, structure, assessment mechanisms and arrangements for feedback to students.

As a minimum, there will be an agreed mechanism for departments to report on both students' attendance and their academic performance in these sessions to colleges.

Information about the purpose, structure, and arrangements for assessment and feedback should be readily available to students and their colleges. This is of particular importance where elements of summative assessment are involved (such as the assessment of laboratory skills/work to fulfil a requirement to have a satisfactory practical record, for First or

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[28] Available from https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/educational-recordings-policy

Second Public Examinations): the mechanisms for transparent yet robust assessment must be clearly defined and set out for candidates and their colleges.

Feedback on academic performance is of interest to students as well as their colleges: departments should give particular consideration to how class teaching can be designed to provide opportunities for formative assessment and feedback.

The provision of information about students' attendance and academic performance is also particularly important where class teaching acts as a mechanism for conveying core rather than supplementary material to students; hence, colleges have a vested interest in monitoring these sessions.

Monitoring attendance is particularly important with regard to international students who hold a Tier 4 visa, as the Home Office requires the collegiate University to have an appropriate attendance monitoring structure in place.

5.3 Opportunities for students to provide feedback on departmental teaching

Every department should provide regular opportunities for all students to provide individual feedback on their educational experience. At a minimum this should take place on an annual basis. Full details regarding policy in this area are available from the Policy and Guidance on student engagement and representation.[29]

Concerns about any aspect of departmental teaching, including assessment and feedback, on the part of students or their colleges should be directed to the Director of Undergraduate Studies (or equivalent post-holder) within the Faculty/Department.

5.4 Supervision of research work

Concerning the appropriate supervision of summatively assessed course work, such as a dissertation (or equivalent) or other submitted assignments, there should be clear expectations as to the amount (i.e. number of hours) of supervision available and whether this includes (or excludes) reading / commenting on one (or more) drafts of work, or is limited to commenting on structure only. Such expectations should be set out in course handbooks.

Students may also be required to sign a declaration upon submission of their work that they have appropriately acknowledged the support received from their supervisor and that they have not exceeded the maximum amount / type of supervision available.

5.5 International placements: student exchanges, language placements and years abroad

There is support for the expansion of internship and other vacation opportunities for students. The University is committed to working towards the objective of providing opportunities, through and outside the curriculum, for students to develop personal and transferable skills to succeed in a global workplace. This commitment includes an aim to

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[29] academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/student-engagement-and-representation

expand the number of funded internships and work-placement opportunities in the UK and overseas[30].

When considering the introduction of international placements, thought should be given to both the academic and personal integration of out-going students within their host environments. This will become more critical as the number of outgoing students increases and as programmes develop and become established.

With regard to academic exchanges, it is not considered essential for incoming students to be of the same type as outgoing students (for example, fourth-year undergraduates often exchange with postgraduate students).

On-course study abroad opportunities can be labour-intensive to operate as an integral part of a course, although they are beneficial to students' learning experience, particularly with regard to students developing intercultural academic competencies. The expansion of such opportunities should not be at the expense of quality, and a balance needs to be struck between giving students opportunities and providing them with the necessary support (including funding) to benefit fully from those experiences.

Further information about collaborative provision on undergraduate courses and their quality management can be found within the Policy and Guidance on providing education with others.[31]

6. Inclusive Teaching, Research and Digital Education

We will ensure that teaching is informed by best practice, an inclusive approach to learning and the opportunities for innovation offered by digital technology.

6.1 Inclusive teaching

Inclusive teaching means valuing the diversity of our students and responding to the different barriers to learning that students encounter.

The collegiate University adopted a common framework statement in 2014 that underpins its procedures for supporting disabled students, and sets out a vision to maintain exemplary inclusive practice for students with disabilities and to meet its Equality Act duties.

Maintaining an anticipatory approach means thinking ahead about the range of adjustments that might be made for potential students without needing reference to individuals. A review of adjustments in Student Support Plans found the mostly commonly requested adjustments to be:

- Teaching materials shared online before/after events
- Recording of lectures
- Clarity regarding course structures and deadlines
- An indication of core and optional readings
- Consistency of layout of courses in Canvas or relevant Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

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[30] https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/strategic-plan-2018-24/education
[31] academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/policies/providing-education-with-others

- Materials in accessible formats
- More time for assignments, practical work and exams
- Clarity about how best to communicate with tutors

Those responsible for undergraduate teaching should consider which of the above adjustments could be proactively made available to all students. Doing so would be a significant step forward in meeting our anticipatory duty. It reduces the need for students to disclose a disability and the time spent retrospectively adapting teaching to meet the needs of disabled students.

Clear guidance should be provided to students about how to use additional materials to avoid students adding to their workload. See for example the student guide for making the most of lecture recordings[32].

6.2 Teaching and Research

This intersection (or nexus) of research and teaching enhances learning by exposing students to current, research-informed teaching as well as providing them with real experience of an authentic research environment.

All those responsible for undergraduate courses are expected to monitor and make explicit (through course handbooks and other literature) the opportunities their subject offers for students to benefit from the research-teaching nexus.

A distinctive feature of the University's educational provision is the high level engagement from senior academics who use their current research practice to enhance the learning of the students they teach.

Research may have a positive impact upon teaching in two particular ways.

   i.   Research-informed teaching:
- provides the appropriate (i.e. current as well as expert) context within which students can learn about knowledge construction within their subject;
- encourages the induction of students into the academic research community of their department and college;
- can encourage enthusiasm and motivation on the part of both staff and students, in sharing the latest thinking and new developments in their subject, and exchanging views to develop critical thinking and awareness of multiple perspectives.

   ii.   Direct experience of the research environment, in undertaking dissertations, projects, fieldwork etc., provides students with:
- better resources to draw upon, in learning how to employ the latest methodologies and technologies in their own research;
- the opportunity to benefit from engaging with active researchers participating in research networks, who can both broaden and deepen students' knowledge and understanding of research in their subject;

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[32] https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/recorded-lectures

- opportunities to explore thematic and inter-disciplinary research through exposure to collaboration between research groups.

In reviewing and developing educational provision, whether at a more local or at an over-arching level, it is important to consider and identify ways in which the structure and design of curricula and assessment provide opportunities for students to:

i. benefit from the individual research strengths of academic staff (special options / papers, research groups / journal clubs, tutorial flexibility) and see how the disciplines and skills of research (including research methodology) contribute to the conception of their subject;
ii. explore ways in which disciplinary knowledge is constructed and developed via research and scholarship in their subject (both informally through contact with the work being undertaken by individual researchers, and formally through research training components of the courses);
iii. engage in different forms of research (such as dissertations, fieldwork, research projects) and to have closer contact with a research environment and/or research methodology;
iv. draw on new kinds of digital research material e.g. digital collections, crowdsourced data, social media data.

It is also important to make clear the means by which the links between research and teaching are communicated to students through department and college literature, especially:

i. highlighting parts of courses which are intended to promote or develop skills relevant to a later dissertation or project;
ii. making explicit elements of courses which are intended to develop an understanding of how disciplinary knowledge is developed and articulated;
iii. encouraging students to take full advantage of research seminars, visiting speakers, and other aspects of the life of the scholarly community / network of which they are temporary members.

6.3 Digital Education

All those responsible for undergraduate courses should regularly consider how digital education might enhance teaching and learning in the subject, and ensure that all students have the opportunity to engage with and benefit from the use of new technologies.

Digital education is understood as the purposeful use of digital tools and technologies to support the processes of teaching, learning and assessment. All students now have access to a core digital learning platform based on Canvas, which offers possibilities for greater flexibility and accessibility to learning activities and resources. Digital education should not substitute in-person teaching in undergraduate education but it can supplement it.

Students should be supported to develop the digital capabilities they need to use digital resources and tools purposefully and with academic integrity, to participate effectively in their research and study and to support their individual learning needs.

Integrating digital skills training into every student's experience need not entail additional components of courses. If courses are sufficiently enriched with a variety of digital learning

and teaching tools, students will experience technology as part of their working environment. Research in all subjects is being transformed by digital technology and the methodologies used in research are broadening as a result. Research-led teaching that is inclusive of the most advanced research tools within their subject will provide students with transferable skills for future employment or further academic study. Departments are strongly encouraged to ensure that students at all levels have substantial opportunities to use technology.

7. Examinations and Assessment

7.1 Approach to Assessment

Following the First Public Examination (FPE), which determines students' eligibility to progress to the next stage of study, every formal assessment constitutes part of the Final Honour School examination and so contributes to the outcome of a student's degree. The University encourages the use of a wide range of assessments for summative purposes. All Honour Schools use timed, written examinations as a major element of assessment. Therefore, formative assessment is used extensively, to help students prepare for University examinations.

7.2 Formative Assessment

The University expects that students will have regular opportunities to practise their examination technique and to receive feedback through formative assessment in colleges, via 'collections':

  i.   students should receive clear and accurate information in order to understand the purpose of the particular form of 'collections' used in their subject and/or college;
  ii. students should receive feedback on collections within a reasonable time-scale. The Conference of Colleges' Quality Assurance Working Group recommends setting a deadline no later than Week 4 for returning feedback on Collections to students, given that any feedback received after Week 4 would not realistically be able to influence a student's performance that term.

Formative assessments are designed to evaluate learning and to provide feedback, and to provide students with the opportunity to practise certain types of assessment. Formative assessments do not contribute towards the outcome of the degree, but provide an indication – particularly to students, college tutors and officers – of each student's progress to date.

'Collections'[33] are a type of formative assessment that is used extensively at undergraduate level within colleges; they are in the format of timed, written examination papers. Collections are normally used following vacation periods to reinforce learning from the previous term, to assess set vacation work, or to prepare students for forthcoming University examinations. In some cases, departments set certain collections papers to be sat in colleges.

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[33] The term 'Collections' is used in two ways in colleges: (1) to signify college formative assessments (as here); (2) to describe termly academic progress meetings usually with the head of house and Senior Tutor (or equivalent).

The University attaches considerable importance to the use of extensive formative assessment at undergraduate level, including the key role of 'collections' in providing students with experience of such assessment in order to:

i.   provide extensive practice in preparation for timed, written examinations;
ii. provide extensive feedback through the assessment of 'collections';
iii. explicitly monitor students' consolidation of their learning from the previous term or in preparing material for the forthcoming term;
iv. tailor academic support for individual students based on areas of strength and weakness as identified through 'collections'.

With regard to the setting and marking of assessments, the Conference of Colleges recommends that:

'Colleges should use Collections or some other form of assessed work systematically as a significant element of formative assessment and feedback, including feedback on technique in timed written examinations. Students who miss collections should be followed up. In addition colleges should regularly review whether each subject is receiving enough formative assessment and feedback.'

'Colleges should make the purpose and importance of collections clear to students, and marking criteria which do not conform with those set out in the course handbooks should be communicated to students prior to collections. Collections should be marked and returned as promptly as possible, and collection marks should be recorded and monitored by Organising Tutors and/or the Senior Tutor. Colleges should inform students of when and how they will receive feedback.'[34]

Within colleges, tutorials also offer the opportunity for formative assessment through feedback. Section 4 of this document on College Teaching provides more guidance on feedback on tutorial learning and teaching.

In addition to some departments' involvement in the setting and sometimes the marking of Collections sat in colleges, other types of formative assessment are also employed within departments, which may include short-answer written tests, multiple-choice-question tests (whether undertaken on a computer or by hand), class-based problems, presentations and practical skills assessments. These forms of assessment are commonly (though not exclusively) used in science subjects: it can be necessary to teach larger groups of students skills that are essential to their subject using specialised equipment or facilities, the acquisition of which can be determined through regular, informal assessment. Such assessments are also necessary to provide students with practice at types of assessment which colleges may not be able to provide so easily, such as laboratory skills. The same formative assessment principles apply: providing clear and accurate information about the purpose of the assessment, and supplying feedback on a reasonable timescale. Departments which set and/or mark collections which are sat in colleges should also be

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[34] Conference of Colleges Senior Tutors' Committee, Guidance and Questionnaire, College Undergraduate Academic Provision (2018-19), Recommendations 4 and 5.

aware of the recommendations of the Conference of Colleges set out in paragraph 7.6 above.

7.3 Summative Assessment[35]

Summative assessments are either used to determine progression to the next stage of the course, or to determine the final degree classification.

7.3.1 Progression

The vast majority of First Public Examinations (FPEs) have a pass mark of 40, which applies to each assessment that forms part of the examination. A small number of exceptions include Honour Moderations in Archaeology and Anthropology, and Honour Moderations in Classics, for which the pass mark in each examination is 30 and the results are classified.

The Second Public Examination (FHS) concludes the assessment of the remaining stages of the degree course.

In addition to formal Parts of the examination in the sciences, a minimum standard of achievement may exist in some Honour Schools in order to progress to the Master's level of a four-year undergraduate course.

7.4 Types of Assessment (University examinations)

Forms of assessments may be used in different combinations to:

i.   reflect the academic practices within the subject;
ii.   formally assess knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes which must be tested and confirmed as having been acquired;
iii. provide an opportunity for students with different academic strengths to demonstrate the level of their knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes in different ways.

A variety and balance of methods should be used within the assessment structure for undergraduate degree courses to achieve the above aims. Assessments should be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are appropriately rigorous and effective.

The University encourages the use of a wide variety of assessments. Approved forms of assessment include:

- Timed, written examination papers – usually three hours, although this may vary in some subjects;
- Timed, computer-based examinations;
- Take-away papers – the amount of time available to students will be much more restricted compared to that available for an extended essay;
- Extended essays – usually of several thousand words based on a particular topic or question;
- Practical, fieldwork, workshop or studio requirement;
- Portfolio – a submission involving a selection of pieces of work;

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[35] See also Section 3 of this document, Teaching and Assessment Framework, Course Structure.

- Dissertation / Thesis / Report of a Research Project – this constitutes an extended piece of writing of several thousand words;
- Oral Presentations – usually associated with a piece of supervised research;
- Poster Presentation;
- Group work – this involves students collaborating formally to produce a piece of assessed work together, such as a presentation (which may be delivered orally or as a poster) or project output;
- Viva voce / oral examination –may be a compulsory element of the examination or may be used to confirm a student's degree result or to consider elevation to a higher mark or degree classification in borderline cases – such viva voce examinations are not used punitively.

Departments are encouraged to consider a wide variety of assessments (as detailed above), which have a clear academic rationale that complements the assessment pattern for the course, and which can be demonstrated as being rigorous and effective in requiring students to evidence equally important skills. For example, extended written work (resulting in the production of a dissertation, thesis or report) will usually be undertaken during the Final Honour School. Such assessments require students to demonstrate some or all of the following skills: to identify and appraise relevant sources independently, to conduct their own investigations or experiments, to present arguments and supporting evidence in depth, to sustain and evaluate a long-term project.

7.5 Review of and Changes to Assessment

Academic committees in departments should monitor the amount of assessment required of undergraduates, including the appropriate balance of different types of assessment.

In doing so, they should monitor the impact of existing (and new) assessments on students by making maximum use of both student feedback (e.g. course-level surveys, the Student Barometer, the National Student Survey) and views from external and internal examiners.

Divisions have similar responsibilities: to monitor the amount and balance of assessment both within individual courses and between courses. They also have responsibility for reviewing the academic cases for, and evaluating the impact of, changes to assessment using quality assurance mechanisms.

In proposing changes to assessment, consideration should be given to student views, whether gathered through surveys organised at departmental level or through Joint Consultative Committees, and via institution-level or national surveys. Departments and divisions should ensure that students are actively engaged with consultations and decisions regarding changes to assessment.

Departments and Divisions are expected to use annual reports on examinations (both internal and external) to inform the review, revision and development of individual courses and course elements. This is covered within sections 1.3.2 (Supervisory bodies) and 4.5 (Examiners' reports) of the Examinations and Assessment Framework.[36] Detailed

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[36] academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/examiners

information on supervisory bodies' review of examiner's reports and examination procedures is available in the Procedures for the annual monitoring of courses.[37]

In addition, Education Committee's Policy and Guidance on new courses and major changes to courses (including closure)[38] should also be consulted if major changes to assessment are under consideration.

7.6 Weighting of Assessment

The weighting of assessments within University examinations should take into account:

   i.   what is considered appropriate for the subject;
   ii. the need to ensure that the appropriate emphasis is placed upon demonstrating the acquisition of relevant knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes in the final degree outcome (e.g. a dissertation versus a number of written papers);
   iii. a candidate's progression through a particular course, to reflect the difference in academic progress that candidates might reasonably be expected to make between the earlier and later stages of their course (e.g. 1/3 in Year 2 versus 2/3 in Year 3);
   iv. the appropriate balance between subjects and the level of specialisation possible within joint honour schools;
   v.   the workload associated with the assessments.

In the First Public Examination, assessments will normally take the form of timed, written papers. These will normally be of equal or similar weight, although examination conventions for the particular examination will set out any rules for arriving at the overall outcome. Depending upon the subject, a record or portfolio of work may also be required, and candidates may need to demonstrate that they have completed a pre-determined proportion of these to a satisfactory standard in order to pass the First Public Examination overall. This is particularly important where students must achieve a satisfactory standard as part of any vocational or accreditation requirements associated with their degree.

In the Second Public Examination, greater emphasis may be placed upon extended pieces of writing (in particular, dissertations / theses / reports) as well as on written papers, though this may vary from subject to subject. Where the Final Honour School examination is split into formal Parts, each of which contribute to the outcome of the degree, the final Part of the course will normally have a greater weighting than the Part or Parts taken at an earlier stage.

Similarly, in joint honour schools, the weighting of assessments may reflect the balance between each subject taken, or the level of specialisation as determined by the student in line with course requirements.

The weighting should take into account the workload associated with the assessment. Workloads across undergraduate degrees should be broadly similar.

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[37] academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/quality-assurance/annual-monitoring-of-courses
[38] http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/pgnewcourses/academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/new-courses

7.7 Student understanding of marking criteria

Students should be provided with sufficient information, which is easy to locate, and written so as to enable them to understand easily the marking and (as appropriate) classification criteria that are used in assessment. These criteria should be set out clearly in examination conventions (as per Annex A of the Policy and Guidance for Examiners).[39]

Students should be able to understand how to apply the marking and classification criteria to their own work, as well as understanding how the criteria are used in assessment. Ways to promote students' understanding of marking and classification criteria include:

- discussing the criteria during college tutorials and departmental briefings, including holding 'Finals Forums' in conjunction with Oxford SU (Oxford University Student Union) – these are discussed further below;
- providing students with direct experience of marking, either through self-assessment or peer-marking;
- introducing teaching sessions where the marking criteria are explained in the context of assessment practice. If using real (anonymised) examination scripts advice should be sought from Education Policy Support in the first instance.

Departments are encouraged to consider holding 'Finals Forums' at least eight weeks prior to the start of FHS examinations, to remind students how they will be assessed in relation to the marking and classification criteria that will be used, to highlight other important areas of the relevant examination conventions (such as penalties for late submission), and to discuss examination preparations, such as revision techniques and how to cope with examination anxiety. Such forums have run for a number of years and are primarily organised by Oxford SU (Oxford University Student Union) in conjunction with departments. The aims and objectives of such sessions should be clear, and scope for evaluation should also be considered.

7.8 Viva Voce

Academic committees within departments are required to provide candidates and examiners with sufficient information relating to the academic purpose, criteria and format of any compulsory or discretionary vivas or oral examinations in use, which are subject to review by supervisory bodies. This information should be set out clearly in examination conventions, (as per Annex A of the Examinations and Assessment Framework).[40]

Departments should ensure that candidates are supplied with information to enable them to understand the role of viva voce or other oral assessments within University examinations, and particularly with regard to the implications of such assessments for candidates' results.

In some courses, the viva or other oral examination is a compulsory assessment and students must attend or risk failure in the examination. In other cases, the viva may serve the purpose of confirming a candidate's position in the relevant results list (and provide an opportunity to elevate marks but not reduce them), or forms part of an optional assessment:

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[39] academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/examiners
[40] academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/examiners

candidates may choose whether or not to attend these oral assessments as there will be no detrimental effect on their results.[41]

7.9 The use of third party proof-readers

Students must comply with the policy on the use of third party proof-readers for assessed written work where the word limit is 10,000 words or greater.

The University's Policy on the use of third party proof-readers[42] sets out requirements in this area. The use of third party proof-readers is not permitted for work where the word limit is less than 10,000 words. The default position is therefore that the guidance applies to all assessed written work where the word limit is 10,000 words or greater. However, departments and faculties may opt to specify that, for certain assessments, students should not be allowed any proof-reading assistance. The policy sets out what a proof-reader may and may not do, and it is the student's responsibility to provide the proof-reader with a copy of the policy statement. Students have authorial responsibility for their work, and should choose whether they wish to accept the proof-reader's advice.

7.10 The use of supervisors as assessors

If a department considers it necessary to appoint a student's supervisor as one of the assessors of their dissertation, the safeguards set out below should be followed, including the use of double blind-marking, and one of the external examiners should be asked to give particular attention to the marking and reconciliation of marks.

Oxford maintains as a principle that those who examine students should be, as far as possible, independent of those who directly teach them. This principle is reflected in the arrangements for the appointment of the examination board which takes its instructions from, but is independent of, the supervisory body for the course. The principle is also reflected in other regulations and policies that seek to ensure, as far as possible, an independence of judgement by the examination board, not unduly influenced by close knowledge of students' performance in class. However, there are a number of circumstances in which a supervisory body for a course might consider it necessary to appoint a student's supervisor as one of the markers of their dissertation; for example, where there is difficulty finding sufficient specialists in a particular topic within a small department. If a department does elect to appoint the supervisor as one of the assessors of the dissertation, the following steps should be taken:

- The supervisor should always be formally appointed as an assessor if not already an examiner.
- The second marker should either be an examiner on the Board of Examiners or an assessor with the closest specialist knowledge to the project topic.
- The two markers should mark the student's dissertation independently of each other, i.e. double blind-marking.
- As for all types of assessment, the Examination Conventions should explicitly state how marks are reconciled when there is a significant difference between the mark of

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[41] Examination Regulations, Part 14, cl. 14.21(3):
https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/Regulation?code=rftcoue-p14ls-n-snawfromexam
[42]academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/policies/third-party-proof-readers

the supervisor and examiner/assessor. In such cases the Chair of Examiners may request an additional assessor or examiner.

- One of the external examiners should be asked to give particular attention to the marking and reconciliation of marks for dissertations where supervisors are involved in marking.

7.11 Results

Numerical marking, which must be expressed in whole numbers for agreed final marks, is used for undergraduate examinations.

The University requires all examiners in First and Second Public Examinations to express agreed final marks for individual papers (including those for formally assessed coursework) on a scale from zero to 100.

Detailed information about marking, adjudication and results can be found within the Examinations and Assessment Framework.[43]

Degree results are classified according to the Honours Degree Classification system. Following a programme of work that was undertaken by the UKSCQA to explore the complex issues surrounding grade improvement and inflation[44],[45], a series of proposals were published and then consulted upon with the sector in 2018-19 in order to protect the value of a UK degree[46],[47]. As a result, the UKSCQA published a statement of intent[48] to ensure transparency, reliability, and fairness in degree classification and new degree classification descriptions have also been agreed as a reference point for UK higher education providers. In response to this work, the University is undertaking a review of its own classification, assessment and marking systems.

7.12 Feedback on Summative Assessments

The University does not provide feedback on summative assessments, except in a limited number of cases:

  i.   upon failure of the First Public Examination;
  ii.   in exception cases for work submitted to fulfil the requirements of Parts of the Second Public Examination prior to the end of the FHS, where this serves as a 'building block' for later assessment;
  iii. in specific circumstances where graduate taught (PGT) courses and the fourth year of integrated Masters undergraduate programmes share teaching and examining provision; in these cases the fourth year undergraduate students may receive feedback according to the PGT feedback policy.

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[43] http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/pgexaminers/
[44] https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-07/understanding-degree-algorithms.pdf
[45] https://ukscqa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/degree-classification-academic-standards.pdf
[46] https://ukscqa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/degree-classification-academic-standards-consultation.pdf
[47] https://ukscqa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Statement-of-intent-consultation-analysis-FINAL.pdf
[48] https://ukscqa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Statement-of-intent-FINAL.pdf

Students may request to see examiner comments and marking for any assessment by making a Subject Access Request. Departments may therefore wish to act proactively to make available information and data on student assessments.

7.12.1 First Public Examination

Candidates who fail the First Public Examination at their initial attempt will receive as detailed a breakdown of marks as is available for all the failed papers.

The marks will be supplied to the candidate by the examiners within the relevant department via the college tutor, who will be in a position to advise the candidate on areas of weakness and strength, to inform their preparation for re-sit.

Candidates who fail any papers at the First Public Examination, and are planning to re-sit the examination, are also entitled to see their examination scripts for any papers which they have failed. Further information is available within the Examinations and Assessment Framework.[49]

7.12.2 Second Public Examination

Examination boards are permitted (but not required) to provide question-level marks to students, for the First Public Examination and for Parts of the Final Honour School before the final year of the course, should they wish to do so and where such question-level marks are reconciled and available. Boards will need to use local processes to release question-level marks (they will not be released into eVision) and will need to be able to provide technical support for this in-house. Further information is available within the Examinations and Assessment Framework.

A protocol for considering individual cases to provide written feedback to students on work submitted in Parts of the examination prior to the end of the FHS, where this serves as a 'building block' for later assessment, is in place. This protocol is available as Annex B of this document.

In specific circumstances where graduate taught (PGT) courses and the fourth year of integrated Masters undergraduate programmes share teaching and examining provision, the undergraduate students may receive feedback according to PGT feedback policy, in the same way as the PGT students.

The circumstances where this is permitted are as follows: (1) an integrated Masters course has a separate classification at the end of each of the third and fourth years; (2) there is a parallel or closely related MSc course to the fourth year of the integrated Masters programme; (3) assessment takes place before or at the start of the third term; (4) teaching and examining provision is shared between courses.

Where these circumstances are in place, the fourth year undergraduate students should receive the same type of feedback on the same timescale as the PGT students, in

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[49] academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/examiners

accordance with the existing PGT feedback policy. The PGT feedback policy is available as part of the Policy and Guidance on postgraduate taught courses.[50]

7.13 Re-sits

7.13.1 First Public Examination

For candidates who fail the First Public Examination at their first attempt and pass fewer than 50% of the examination papers, candidates are expected re-sit the **whole** examination on one further occasion, at the earliest available opportunity.

Candidates who fail the examination but who pass at least 50% of the papers are expected to re-sit the papers they have failed, at the earliest available opportunity. Specific details will be provided in the examination conventions for the relevant programme.

Re-sits are governed by the relevant special regulations for the course concerned.

A further exceptional (i.e. second) opportunity to re-sit the examination requires application to and approval on behalf of the Education Committee.[51]

For the majority of First Public Examinations (i.e. where the first sitting is scheduled in Trinity Term), the earliest opportunity to attempt the examination again will be during the Long Vacation.

Re-sits should be concentrated within the first two weeks of September rather than in the final two weeks. This is to ensure that all First Public Examination results are available prior to the start of the next academic year.

A candidate who passes the First Public Examination whether at the first attempt or after re-sitting the examination is deemed to have reached the University's threshold standard for embarking on the Final Honour School.[52]

The colleges have an important role in decision-making regarding the academic performance and progression of individual students in the First Public Examination, including re-sits. In particular and carefully defined circumstances, as set out in its own academic procedures, a college should be able to limit a candidate's opportunity to take the re-sit examination normally available.

Where college academic procedures are already in progress at the time of a candidate's first attempt at the First Public Examination and the student has received a written warning which explicitly provides, at least four weeks before the first examination (and subject to normal college appeal mechanisms), a college may indicate that a specified number of failures on identified papers or other elements of the First Public Examination at the first attempt will lead to the termination of the student's course of study.

A failure to meet a college-specified pass level *higher* than the common pass mark of 40 in a First Public Examination (the threshold standard) at either the first or a subsequent attempt should not in itself lead to the termination of a student's course of study, or be the deciding

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[50] academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/policies/pgt
[51] Ibid., 3.16 (2).
[52] Ibid., 3.16 (3).

factor in allowing a candidate to embark on the Final Honour School, but may be a relevant factor in any *subsequent* consideration of academic disciplinary procedures.

7.13.2 Second Public Examination

The University's regulations provide for re-entry to (i.e. a re-sit of) the Final Honour School where a candidate either fails the degree outright, or fails to obtain a classified result (i.e. a Pass degree).[53]

There is no provision for additional sittings of the Second Public Examination. However, candidates who do not achieve a classified result at the end of their course (or at the BA exit point for some integrated Master's degrees) are not prohibited from entering for the Final Honour School examination again, according to the provisions of the relevant General Regulations. The regulations require students to resit all papers, however an application may be made to Education Committee to permit students to resit only the failed papers.

For those Final Honour School examinations delivered in Parts (in the sciences), the special regulations for those subjects normally specify that a second attempt is limited to third-year examinations only.

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[53] General Regulations for the First and Second Public Examination, Part 4, Second Public Examination, 4.13, https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/Regulation?code=grftfasecopublexam

Annex A: Resources

Examination Regulations,
https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/

Common Framework for Undergraduate Admissions,
https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/decisions/common-framework?wssl=1

Common Framework for Supporting Disabled Students,
academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/disability

Centre for Teaching and Learning resources for lecturers and other teaching staff,
http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/support/teaching/resources/

Teaching Management System (TMS)
http://www.oxcort.ox.ac.uk/

University Strategic Plan 2018-24, available from
https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/strategic-plan-2018-24

Resources provided by Education Committee

Examinations and assessment framework (EAF)
academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/examiners

Policy and Guidance on Course Information,
academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/course-information

Policy and Guidance on new courses and major changes to courses,
academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/new-courses

Educational Recordings Policy
https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/educational-recordings-policy

Policy on the use of third party proof-readers,
academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/policies/third-party-proof-readers

Policy and Guidance on student engagement and representation,
academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/student-engagement-and-representation

Policy and Guidance on providing education with others,
academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/policies/providing-education-with-others

University awards framework,
academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/university-awards-framework

Procedures for the annual monitoring of courses,
academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/quality-assurance/annual-monitoring-of-courses

Digital Education Strategy,
https://ctl.ox.ac.uk/digital-education-strategy

Policy and Guidance on undergraduate learning and teaching

Resources provided by Senior Tutors' Committee

Senior Tutors' Committee resources, including Guidance and Questionnaire on College Undergraduate Academic Provision,
https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/ADMN-SeniorTutorsCommittee

Resources for students

University Student Handbook,
https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/student-handbook?wssl=1

Study skills and training, including plagiarism guidance,
https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills?wssl=1

Online plagiarism awareness course for students,
https://www.it.ox.ac.uk/article/avoiding-plagiarism-and-research-integrity-courses-moved-out-of-weblearn

Language Centre,
http://www.lang.ox.ac.uk/

IT Services,
https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/it?wssl=1

Bodleian Libraries,
http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/

Disability Advisory Service,
https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability?wssl=1

Counselling Service,
https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling?wssl=1

Careers Service,
http://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/

Orientation for international students,
www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/international?wssl=1

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Annex B: Protocol for supplying written feedback (on an exceptional basis) for submitted assessments in Parts of the Honour School that occur before the final year of the course

A department, with the support of its academic division, may submit a request to Education Committee[54] to provide written feedback to students on a submitted summative assessment, which the department considers to be a 'building block' for assessments which take place between subsequent Parts of an Honour School examination.

The request to provide written feedback under these circumstances must confirm that the criteria set out below will be met.

1. The assessment must be submitted to meet the requirements of a formal Part of the Honour School, prior to the final year of the degree programme.

   [This protocol should only be used for supplying feedback for assessments where marks have been formally agreed and released by the examination board, as is the case for formal Parts of the Honour School. Therefore this protocol cannot be used to supply feedback on all pieces of assessment contributing to the final degree outcome.]

2. The assessment must take the form of submitted work, i.e. an essay, project, thesis/dissertation or other piece of work which students must submit to meet the requirements of the Honour School.

   [This protocol does not apply to timed, written examinations.]

3. This will be the only opportunity for formative feedback to be provided on the specific knowledge, understanding and skills which are being tested by the assessment.

   [This protocol is intended for use where collections or formative feedback through tutorial or other work are not possible.]

4. There must be clear and demonstrable links between the assessment which constitutes the 'building block' and the subsequent assessment to which it relates, including:

   i. Learning outcomes – how does the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills associated with the first assessment prepare students for subsequent learning development through work towards the subsequent assessment?

   ii. Assessment – there should be parallels between the first and subsequent assessments (in addition to these assessments being submission-based). The benefits of supplying feedback on the first assessment should be evident: students need to be able to learn from the feedback on their first assessment to inform their attempt at the subsequent assessment.

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[54] Via the Head of Taught Degrees

iii. Assessment criteria – how will the respective marking criteria test how candidates have developed their knowledge, understanding and skills between the first and subsequent assessments?

iv. Feedback – how will the provision of feedback on the first assessment have a direct, formative impact on the work required in the subsequent assessment?

5. An example of the circumstances for which this protocol is designed is the individual mapping project which candidates for Part A2 of the Honour School of Earth Sciences are required to submit, for which feedback would be helpful to students before submitting work for Part B of the Honour School.

Procedure for incorporating the supply of written feedback into the Honour School assessment process involving examination in Parts

Further to approval being granted, the procedure below should be followed.

i. Written feedback should be supplied in the same format to students in the same cohort, preferably by use of a pro-forma. A pro-forma will help to ensure that students receive a consistent amount of feedback, and that the type of written feedback is appropriate to the assessment.

ii. The outcome of the first assessment i.e. the agreed final mark plus the written feedback must be ratified at the final meeting of the examination board (and therefore including the external examiner/s) for that Part of the Honour School examination, prior to being released to students.