

ICT Systems Induction

(and Safety)

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<http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/help/introductory-info>

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Network

The department provides the majority of services in house as with most of the other large departments in the division, e.g. email, file store, backup, web services etc..

- Username/password will work on
 - all departmental Windows and Linux machines
 - departmental website (which also provides email access, file access, other restricted web materials)
- The majority of desktop machines are running Linux - aimed at academic research with about 3000 packages installed.
- Linux machines are all remotely accessible using nxclient etc.
- There is a large Windows Terminal Server (wts) that provides easy remote access to windows only applications, e.g. MS Office
- Remote Access Portal (RAP) etc: see <http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/help/remote-access> which list the various ways to remotely access applications, email, files and journals
- Reasonable personal use of departmental systems is fine: common sense but see rules for details

NOTE: There is a central university email system too using your SSO details. Although the department has its own system you will still need SSO for access to central facilities, e.g. software download.

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Facilities Access

- Accounts are preopened
 - Postgrads - can be collected with welcome pack
 - Support Staff - given out as part of induction on first day
- Account will typically be closed 1 month after course/contract ends but you will be warned near the time and can ask for an extension
- Account details explain how to log in and point you to <https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/help/introductory-info>

Privacy

Material/email in your own account is in general private. Material in a pseudo account/file share is open to those with access permission which will generally involve the immediate team and other relevant staff.

Although IT staff have the technical means to grant access to others or obtain things from within an account/share this is not done in general regardless of who makes such a request. Wherever possible people will be asked to reconsider the need for the material, whether it is urgent, can they obtain explicit permission from the owner/holder etc. Only in extreme and clearly justified situations will IT staff provide access without explicit permission of the owner/holder. If in doubt IT staff would refer the matter to the Head of ICT whom in turn could refer the matter to the Chairman.

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The importance of your password

Computer systems in general are moving towards single sign on services whereby you have one username and password to access all the providers facilities (and ideally only need to enter your password once per session regardless of how many services you access). Typically the provider is also offering a wider range of means of accessing those services, in particular web and remote access.

With this greater ease of access comes ever greater personal responsibility. You should never tell anyone else your password. Ideally use a different password for different service providers and change your password from time to time.

With the great ease of web and remote access there is also a greater need to consider when and where you use your password and remember to close applications and log out after using it, e.g. do not leave yourself logged in on a web browser in an internet cafe etc (and be wary of systems that cache your password).

Remember to lock the screen or logout if going away from your computer!

For the more security conscious/paranoid also consider that if you are using strange systems that others have access to the system itself may be compromised, e.g. a key logger recording everything you type or some other rogue application/change giving the person access to your password or materials.

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Data Storage

Storing data safely is vital. Each user has a home directory. This has an initial limit/quota of 2GB. When you reach that limit you can ask for more and all reasonable requests will be done if possible. Home directories are backed up to two separate backup systems every night. Users email is stored separately.

Each Linux machine has the spare space on the local disk accessible as /scratch. This is typically 50-100GB of space. It is purely local to the machine and is backed up weekly. Linux machines also have a /tmp directory. This is not backed up and is automatically emptied whenever the machine is rebooted.

Windows machines are much harder to lock down and hence protect the user from storing data on the unbacked up local disk. In general **nothing is backed up from the local disk of a windows machine** so never try to store files there.

In the future there may also be a central scratch system accessible from all machines which will be backed up too. It will probably offer 1-3TB of space.

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Personal Machines

Can connect laptop wirelessly or wired (provided free network socket)

With a personally managed machine always remember to think about:

- backup - e.g. use the university HFS
- anti virus - e.g. sophos freely available
- maintenance - e.g. warranty or university maintenance scheme
- support and management - e.g. it is generally your responsibility to run the machine and resolve any issues although we may be able to provide some advice.

In particular this includes if you do some work from home where you are then responsible for the support and management of that machines.

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Green IT / Machine Shutdown

The department's current desktop PCs use about 50% less electricity than those from 5 or so years ago. Standard policy in large networks has typically been to ensure all machines stay running 24x7 to ensure remote availability, data integrity, security updates applied in a timely fashion, ease of management etc. As such **policy is users should not in general shutdown machines.**

The department runs a **power management system for the desktop PCs as part of a green IT programme.** Currently the **machines automatically shutdown between the hours of 6pm and 8am if not in use.** This has reduced the department's electricity bill by about 15–20% without noticeable changes for the majority of users. This is an automated/managed system and thus **the policy remains that users should not in general shutdown machines.**

This is just the first step and further changes will be made to reduce electricity usage further over the coming year.

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Support/Help

- Web pages — <http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/help>
- Office mates, other academics and colleagues
- Computing officers
 - Visiting in person - however being a large team we do not all know everything about everything!
 - **Request system - help@maths.ox.ac.uk** (gets to all IT staff and the problem is properly logged and tracked). Some key points:
 - only one problem per email
 - always keep the ticket so you can reply later to chase it up or add info
 - always describe the problem clearly and concisely
 - give it a sensible subject line so it can be easily understood in the long list of requests
 - remember to be clear about where the problem is/you are as there are over 1000 users, nearly 200 offices, 4 or more buildings and people contacting us from all over the world
 - the more clearly you report the problem the better chance you give yourself of a quick and accurate response that resolves the issue

Request system statistics — <http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/notices/it/request-system>

IT Policy — <http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/notices/it/policy>

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Mailing Lists

See <http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/help/faqs/communication/mailing-lists> for full details on best practice for using the lists and the names of the 80+ lists.

For most people the short summary of appropriate lists names to use is very helpful

<http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/help/faqs/communication/which-lists>

This includes **members-announce@maths.ox.ac.uk** which will pass a message on to each of

- permanent-faculty-announce@maths.ox.ac.uk
- research-staff-announce@maths.ox.ac.uk
- support-staff-discuss@maths.ox.ac.uk
- postgrad-announce@maths.ox.ac.uk

Note the lists in general are for announcement purposes and posting is moderated by a list owner. Any message not relevant to the list is thus likely to be rejected (e.g. messages about items for sale are generally not acceptable).

Safety

Maths departments are generally very safe places!

- In general do not move or switch off IT equipment yourself. Always contact computing support/technicians or caretaking staff. Note the department has a green IT system which automatically turns desktops off during certain periods if they are not in use. If you need to use a desktop that is off press the power button to turn it on but leave it on when you finish (the automated system will do the rest). Similarly do not rearrange office furniture without first seeking advice to ensure the change is acceptable to the department and also safe.
- Workstation layout and display screen assessments - see <http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/notices/safety/dse> for details. If having looked through the material you would like a formal DSE assessment this can be arranged. All workstations should already be laid out in accordance with the guidance. In most cases the monitor is height adjustable. For monitors that are not height adjustable boosters are available upon request.

Further health and safety induction information is available at

<http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/notices/safety/induction>

Other

- Please log onto the website and update your profile page!
See <http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/help/faqs/www/editing-personal-data>
- LaTeX (mathematical document preparation system) talk in first term every year.
Also lots of information at <http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/help/faqs/latex>
- System Administrator Appreciation Day
See <http://www.sysadminday.com/>