

Information for Supervisors of Part C/OMMS dissertations at Maths

This document aims to clarify the Part C and MSc in Mathematical Sciences (OMMS) dissertations for assigned supervisors at the Mathematical Institute. As of the academic year 2020-21, the dissertation is a compulsory component for students on the OMMS course as well as for Part C Maths students.

As you will know, an alternative source of information on the dissertations (including the list of topics and a timeline) can be found at the following link: <https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/members/students/undergraduate-courses/teaching-and-learning/part-c-students/teaching-and-learning/dissertations>

TIMELINE

Michaelmas Term	
<i>Friday, Week 0</i>	Dissertation information session for Part C and OMMS students followed by the release of proposed topics and dissertation guidance
<i>12noon Friday, Week 3</i>	Deadline for students to submit their ranked top 5 dissertation choices
<i>Week 5</i>	Students and supervisors informed of the allocation
<i>Weeks 6-8</i>	1-2 initial supervision meetings with students
Christmas Vacation	
<i>Throughout</i>	Communication to supervisors who will be their second assessor. It might that this has yet to be confirmed, thus, these supervisors might receive communication in the weeks that follow.
Hilary Term	
<i>Weeks 1-8</i>	4-5 further supervision meetings
<i>Weeks 7/8</i>	Student oral presentations
Trinity Term	
<i>Friday, Week -1</i>	Deadline to return supervisor logs to Academic Admin
<i>12noon Monday, Week 1</i>	Submission deadline
<i>Wednesday (normally), Week 1</i>	Dissertations available for assessment
<i>Friday, Week 4</i>	Deadline for assessments
<i>Weeks 5/6</i>	Reconciliation between the first and second assessors

Supervision:

Supervisors will normally meet the students working on their topic **six** times; the workload on supervisors should be roughly equivalent to 6 x 1hr group meetings with all the students completing the dissertation. However, this guidance is not meant to be dogmatic and the form of these meetings should be what best suits the supervisor and students as the dissertations progress. So, for example, it may make sense to meet all students for an hour for the first meeting or two, and then divide later hours amongst the students so as to provide shorter 1-on-1 sessions. So that students

are treated equitably across the year, it is important that the amount of supervision should not stray much beyond the equivalent of 6 hours supervision as a group.

The first meetings should take place in Weeks 6- 8 of Michaelmas to allow students to start working on the project, e.g. by doing some background reading, over the Christmas Vacation. Once back in Oxford after the break, there should be further meetings taking place in Hilary term. Overall, the number of meetings should not exceed 6 hours.

If students would like further in-person supervision, it will be at the supervisor's discretion whether additional meetings will be arranged; in the interest of equitable treatment of the students, this should be uncommon but might be justified, for example, if a student had missed a meeting through illness or if a particular omission from a student's educational background became apparent. The intention of the relatively light touch supervision is to encourage independent research work and so excessive help via email is also discouraged.

As supervisors will also be the first assessors, supervisors should not read through the whole document and students have been made aware of this. It is permissible for supervisors to review a section or page if approached, say to comment on the style of presentation or comment on a particularly technical proof. Again, this will be at the discretion of the supervisor.

Oral Presentations:

As part of the dissertation double-unit, students will be required to give an oral presentation. While this presentation will not be assessed, it is hoped that this will be a useful opportunity for skills development as a number of students will not have presented before. Ideally, these talks will take place towards the end of Hilary term and allow students to have some time to take on board any comments from the 'audience' before submission.

As a minimum, there should be two people in attendance, usually the supervisor and another individual with similar background knowledge. This could be a DPhil student, postdoc or another member of faculty. Where the projects have taken a different direction, students taking the same topic will be able to attend their peers' presentations if the student giving the talk would be comfortable with having an audience.

The oral presentation will be in addition to the 6 hours of supervision given during the terms. *Please note that the second assessor will not be able to attend the oral presentation.* This is because the projects are blind marked and might lead to identification of the author when assessing.

For each student, Academic Administration will need to receive confirmation that the presentation has taken place. The ideal way to do this is to complete an Oral Presentation Feedback form which is available at <https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/members/teaching-staff/information-supervisors-undergraduate-projects>. You will also have received this form via email. Any feedback on the form will be passed onto the students. However, if you have already given this verbally, you could confirm this via email.

Project Assessment:

Further information will be provided by the Academic Administration team towards the latter end of the academic year. Supervisors will be the first assessors for the projects. Second assessors are currently still being appointed, and (if you have not yet been contacted about this) confirmation of this will follow in due course.

Throughout the year, supervisors will be asked to complete a Supervisor Log which records the amount of supervision a student has received, both in person and via email. You would be able to complete one document per group. This document is available at:

<https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/members/teaching-staff/information-supervisors-undergraduate-projects>. Second assessors will receive a copy of the completed document in the assessment pack alongside the guidance and marksheets.

Plagiarism:

Since students who work on the same broad dissertation project will be jointly supervised, there are naturally concerns about what constitutes plagiarism and what constitutes collaboration. While it is acceptable for students to discuss the broad project ideas, each student should be individually interpreting the literature, writing their own code, doing their own calculations or developing their own proofs (as appropriate) and, ideally, taking the project in their own unique direction.

The Proctors state that:

No candidate shall plagiarise by presenting someone else's work as their own, or by incorporating other people's work or ideas without full acknowledgements. Examples of this practice include: verbatim quotation, cutting and pasting from the internet, and paraphrasing without clear acknowledgement; collusion; misleading citation; failure to acknowledge assistance; and unacknowledged use of material written by professional agencies or other persons. Unless specifically permitted by the Special Subject Regulations for the examination concerned, no candidate shall commit auto-plagiarism i.e. submit to the examiners any work which he or she has previously submitted partially or in full for examination at this University or elsewhere. Where earlier work by the candidate is citable, he or she shall reference it clearly.

All final submissions will be run through Turnitin and students will be required to submit a Declaration of Authorship alongside their work. The students should already be aware of the plagiarism and its implications with the central Plagiarism webpage (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism?wssl=1>), and the department runs a Fridays@2 session on this earlier in Michaelmas term.

As a supervisor of these projects, you might find it beneficial to look through the central University's comprehensive website for students which includes an online course on awareness. If you have any concerns about plagiarism, you should report them along with evidence for your concerns. Such reports should be made to the Chair of Examiners for Part C and OMMS as appropriate, via the Academic Admin. In minor cases, this will be dealt with by the Exam Board; if there are more major concerns, the matter will be referred to the Proctors.

TMS:

The Academic Administration team will be creating 'Teaching Arrangements' for supervisors of Part C students. Alternatively, the University has put together guidance for tutors on how to add 'Teaching Arrangements' themselves (which include project supervision) to stints on [TMS](#) at the following address: <https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/tms-quick-start-guide-tutors#collapse3240646>. You may find the 'Information Guide' and video on 'Teaching Arrangements for Tutors' particularly helpful.

GSR:

Supervisors of OMMS students are required to complete termly Graduate Supervision Reporting reports on their supervisees. Further information regarding the GSR can be found at: <https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/graduate-supervision-reporting-gsr>

Useful Contacts:

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