



MSc International Human Rights Law

**Course handbook for students
starting 2026-27**

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1. Foreword

1.1 Statement of coverage

This handbook applies to students starting the MSc in International Human Rights Law in Michaelmas Term 2026, academic year 2026-27. The information in this handbook may be different for students starting in other years.

1.2 Version

Version	Action	Date
Version 1.0	Creation of Handbook	18 September 2026

This is Version 1.0 of the 2026-27 handbook. If there are any *minor* changes to the handbook, then new versions (1.1, 1.2, etc.) will be made available on the MSc in IHRL Canvas site. If there are any *major* changes, then the new version will be renumbered as Version 2.0, and you will be informed of the changes in question.

1.3 Disclaimer

The Examination Regulations relating to this course are available at [2026-27, Master of Science by Coursework in International Human Rights Law \(Part-time\)](#). If there are any conflicts between the information in this handbook and the Examination Regulations, you should follow the Examination Regulations. If you have any concerns, please contact the IHRL Course Administrator at ihrl@law.ox.ac.uk.

The information in this handbook is accurate as of 8 September 2026. However, it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained on the University's [Changes to courses webpage](#). If such changes are made, the department will publish a new version of this handbook together with a list of the changes and students will be informed.

1.4 Welcome

Welcome to the Master of Science in International Human Rights Law (often referred to as the IHRL MSc or the MSc in IHRL). This is a matriculated postgraduate award-bearing course offered by the University of Oxford Faculty of Law. This Course Handbook is designed to assist you during your time with the Faculty of Law and to answer questions about your course including what you can expect from the Faculty.

We hope you enjoy your course and find your studies stimulating and rewarding. We appreciate that Oxford University can sometimes be a confusing place, so please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or are not sure about something. A list of key contacts and sources of information can be found below (1.5).

The IHRL Team communicates with students by way of announcements to the course Canvas sites and by individual emails to your Oxford email accounts. We advise you to [set up notifications](#) from the course Canvas sites so that you receive these announcements to your email account and do not miss out on important information (this will be covered during the online induction period). We expect you to check your emails and the Canvas sites regularly.

You are a member of a college as well as a student at the University. Your college will provide much of the support and many of the facilities you will need as a student. The [Oxford Transition Support](#) webpages are also a good starting point, where useful information about new starters in Oxford can be found in one location.

Prof Nazila Ghanea and Dr Shreya Atrey (Course Directors)

Ms Laura Thomlinson (Senior Course Administrator)

Ms Mandakini Jathavethan (Assistant Course Administrator)

1.5 Useful contacts and sources of information

The IHRL course team is based at: The Faculty of Law, University of Oxford, St Cross Building, St Cross Road, Oxford OX1 3UL Email: ihrl@law.ox.ac.uk Tel.: +44 (0)1865 270281	
Course Directors	Prof Nazila Ghanea and Dr Shreya Atrey have overall responsibility for the academic content and teaching. Email: nazila.ghanea@law.ox.ac.uk Email: shreya.atrey@law.ox.ac.uk
Senior Course Administrator	Ms Laura Thomlinson has overall responsibility for the administration of the programme. She can advise on all aspects of your time on course including student status, assessment, extensions and suspensions and direct you to colleagues where necessary. Email: ihrl@law.ox.ac.uk Tel.: +44 (0)1865 270281

Assistant Course Administrator	Ms Mandakini Jathavethan supports the Senior Course Administrator in all aspects of administration for the programme. Email: ihrl@law.ox.ac.uk
Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (Postgraduate Taught Courses)	Prof Simon Douglas is responsible for matters relating to students on postgraduate taught courses in the Faculty of Law and is available as a source of impartial advice for any academic-related issues. Email: simon.douglas@law.ox.ac.uk
Legal Research Librarian	Ms Katharine Matthews is the Legal Research Librarian at the Law Library and should be your first point of contact if you have a question about library resources. Email: katharine.matthews@bodleian.ox.ac.uk and/or law.library@bodleian.ox.ac.uk Tel.: +44 (0)1865 271463 or +44 (0)1865 271462
Bodleian Libraries	General information about finding resources Search facility for finding and accessing library resources (SOLO) Human Rights Law subject and resource guide
Oxford Students' website	Oxford Students' website This site provides a central point for all student information (though please note that not everything is applicable to part-time and distance-taught students). The site includes links to guidance for new students, visas and immigration, academic matters, fees and funding, and welfare.
Student Support	Welfare and Wellbeing For general information about the University's provision in the areas of health (mental and physical), counselling, disability, equality and diversity, peer support and many other areas. Mr Paul Burns is the Disability Officer within the Faculty of Law Email: paul.burns@law.ox.ac.uk Preventing and Responding to Harassment and Sexual Misconduct This comprehensive guide sets out the University's approach to preventing and responding to harassment and sexual misconduct involving students, and brings together policies, procedures, guidance and key information. Harassment Advisors for the Faculty of Law are listed at Harassment Advice Faculty of Law . Financial Assistance Ms Olga Pavlova is the Student Funding Officer within the Faculty of Law Email: olga.pavlova@law.ox.ac.uk

IT and Digital	For information on IT and digital services, please visit IT and digital Oxford University . There are links from here to information on getting started at Oxford, email, generative AI tools, staying secure online and how to get IT support.
IT Support	IT support is provided by departments (in this case the Law Faculty), colleges (New College for most of you) and a central university IT team. For help with Single Sign On (SSO) and multi-factor authentication issues, students should contact their departmental or college IT support team in the first instance. Law Faculty IT support: itsg-support@law.ox.ac.uk Central university It support: Get IT support Oxford University For assistance with accessing your course Canvas sites please contact ihrl@law.ox.ac.uk in the first instance For assistance with Student Self-Service and Registration, please contact student.registration@admin.ox.ac.uk. Guidance on submitting an assessed assignment to the online submission system is available on the coursework submission webpage.
Student Self-Service and Annual Registration	Via Student Self Service , you will be able to register, view and update your personal and academic information throughout your studies at Oxford. You must register at the start of the course and each successive year. Any changes to your student status (e.g. suspension) must also be applied for through Self Service.
Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR)	You will also access the GSR through the Student Self Service website. This is where you and your supervisor will record and review your progress.
Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) on Canvas	Canvas is a web-based environment to support learning, typically including course materials, discussion forums, and course information as well as access to online submission of assessed work. There are three Canvas sites for this course – (1) a course-level IHRL MSc site which should be your central point of reference for the course as a whole, (2) a site for the online induction and Fundamentals of IHRL course 2026-27 and (3) a site for the 2027 summer residence (you will be notified when this becomes available)

Course Committee and Student Representatives	Two student representatives from each cohort are sought each year to take an active role in the delivery of the course through representation on the course management committee. Further details are at Student representatives: MSc International Human Rights Law and Course committee documentation: MSc International Human Rights Law .
Degree ceremonies	How to book your degree ceremony, order your tickets and what to wear.
Virtual tour of Oxford	Virtual Tour of Oxford uses interactive web pages which allow you to explore and manipulate 360-degree photographic panoramas of the city and university.
Transcript request	While you are on-course: email ihrl@law.ox.ac.uk After you have completed your course: Academic Transcripts webpage .

Other Key Sources of Information

This handbook contains information specific to your course. You should read it in collaboration with:

- [The IHRL MSc publicity website](#)
- [The Graduate Admissions website](#)
- [The University Student Handbook](#)
- The Course Examination Conventions for 2026-27 (these are made available on the [IHRL MSc Canvas site](#) during Michaelmas Term). See also 4.3.
- Your college handbook/website

1.6 Key locations

Your course is partly distance-taught and partly residential.

Your summer residence takes place in Oxford in July/August each summer (see 2.6). You are offered accommodation at [New College](#) though please note there are some restrictions (see 8.5). Your classes will take place in the Manor Road Social Sciences Building (see 8.1). You will be escorted to the most relevant buildings/rooms during the first few days of the residence.

1.7 Important dates

Please note teaching and submission dates very carefully and bear them in mind when planning your holidays and other commitments for the year. The regulations and examination conventions require you to submit coursework by the deadlines specified.

1.7.1 Teaching dates

Course induction (online)	Sunday 27 September – Saturday 10 October 2026
The Fundamentals of International Human Rights Law (online)	Sunday 11 October 2026 – Tuesday 13 April 2027
Summer residence 1 (in Oxford)	Thursday 1 July – Saturday 7 August 2027 • Examination: Tuesday 27 July (provisional) • Examination: Friday 30 July (provisional)
Summer residence 2 (in Oxford)	Saturday 1 July – Saturday 29 July 2028 (provisional) • Examination: Tuesday 25 July (provisional) • Examination: Friday 28 July (provisional)

1.7.2 Assessment deadlines

Deadlines for the online Fundamentals coursework assignments, dissertation proposal, and dissertation itself are listed below, together with the expected return dates for marks. All deadlines are UK local time (GMT/BST). It is a student's responsibility to account for any local time differences. The regulations and examination conventions require you to submit coursework by the deadlines specified. This information is also included in the Fundamentals schedule.

Assignment	Due by:	Provisional marks returned by:
Fundamentals 1	Tuesday 19 January 2027, 12.00 UK local time	23 February 2027
Fundamentals 2	Tuesday 13 April 2027, 12.00 UK local time	18 May 2027
Dissertation proposal	Wednesday 8 September 2027, 12:00 UK local time	This is required but not assessed
Dissertation	Wednesday 5 April 2028, 12:00 UK local time	31 August 2028

Return dates are subject to many factors and although every effort will be made to adhere to them, there may be circumstances in which this is not possible. These may include where work has been submitted late, or where there are special circumstances requiring further action, or other unexpected events such as staff sickness. Where the return date cannot be met, the course team will contact students with the anticipated date.

Return dates for the examinations will be released as final marks after the Board of Examiners has confirmed the results for the year, usually in mid-October.

Provisional marks and feedback for the dissertation will usually be released by the end of August of the second year with final results being released after the Board of Examiners has confirmed the results for the year, usually in mid-October.

1.7.3 Resubmission of coursework/the dissertation and resit of examinations

If you need to resubmit an assignment (including the dissertation) or resit an examination, you will be advised of the new date by the Course Administrator. Please see the Course Examination Conventions for further information.

1.8 The role of the faculty, college, and university

Students taking law programmes at Oxford are members of their college, of Oxford University generally, and of the University's Law Faculty.

At graduate level, it is the faculty which plays the principal role in organising student's teaching and supervision, and in monitoring their academic progress. The faculty consists of all college and University staff who are involved in the teaching of law. Its members meet regularly to discuss its affairs. Within the faculty there are subject groups consisting of members with a particular interest in the various subjects.

Colleges provide support of a more pastoral nature, through the college advisor, as well as accommodation and meals, sports, social, and welfare facilities. They normally have IT facilities, and a college library, with a collection of law books. The colleges describe their arrangements and facilities in their entries in the Oxford University prospectus (many also have their own prospectus) and, in much more detail, in the material which they supply to their own students.

The University contributes to the overall academic structure within which the various programmes run (it is responsible for defining syllabi, for example, and running official examinations). It also provides sports, welfare, careers, language teaching and IT facilities. It describes its arrangements and facilities on the University website (and in particular the information on the [Oxford Students' Website](#), and, in more detail, in the literature which students receive upon or after entry, such as the [University Student Handbook](#)).

2. Course content and structure

2.1 Overview

Students who successfully complete the two-year course will be awarded a Master of Science (MSc) in International Human Rights Law.

2.2 Course aims

The purpose of the MSc programme is to develop your understanding of international human rights law and your ability to contribute to this field. The programme of study places emphasis on increasing your understanding of the scope and limits of international human rights law principles and institutions, and your capacity to think analytically about further implementation and research.

The specific objectives of the course are as follows:

- To enhance students' understanding of international human rights law at the domestic, regional and international levels;
- To enhance students' ability to think analytically about the further implementation and development of international human rights law generally and in the context of their own professional and national setting;
- To increase students' ability to conduct research in this field of law;
- To assist students' career advancement; and
- To facilitate students' collaboration with other professionals for the more effective development and application of international human rights law.

2.3 Intended learning outcomes

By the end of the course students will have achieved the following learning outcomes.

Knowledge and understanding:

At the end of the course, students will be expected to display:

- An understanding of the principles, institutions, jurisprudential debates and policy choices at issue in the international human rights context
- An understanding of the strategies for the implementation of human rights law
- An understanding of the methods required to undertake human rights research and the areas in need of further research

Cognitive / intellectual skills:

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Assess which facets of international human rights law are relevant to a particular case
- Analyse normative standards, judicial decisions, legal briefs, official documents, secondary materials and other documents
- Assess, develop and implement basic advocacy strategies appropriate to specific cases and contexts
- Conduct research in international human rights law

Transferable / key skills:

Students will also be expected to have developed a range of transferable skills including:

- Independent research and learning skills;
- Independent capacity to conduct human rights advocacy;
- Use of information technology to conduct human rights advocacy and research;
- Reasoning skills;
- Presentation and communication skills;
- Effective writing and communication skills;
- Ability to collaborate with colleagues;
- Ability to analyse and approach human rights-related problems independently and in small groups.

Discipline-specific practical skills:

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Assess and develop human rights law argumentation;
- Assess, develop, and implement basic strategies for human rights advocacy;
- Access the key textual and online sources of information applicable to human rights research and advocacy;
- Conduct online and library research for human rights advocacy and the furtherance of the understanding of human rights law.

2.4 Course structure

The course is taken part-time over two academic years (six terms). It is partly distance-taught and partly residential. The basic structure of the course is set out below. You will find more details about dates at 1.7 and more information about summer seminar options at 2.5.

YEAR 1

Michaelmas and Hilary Terms (September – April)

- Induction and Fundamentals of International Human Rights Law (Fundamentals) (online)

Trinity Term (May – June)

- Advance reading for your first summer residence (online)

Summer residence (July – August, Oxford)

- Two chosen electives (see 2.5)
- Dissertation preparation

YEAR 2

Michaelmas and Hilary Terms (September – April)

- Dissertation research and writing (online)

Trinity Term (May – June)

- Advance reading for your second summer residence (online)

Summer residence (July – August, Oxford)

- Two chosen electives (see 2.5)

2.5 Syllabus and classes

An overview of the various elements and classes that make up this course is set out below and a short course description for each of these is available on the [MSc course publicity website](#). A detailed syllabus for the online Fundamentals course and each summer class will be provided via the relevant course Canvas site as they become available. Each syllabus contains information on the content of teaching sessions, required and optional readings, and assignment titles (where relevant).

2.5.1 Online elements

- Course induction
- Fundamentals of International Human Rights Law
- The dissertation

2.5.2 In-person elements

Below are the courses that were offered during the summer residence in 2026. We expect to be able to offer a similar range during your residences in 2027 and 2028, but it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at [Changes to courses | Oxford University](#).

Students will choose one class from Group A and one from Group B in each summer of the course. Due to class size constraints, it is not always possible to allocate students to their first choice of classes.

Group A (2026)

- Business and Human Rights (Liz Umlas)
- International Criminal Law (Patti Sellers)
- Domesticating International Human Rights Law (Ahmed Shaheed)
- Human Rights and the Environment (John Knox)
- International Equality Law (Shreya Atrey)
- International Humanitarian Law (Dino Kritsiotis)
- Transitional Justice (Lars Waldorf)

Group B (2026)

- International Rights of Children (Ann Skelton)
- Poverty and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Olivier De Schutter)
- Racial Discrimination, Minorities and Indigenous Peoples (Joshua Castellino)
- Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Human Rights (Cathryn Costello)
- Comparative Regional Human Rights Systems (Frans Viljoen)
- Freedom of Religion or Belief (Nazila Ghanea)
- International Rights of Women and Gender Related Discrimination (Fareeda Banda)

2.6 Format and arrangements for summer residences

The two summer residences are compulsory elements of the course and are full-time. Students are expected to attend both sessions for the full period (see 1.7 for dates and 3.4.1 for attendance/participation requirements). The summer residences comprise three weeks of intensive classes and one week of revision/examinations. The first residence also includes an orientation period and one further week of classes for dissertation preparation. Except on the arrival weekend, there are no timetabled activities at the weekend. A daily schedule for the summer residences is provided in advance via the course Canvas site. For information on accommodation arrangements and social events at the summer residences, please see 8.5.

3. Teaching and learning

3.1 Organisation of teaching and learning

Students taking law programmes at Oxford are members of their college, of Oxford University generally, and of the University's Law Faculty. For this course, it is the faculty which plays the principal role in organising student's teaching and supervision, and in monitoring their academic progress. The college's role is of a more pastoral nature. Please see 1.8 for further information.

The organisation of the teaching and the teaching patterns are different for each element of the course. These are described in more detail below. Please see 3.4.1 for further information on attendance and participation expectations.

If you have any issues with teaching or supervision, please raise these as soon as possible so that they can be addressed promptly. Details of who to contact are provided in section 7.4 on complaints and appeals.

3.1.1 Online discussions

The online Fundamentals course will involve you participating in asynchronous small group discussions via the course Canvas site for each of the six units which make up the Fundamentals course. Each discussion period runs over six days during which time students are expected to contribute actively to three discussion questions that have been posed. Class sizes are usually 10-15 students. The Fundamentals course runs over seven months and follows a pattern of two reading weeks and one discussion week, with time set aside for writing an assignment at the end of each term. A detailed schedule for the Fundamentals course is provided separately on the Fundamentals Canvas site.

3.1.2 In-person classes

During the summer residences you will have 24 hours of taught classes for each of the summer electives you have selected, spread over three weeks. These usually take place in the mornings, four days a week with one day left free for reading and class preparation. Elective class sizes are usually set at a maximum of 15 students. The primary purpose of these sessions is for you and your colleagues to address in depth the subjects at hand. Significant emphasis is placed on discussion rather than extended presentations by your tutors. In addition, in their first year, students will attend a series of lectures, research groups and library training linked to the dissertation. A detailed schedule for the summer residence is provided separately on the Summer Residence Canvas site.

3.1.3 Private study

For all elements of the course, you will have periods of private study. These usually will involve the intensive and critical engagement of reading materials, the conduct of research, writing assignments and preparing for online discussions and seminars.

3.1.4 Supervision

You will be guided in your research through exchanges with your Fundamentals tutor and your dissertation supervisor. These exchanges provide an opportunity for you to explore your research interests and questions with your tutor/supervisor, to resolve any substantive problems you may be encountering with the reading materials or your dissertation, and to receive feedback during the course of that research. Supervision may be by email or via Teams or Zoom or a combination of both, with students and supervisors agreeing on the schedule/timing between themselves. Further information about consultations with your Fundamentals tutor is available on the Fundamentals Canvas site and will be covered during the induction. Further information about supervision for your dissertation will be provided in a Dissertation Handbook in Trinity Term of your first year.

3.1.5 Lectures

During the summer residences, students will have the opportunity to attend optional events by faculty members and guest speakers. These may include lectures, panel presentations, book launches, and film screenings followed by discussion.

3.2 Teaching staff

Our regular teaching staff are listed below though not all will teach or supervise dissertations every year. It may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at [Changes to courses | Oxford University](#). For further information on the tutors, please visit the [teaching staff pages](#) on the MSc publicity website.

3.2.1 Oxford Faculty members

Thiago Alves Pinto, Departmental Lecturer in Legal Studies and Diplomatic Studies and the Director of Studies in Religion and Theology, Department for Continuing Education.

Shreya Atrey, Associate Professor in International Human Rights Law, Faculty of Law.

Freya Baetens, Professor of Public International Law, Faculty of Law and Research Director, Oxford Human Rights Hub.

Nazila Ghanea, Professor of International Human Rights Law, Faculty of Law and Course Director for the MSc in International Human Rights Law.

3.2.2 Other teaching staff

Oxford University has access to a world-wide network of leading academics and practitioners. Those who regularly teach and/or supervise dissertations include the following:

Fareda Banda, Professor of Law at SOAS at University of London.

Carolyn Patty Blum, Clinical Professor of Law (Emerita) at Berkeley Law School.

Jason Brickhill, Director of Litigation, Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa; Associate, Oxford Human Rights Hub; Honorary Research Associate, University of Cape Town.

Joshua Castellino, Executive Dean of the College of Arts, Law & Social Sciences, Brunel University London

Cathryn Costello, Professor of Global Refugee and Migration Law, University College Dublin.

Bernard Duhaime (to be confirmed), Professor of International Law, Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of Quebec in Montreal; UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence

Olivier De Schutter, Professor, University of Louvain (UCLouvain) Belgium; UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights

Malcolm Evans, Principal of Regent's Park College; formerly Professor of Public International Law at University of Bristol.

John Knox, Professor of International Law at Wake Forest University, USA.

Dino Kritsiotis, Professor of Public International Law at the University of Nottingham, UK.

Philip Leach, Professor of Human Rights Law at Middlesex University, a solicitor, and Director of the European Human Rights Advocacy Centre (EHRAC).

Wade Mansell, Emeritus Professor of International Law at the University of Kent, UK.

Yvonne McDermott Rees, Professor of Law, Swansea University, UK

Siobhán McInerney-Lankford, Head of Unit at the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (Equality, Roma and Social Rights Unit).

Juan Méndez, Professor of Human Rights Law, American University Washington College of Law.

Rachel Murray, Professor of International Human Rights Law at the University of Bristol and Director of its Human Rights Implementation Centre.

Patricia Sellers, International criminal lawyer and Special Adviser on Slavery Crimes to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

Ahmed Shaheed, Professor of Human Rights at Essex Law School and Senior Fellow at Raoul Wallenberg Human Rights Centre.

Ann Skelton, Professor of Law and holds the UNESCO Chair in Education Law at the University of Pretoria.

Surya Subedi, Professor of International Law at the University of Leeds and a practising Barrister at Three Stone Chambers, Lincoln's Inn, London.

Patrick Thornberry, Emeritus Professor of International Law at Keele University and Honorary Professor of Law at the University of Nottingham, UK.

Elizabeth Umlas, Lecturer at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, an independent researcher and consultant with 20 years of experience in the field of business and human rights.

Frans Viljoen, Director of the Centre for Human Rights at the Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria.

Lars Waldorf, Professor of Law, Northumbria University, UK

Alexandra Xanthaki, Professor of Law at Brunel University London, UK and the Research Director of the Brunel Law School.

3.3 Dissertation

You will submit a dissertation of up to 12,000 words on an international human rights law topic in April of your second year. Your work will be supervised by a supervisor and a co-supervisor if required. The dissertation will enable you to systematically utilise the knowledge and understanding of the principles and practice of international human rights law gained from your coursework. You will be required to demonstrate your ability to utilise the complete range of research skills learned in your coursework.

Preparation for your dissertation starts in earnest after the submission of the second summative assignment for the Fundamentals course. Before you arrive for the summer residence, take time to think about the specific area you wish you work in and also the specific legal research question that you want to answer in your dissertation. Starting to think early about your dissertation and as you prepare for your summer courses and during the summer residence sets you up to make the most of 'dissertation week'. The dissertation week is Week 5 of your first summer residence and is designed to help you develop your research proposal that is due for submission in September. This is a 1,500-word proposal in which you will need to provide certain key information including your working title, research question, hypothesis, methodology and scope, structure/chapter outline, and a short one-page bibliography. The dissertation week involves morning seminars, research group meetings and afternoon independent research time, in addition to a writing workshop and library skills training. Each of the elements will be introduced to you over a live Teams call prior to your first summer residence so you know what to expect in the summer.

After you have submitted your dissertation proposal and your supervisor has been allocated, you will conduct your research and write the dissertation during Michaelmas and Hilary Terms of your second year. Your dissertation should be submitted by the date provided in 1.7.

Further details about requirements for the dissertation will be provided in a separate Dissertation Handbook during Trinity Term of your first year.

3.4 Expectations of study and workload

Although this course is part-time, it represents a serious commitment on your part. While your tutors will provide academic and pastoral support, you are responsible for your own academic progress, which will depend in part on your ongoing commitment and engagement.

Students are expected to devote 15-20 hours per week to private study when not in Oxford. The summer residences are full-time. The first-year residence is just over five weeks in length, and the second-year residence is four weeks. This may require careful scheduling to fit in with your other commitments, and you are strongly encouraged to consult as early as possible with your employer, colleagues, and family to ensure your engagement and attendance is possible, particularly at the summer residences. Good organisational and time management skills should contribute to successful completion of the course.

3.4.1 Attendance/participation

You will gain maximum benefit from the course if you attend and participate fully in all taught elements. These will benefit both you as an individual and the class as a whole and will make for a more dynamic and stimulating learning environment. The minimum attendance recommended for this course is set out in the Course Examination Conventions for this academic year (see 4.3). You should be aware also that the student contract includes a provision that you will progress your own studies.

We understand that unexpected events can occur. If you are unable to fully participate, whether that be in online or in-person sessions, please contact the [Course Administrator](#) as early as possible for advice.

3.5 Use of IT

This course has a substantial IT element, particularly for the online parts of the course. Guidance is provided at each stage, but students need to have reliable internet access, a device on which they can read and produce significant amounts of text, and a good level of experience and skills including proficiency in Microsoft Word or similar word-processing packages.

For more information about training and skills, including IT/digital capabilities courses and resources, visit [Training and skills | Oxford University](#).

4. Assessment

4.1 Assessment structure

To complete the MSc in International Human Rights Law, students must satisfy the examiners in the following: (a) two 2,500-word coursework assignments, (b) four 3-hour examinations and (c) a 12,000-word dissertation. The final mark will be calculated according to the following weighting:

The coursework assignments on the Fundamentals of International Human Rights Law are equally weighted at 10% each and together account for	20%
Each of four written examinations accounts for	12.5%
The dissertation accounts for	30%

For further information about how the work is assessed and marked please refer to the Course Examination Conventions (see 4.3) and the Course Regulations at [2026-27, Master of Science by Coursework in International Human Rights Law \(Part-time\)](#).

4.2 Feedback on learning and assessment

For your Fundamentals assignments (see 4.2.1) and your dissertation, you will receive feedback as well as a mark. This is described in more detail below. Feedback is an important element of the teaching and learning process and students are encouraged to take careful note of the feedback provided and consider how it might be applied to subsequent work. As well as formal feedback on assignments, there will also be opportunities for informal feedback from interactions with your tutors, supervisors and peers.

4.2.1 Fundamentals assignments

For the online Fundamentals course there is a formative assignment (not assessed towards the degree mark). This is intended to give students an opportunity to practice writing a legal essay and to receive feedback on their work before having to submit assessed work. You are strongly recommended to take advantage of this opportunity to submit a formative assignment.

When a Fundamentals assignment (formative or summative) has been marked you will be sent an email with feedback and a provisional mark. This should be according to the dates set out at 1.7. Marks remain provisional until the Board of Examiners has confirmed the Fundamentals results,

usually in June. In some cases, your provisional marks may change following the examiners' review. When your marks are confirmed, you will be sent a notification indicating how to access your mark.

4.2.2 First-year examinations

When your examinations have been marked you will be sent a notification email indicating how to access your mark. This will be after the Board of Examiners has confirmed the results for the year, usually in early October. Feedback is not provided on examinations.

4.2.3 Dissertation, second-year examinations and overall degree

When your dissertation has been marked you will be sent an email with feedback and the provisional mark. This should be according to the dates set out at 1.7. Marks remain provisional until the Board of Examiners has confirmed the results for the year, usually in mid-October. When the marks for your dissertation and second-year examinations are confirmed, you will be sent a notification indicating how to access your marks and also your overall degree classification.

4.3 Examination conventions

Examination conventions are the formal record of the specific assessment standards for the course or courses to which they apply. They are designed to help you understand how your work will be marked, and how those marks will be used to arrive at a final result and classification of your award and to ensure that examiners can carry out their tasks consistently. They include information on attendance expectations, marking scales, marking and classification criteria, use of double marking, the role of the external examiner, progression, resits and resubmission arrangements, penalties for late submission, and penalties for over-length work. The Examination Conventions for this academic year will be made available on the [IHRL MSc course Canvas site](#) during Michaelmas Term and students will be notified.

4.4 Good academic practice

4.4.1 Avoiding plagiarism

The University defines plagiarism as follows:

“Presenting work or ideas from another source as your own, with or without consent of the original author, 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, as is the use of material generated wholly or in part through use of artificial intelligence (save when use of AI for assessment has received prior authorisation e.g. as a reasonable adjustment for a student's disability). Plagiarism can also include re-using your own work without citation. Under the regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offence.”

Please read more about what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it at [Plagiarism | Oxford University](#). You are strongly recommended to complete the online [Plagiarism Awareness Course](#).

Please also refer to Appendix C in this handbook which give specific guidance to law students on avoiding plagiarism.

Students should be aware that the department actively checks submitted work for evidence of plagiarism, including self-plagiarism.

4.4.2 Use of Artificial Intelligence

The University's position on the use of AI is set out at [Plagiarism | Oxford University](#) and states that students are prohibited from presenting work or ideas as their own if the material is generated wholly or in part through use of artificial intelligence unless specific prior authorisation has been given.

The Faculty of Law's policy on the use of AI in summative assessments is set out at [Use of AI in Law Faculty Summative Assessments | Faculty of Law](#). This details how students are permitted to use AI in the preparation of assessment. Students should read this policy thoroughly before starting work on any piece of summative assessment. The full policy is set out below.

A further note on use of AI in examinations can be found in section [6.2](#) and section [6.10](#) of the [University's Student Handbook](#).

Faculty of Law Policy on AI Use in Summative Assessment

This statement sets out when use of AI is permitted by students for taught course summative assessments in the Law Faculty.

AI **must not** be used in closed book examinations. For other taught course summative assessments, students **may** use permitted AI platforms in preparatory work as a tool for research and initial brainstorming for ideas. If using AI, students must do so responsibly and consider the accuracy and integrity of results; in particular, the risk of 'hallucinations'. Students remain responsible for their submitted work in its entirety, and specifically for the selection and development of ideas, for critical thinking, analysis, for the veracity of the information and sources, and for the writing style of the submission. To ensure this, AI **must not** be used to generate any text in submitted work, including any drafts, or any outlines of all or part of the argument.

Permitted AI platforms:

Use of AI platforms is restricted to those provided to students by Oxford University (e.g. Chat GPT Edu). These are made available free at the point of use to ensure equality of access and are governed by agreements with platform suppliers that ensure the security and integrity of information uploaded and compliance with relevant intellectual property, confidentiality and data protection laws. For further guidance, please refer to the University's [Policy for using Generative AI in Research](#).

Declaration:

When students submit a summative assessment, they must confirm that it has been prepared in accordance with the Faculty's policy on use of AI. A declaration form has been developed for this purpose and includes the following elements:

- A statement that *any* use of AI was consistent with the policy and that the student did not use AI to generate any of the text of the submitted work, including drafts, or any outline of all or part of their argument,

- An acknowledgement that the student is responsible for all of their submission's contents,
- An undertaking to retain a record of AI use as described below.

Records:

If students use AI in the course of their work, they should retain for consultation on request, a record of which University-approved AI platform was used, and a list of the types of preparatory work for which it was used (e.g. research, brainstorming). Within their workspace in the AI platform in question, they should also retain records of prompt(s) used, and the number of generations of the same prompt(s). Such records should be kept until assessment marks have been released.

4.4.3 Referencing

A reference is a specific referral to a published piece of work in support of a particular argument or statement of fact that you are making. You will depend on material from other writers for many of your assignments. If you do not acknowledge the materials of other writers, you are plagiarising. So, all quotations, however brief, must be acknowledged, as should ideas.

The main purposes of each reference are to provide all the necessary information for the reader to easily confirm your supporting material, and to read more about your evidence or argument. References are also a good reflection of your understanding of the literature and using them well increases the quality of your writing. You are reminded, however, that over-reliance on quoted material, even where properly referenced, may restrict your opportunity to present your own material and this may therefore affect marks awarded.

Further information is available at [Referencing | Oxford University](#). Course-specific guidance on referencing, including bibliographies, can be found in Appendix B of this handbook.

4.4.4 Other forms of good academic practice

You may also find it useful to read about other study skills including managing your time, reading, note taking, referencing and revision at [Study skills | Oxford University](#).

4.5 Entering for University assessments

For this MSc course, the Course Administrator will automatically enter you for all pieces of assessment. This includes the core assessments (Fundamentals assignments and the dissertation) and optional assessments (your choice of two summer electives each year). You can view your Academic and Assessment Information page in 'My Exams' within [Student Self-Service](#) at any time during the year to see your assessments. Once you have been entered for your summer electives, you may be asked to log in to Self-Service and check that you have been entered for all assessments correctly, notifying the Course Administrator of any errors immediately. Please note that if you are late choosing your optional assessments (the summer electives) or you want to change your option after you have been entered for it, a fee will be payable. Please see [Examination entry | Oxford University](#) for further information.

4.6 Examination dates

Examinations will take place during the two summer residences in one of the University's examination venues in central Oxford. Please see 1.7.1 for summer teaching dates and examinations. The examinations always take place during the residence.

4.7 Sitting your in-person examinations

4.7.1 Format of examinations

Examinations are designed to the extent possible to cover the entire syllabus and all required readings for that subject. The objective of the examination is to probe your knowledge of and ability to analyse the concepts, texts and institutional arrangements of central importance to the subject. You are not expected to quote verbatim passages from the readings, but you are expected to have identified, understand and be able to analyse the key contents of the syllabus and required readings.

Each examination is three hours in length. Candidates are required to answer two of six questions for each paper. The questions are usually of equal value.

Examinations are 'closed-book', which means that no reference materials or books will be provided or allowed into examinations.

Examinations will be typed on a laptop provided by the University using the University's assessment/examination software, Inspira. For further information please see [In-person exams on a computer | Oxford University](#). You will have the opportunity to familiarize yourself with the system prior to taking your first examination.

4.7.2 Alternative examinations arrangements

If you have a medical or other condition for which you think you may need alternative examination requirements, it is very important that you inform your college in advance (ideally prior to your coming to Oxford for the residence and no later than the first week of the residence). This could include, for example, extra time, permission to hand-write rather than type, ergonomic or other seating arrangements, taking food and drink into the exam. This list is not exhaustive. If you have requirements that are not covered here, contact your college office to find out if these can be accommodated. Your college office or college disability advisor can advise you on the process of applying for alternative examination arrangements, or you may contact the Disability Advisory Service via [Disability | Oxford University](#). You will need to provide evidence of why you need the adjustments, and you may be asked to undertake additional assessments to evaluate your needs. Please see [Examination adjustments | Oxford University](#) for further information on alternative examination arrangements.

4.7.3 Preparing for and sitting the examination

Practical information and support for sitting exams is provided at [Completing an exam | Oxford University](#), which includes information about sitting an in-person exam as well as sitting an in-person exam on a computer. Please note the items that are required for sitting an examination, those that are permitted, those which require a signed letter from the college, and those which are disallowed. If you do not appear dressed in the correct clothing, you may be refused entry to the examination

under university rules. Please refer to your college handbook/website or the appendices in this handbook for a description of academic dress.

Important information about what you can and cannot do in exams is available on the above website. For each exam students may join an escorted walk to the exam venue, but it is ultimately your responsibility to ensure you arrive by the required time.

The University operates a policy of anonymous marking for examination scripts, so you should not enter your name on any of your papers.

Should you be affected by something unexpected, such as illness, on the day of your examination which means you cannot attend, you should ensure that someone contacts either the Course Administrator or your college to let them know as soon as possible.

Please see 4.9 for information about notifying examiners of any circumstances that may have affected your performance before or during an examination (e.g. a disturbance in the exam, illness, or bereavement).

Past examination papers are available from [Exam Paper Archive | Bodleian Libraries](#) which is also linked from the MSc summer residence Canvas website.

4.8 Submitted work (coursework and dissertation)

Please see 1.7.2 for all assessment dates, including coursework and dissertation submissions.

Coursework and the dissertation must be submitted via the University's online submission system, Inspira, which can be accessed via links in your Canvas sites. You must familiarise yourself with the instructions on how to submit an assignment for an award-bearing course, available at [Submission of coursework assessments | Oxford University](#). You will have an opportunity to practice submitting to the online submission system ahead of your formal submission.

All assessed work for your course is marked anonymously. Please ensure that you do not include any identifying information such as your name or student number into the document or the file name. You should name the Fundamentals assignment files 'IHRMSc_Fundamentals1' or 'IHRMSc_Fundamentals2' and the dissertation 'IHRMSc_Dissertation'.

Your identity will be revealed once marking for each assignment is complete to enable your Course Director or tutor to keep track of your overall progress.

All deadlines are **12 noon UK local time**. It is a student's responsibility to ensure that they account for any local time differences.

Before submitting the files for marking please make sure that you have uploaded the correct files and that they are your final versions. If you submit the wrong files, you may not be able to withdraw or replace them – if this happens, contact your Course Administrator for advice without delay.

Under no circumstances should work be submitted directly to Course Tutors. If you experience any technical problems, please contact your Course Administrator in the first instance.

Students are strongly advised to keep separate (i.e. on a memory stick, by emailing it to themselves or using an external storage device or server) backups of their work, (including both working and final copies) as work lost as a result of technical problems or computer breakdown will not be considered a reason for granting permission to submit late.

4.9 Problems completing assessment or affecting performance

There are a number of University processes in place to help you if you find that illness or other personal circumstances are affecting your ability to submit assessed assignments or attend examinations. Similarly, there is a process to notify examiners if you believe your performance in an assessment has been seriously affected by acute illness or other personal circumstances (e.g. an accident or bereavement). This is known as a 'Mitigating Circumstances Notice to Examiners' (or MCE). Further information is available at [Problems completing your assessment | Oxford University](#). Please note that MCE notices should be submitted as soon as possible after the affected assessments have taken place/been submitted.

Late submission of assessments without permission to submit late is likely to result in mark penalties.

If you find that illness or other personal circumstances are affecting your ability to submit the *formative* assignment, please contact the course team for advice. As this is not assessed and does not contribute to your final degree mark the processes are different.

4.10 External examiner and examiners' reports

As part of the Quality Assurance processes an external examiner is appointed to the course to act as an external arbiter of standards. The external examiner for this course is currently Sandesh Sivakumaran, Professor of International Law at the University of Cambridge but this will change to Dominic McGoldrick, Professor of International Human Rights Law at the University of Nottingham during the course of 2026-27.

The most recent external examiner's reports, and those of the Chair of the Board of Examiners are made available on the [course committee page](#) of the [IHRL MSc Canvas site](#).

Students are strictly prohibited from contacting external examiners directly. If you are unhappy with an aspect of your assessment, please see the information on complaints and appeals at 7.4.

4.11 Prizes

The MSc in International Human Rights Law offers one prize each year to the student finishing the degree with the highest overall mark.

5. Skills and learning development

5.1 Academic progress

The Course Director has overall responsibility for monitoring and reporting on student progress. They will do this through regular contact with students and with tutors and supervisors. Your progress will

be formally reviewed each term in a report written by your supervisor for that term (see 5.1.1) using the Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) system (see 5.1.2). Where academic performance, including attendance, is not meeting expectations the student will be offered academic advice and guidance.

5.1.1 Academic supervisor

An important person in helping your intellectual development during the degree programme will be your academic supervisor. This person will oversee your academic work and submit progress reports. For the first three terms of your course, your academic supervisor will be your online Fundamentals tutor. For the next two terms, your academic supervisor will be the person allocated as your dissertation supervisor and, for the final term, your supervisor is expected to be a member of the Faculty of Law.

5.1.2 Graduate supervision reporting (GSR)

Matriculated students are strongly encouraged to make a self-assessment report about their progress every term. This is an important mechanism which allows you to record and review your progress each term, and to bring to your supervisor's attention any matters not covered elsewhere. These may include:

- academic progress
- skills developed and / or training undertaken
- skills and training needed
- engagement with the academic community (e.g., seminar or conference attendance, teaching or engagement with college activities)

Your supervisor will comment on your progress, and the Course Director and Director of Graduate Studies can also review all comments. Once the supervisor has completed and submitted their report, this will then be available for you and your college to review.

You will access the GSR via Student Self-Service and you will receive a reminder every term when the window for you to submit your self-assessment has opened.

5.1.3 College adviser

In addition to an academic supervisor, your college will assign you a College Adviser who may be consulted on any issues, academic or non-academic, which concern you. Although your College Adviser is not expected to perform the academic role of the Academic Supervisor, you may wish to seek general academic-related advice from them. In addition, you should feel free to seek advice from them on personal matters, including family and work issues that may be affecting your academic performance, seminar attendance, career plans, etc. Your College Adviser should contact you in the first instance and you should ensure that you respond. Since you are working at a distance for most of the year you may not be able to arrange a face-to-face meeting, but you can always be in contact with your College Adviser by email or Teams/Zoom as appropriate. For further information on the role of College Advisers please see your college handbook or website.

5.2 Learning development and skills

The academic and transferable skills you are expected to develop as learners are set out in the intended learning outcomes section at 2.3.

During your first summer residence, law librarians will offer library skills training on getting started with research, specifically literature searching and the use of Oxford Standard Citation of Legal Authorities (OSCOLA) referencing system.

For further information on study skills and training please see 5.4.

5.3 Inductions

An induction is conducted online at the start of the course in September/October and has three basic objectives: to introduce students to their colleagues, to begin the formation of a working community and to practice using the course Canvas site. The induction is required but non-assessed. It is during this period that we try to resolve any IT issues in order to ensure that at the start of the assessed part of the degree course there are no technical problems that would hinder the students' learning.

At the first summer residence students will also be given in-person inductions which specifically cover arrangements for the residence. This will include a welcome/induction meeting with the Course Director, a welcome/induction with New College staff (and your member college if that is not New College), plus inductions/tours of New College and its library, and the Bodleian Law Library.

5.4 Opportunities for skills training and development

A wide range of information and training materials is available at [Study skills | Oxford University](#) to help you develop your academic skills – including time management, research and library skills, referencing, revision skills and academic writing.

Additionally, the University offers hundreds of self-service resources to help you develop your IT skills for study, research and work. These are listed at [Training and skills | Oxford University](#).

5.5 Language learning and upskilling

The [University of Oxford Language Centre](#) provides a wide range of general and specialised courses in foreign languages and Academic English.

5.6 Opportunities to engage in the department research community

The research activity in the Faculty of Law is supported by ten research groups and five institutes/centres. These are listed at [Research Groups | Faculty of Law](#). In particular, you may wish to look at the Human Rights Law Research Group which includes the Oxford Human Rights Hub, the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights and Oxford Pro Bono Publico.

The [OUCLJ](#) is the flagship journal of Oxford University's postgraduate law community, designed for doctrinal and theoretical contributions from academics, professionals, and policymakers, wherever situated, on matters of current interest to Commonwealth legal systems. The Journal was founded in 2001 and has been run for the last 25 years by postgraduate students at the Faculty, many of

whom have gone on to successful careers in legal academia and practice. Joining the Editorial Board or Editorial Committee of the Journal is a great opportunity for law postgraduates to contribute to the academic community, make connections, and improve their own writing and editing skills

5.7 Careers information and advice

As professional experience is required for applying to this course, you will already have started your career. However, you may still wish to look at the University's resources at [Careers | Oxford University](#) and at [Work, skills and experience | Oxford University](#). In addition, you may find it useful to talk informally to your fellow students, the Course Director and your tutors.

6. Student representation, evaluation and feedback

6.1 Department representation

We strongly encourage students to take an active role in the design and delivery of the course. One of the mechanisms for this is through student representation on the course committee. Early in Michaelmas Term the Course Administrator will ask if anyone wishes to put themselves forward. No special qualifications are needed, only a willingness to put forward the views of your fellow students, take part in discussions and report on the outcomes.

Student representatives may also be invited to join other committees in the Faculty of Law where there are opportunities to be involved in wider policy discussions and the long-term strategy of the Faculty.

The Course Administrator will announce your Student Representative later in Michaelmas Term via the MSc programme Canvas site. Names and contact details of all student representatives will be listed on the [student representatives](#) page of the [MSc Canvas site](#).

6.2 Division and University representation

Student representatives sitting on the Divisional Board are selected through a process organised by the Oxford University Student Union (Oxford SU). Details can be found on the [Oxford SU website](#) along with information about student representation at the University level.

6.3 Opportunities to provide evaluation and feedback

Students are invited to complete an evaluation form via the Canvas site after each element of the course has been completed. Students may also wish to provide feedback via their student representatives. This feedback is considered at termly course committee meetings of which the Student Representatives are members. Points raised will be considered by committee members and responded to via minutes of the meeting which are made available to all students on the [course committee documentation](#) page of the [MSc Canvas site](#).

In addition, students on full-time and part-time matriculated courses are surveyed once per year on all aspects of their course (learning, living, pastoral support, college) through the 'Student

Barometer'. Information about this survey and other University surveys is available at [Student surveys | Oxford University](#).

7. Student life and support

7.1 Who to contact for help

If you are unwell or unable to participate in online discussions or classes at the summer residence for any other reason, please contact your tutor and the Course Administrator for advice in the first instance.

Every college has its own systems of support for students. Please refer to your college handbook or website for more information on who to contact and what support is available through your college.

Details of the wide range of sources of support available more widely in the University are available from [Welfare and Wellbeing | Oxford University](#), including in relation to mental and physical health and disability.

The [Disability Advisory Service \(DAS\)](#) can provide information, advice, and guidance on the way in which a particular disability may impact on your student experience at the University and assist with organising disability-related study support.

The [Counselling Service](#) is here to help you address personal or emotional problems that get in the way of having a good experience at Oxford and realising your full academic and personal potential. They offer a free and confidential service.

The [Preventing and Responding to Harassment and Sexual Misconduct](#) website sets out the University's approach to preventing and responding to harassment and sexual misconduct involving students, and brings together policies, procedures, guidance and key information.

[Oxford Against Sexual Violence](#) is the University's campaign against sexual harassment and violence. Central to the campaign is the [Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service](#), which is jointly funded by the University and colleges, providing free support and advice to any student who has been affected by sexual harassment or violence, domestic or relationship abuse or stalking. You can refer to the [Support Service](#) webpages for details of specialist professional advice and support. A full briefing document on *Understanding Harassment and Sexual Misconduct: What you need to know* can be read via the [IHRL MSc week 2 induction page](#) for further information.

The [Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service](#) provides a safe space for you to be heard, with advisors offering free support and advice to any current student who has been impacted by sexual harassment or violence. All specialist caseworkers at the service are trained to support you at your pace, non-judgementally and in confidence.

In addition, the University offers a peer support service. Further information is available at [Peer Support | Oxford University](#).

7.2 Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)

The University's Equality and Diversity Unit works with all parts of the collegiate University to develop and promote an understanding of equality and diversity and ensure that this is reflected in all its processes. The Unit also supports the University in meeting its legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010, including eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations between people. Further information is provided at [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion | Oxford University](#).

As a member of the University, you contribute towards making it an inclusive environment. The University does not tolerate any form of harassment or victimisation and expects all members of its community, visitors, and contractors to treat each other with respect, courtesy, and consideration.

The University has a broad network of harassment advisors in departments/faculties and colleges and a central Harassment Advisory Service. For more information on the University's harassment policy and the support available for students, visit [Supporting Students at Oxford: preventing and responding to harassment and sexual misconduct | Oxford University](#).

At the Faculty of Law, we incorporate equality into our core objectives, making every effort to eliminate discrimination, create equal opportunities and develop good working relationships between different people. Faculty of Law harassment advice, including a list of current Harassment Advisors is available at [Harassment Advice | Faculty of Law](#).

All Law Faculty EDI activities are overseen by the [Equality and Diversity Committee \(EDC\)](#), which reports directly to the Law Board. EDC meets twice a term, on Tuesdays of weeks 4 and 8, and **all meetings are open to students**, with no reserved business. If you would like to raise an item for discussion, you can do so directly by emailing equalityanddiversity@law.ox.ac.uk or contacting your [student representative](#) on the Committee. Every year, at least three student representatives join the Committee, one from each degree type (undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research).

You can find out more about our recent activities and get involved by visiting [Equality, Diversity & Inclusion | Faculty of Law](#). Please email equalityanddiversity@law.ox.ac.uk if you have any questions. We are keen to listen to student voices and work together to make the faculty a more inclusive space for all.

You may also find it useful to read the University's guidance on leading an inclusive student life at [Inclusive student life | Oxford University](#).

7.3 Freedom of speech

Freedom of speech and academic freedom are central tenets of university life. At the same time the University does not tolerate any form of harassment or victimisation and expects all members of the University community to treat each other with respect, courtesy and consideration. Please see [Inclusive student life | Oxford University](#) for further advice, plus the University's [Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech | Oxford University](#).

Freedom of speech and academic freedom also apply in a social media context, but it is easy to forget that written electronic communication can deprive us of the clues and non-verbal means that

we normally use in face-to-face communications to interpret what someone is saying and feeling. For further advice about social media usage, please see [Social media guidance | Oxford University](#).

7.4 Complaints and academic appeals

The University, the Social Sciences Division and the Faculty of Law all hope that provision made for students at all stages of their programme of study will result in no need for complaints (about that provision) or appeals (against the outcomes of any form of assessment). Where such a need arises, an informal discussion with the person immediately responsible for the issue that you wish to complain about (and who may not be one of the individuals identified below) is often the simplest way to achieve a satisfactory resolution.

Many sources of advice are available from colleges, departments and bodies like the Counselling Service or the Oxford SU Student Advice Service, which have extensive experience in advising students. You may wish to take advice from one of those sources before pursuing your complaint.

General areas of concern about provision affecting students as a whole should be raised through Joint Consultative Committees or via student representation on the faculty/department's committees.

7.4.1 Complaints

If your concern or complaint relates to teaching or other provisions made by the Faculty of Law, then you should raise it with the Academic Administrator, Mr Paul Burns (paul.burns@law.ox.ac.uk) or with the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (Taught), Dr Simon Douglas (simon.douglas@law.ox.ac.uk).

If your concern relates to the course as a whole, rather than to teaching or other provision made by the Faculty of Law, you should raise it with the IHRL MSc Course Director. Complaints about departmental facilities should be made to the departmental administrator (Paul Burns). If you feel unable to approach any of those individuals, you may contact the Dean of the Law Faculty (Professor John Armour). The officer concerned will attempt to resolve your concern/complaint informally.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may take your concern further by making a formal complaint to the Proctors. Please see [Complaints and academic appeals | Oxford University](#) for further information.

If your concern or complaint relates to provision made by your college, you should raise it either with your tutor or with one of the college officers, Senior Tutor, Tutor for Graduates (as appropriate). Your college will also be able to explain how to take your complaint further if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of its consideration.

7.4.2 Academic appeals

An academic appeal is an appeal against the decision of an academic body (e.g. boards of examiners), on grounds such as procedural error or evidence of bias. There is no right of appeal against academic judgement.

If you have any concerns about your assessment process or outcome it is advisable to discuss these first informally with the IHRL MSc Course Director or course team. They will be able to explain the

assessment process that was undertaken and may be able to address your concerns. Queries must not be raised directly with the examiners, including teachers and markers.

If you still have concerns you can make a formal appeal to the Proctors. Please see [Complaints and academic appeals | Oxford University](#) for further information.

7.5 Student societies, including the Oxford Student Union

As a student of the University, you are automatically a member of the [Oxford Student Union](#) (SU). [The Oxford SU](#) offer free, confidential, independent advice to all students studying or suspended from award-bearing courses at the University of Oxford, whether matriculated or not. They specialise in helping students navigate collegiate University, CCAT and OIA processes and can help students to understand support options available at Oxford and beyond. Support outside of their remit includes emergency support, emotional support/counselling, legal advice or advocacy, visa advice, financial advice and housing advice – instead, the SU recommend students check out the [A-Z of Accessing Support](#) for appropriate support in these areas.

You are also eligible to join any of the large number of college and university societies although many will not be active during the summer vacation when you are in Oxford. For further information please see [Clubs and societies | Oxford University](#).

7.6 Policies and regulations

The University has a wide range of regulations, codes of conduct and policies that apply to students. These are all available in an A-Z list via [University regulations and policies | Oxford University](#).

7.7 Merchandise

Please note that the University has strict licensing rules for any merchandise created in affiliation. If you wish to enquire about the creation or availability of merchandise at the Faculty of Law, please contact the [Communications Office](#). Students should not attempt to create and order their own merchandise.

8. Facilities

8.1 Teaching rooms and facilities

When you are in Oxford for the summer residences, your classes will normally take place in the [Manor Road Social Sciences Building](#) though some sessions may take place at New College.

The Manor Road Building houses the Social Sciences Library (see 8.3). It has a café and a large common room with drinks machines. Refreshments will be provided in the common room during breaks between classes. It also has a room which can be used by nursing mothers and a quiet room which can be used to pray, rest or meditate during the working day.

In some cases, teaching rooms in the [St Cross Law Faculty Building](#) may also be used.

The St Cross Law Faculty Building houses the Bodleian Law Library (see 8.3). It also has a café (though this is not usually open outside of term time) and has a [Contemplation Room](#). This is located on the ground floor and is open to all staff, students and visitors who may need a little time away from the busy spaces we occupy. It is a quiet, private space, for people to use for short periods during the working day to pray, rest or meditate.

8.2 Study spaces

Prior to the summer residence and during the residence itself, students are provided with information about study spaces, including the nearest/most relevant libraries and a study room in New College, where most students will be accommodated.

8.3 Libraries

Oxford has a large number of libraries but the [Law Library](#) and the [Social Sciences Library](#) are the two libraries you are likely to use most. While you are away from Oxford you will use the resources electronically. When you are in Oxford at the first summer residence the Law Library will arrange a tour of the library plus library skills training to help you prepare to research your dissertation. They are also able to provide individual tutorials focusing on your dissertation topic. When you are not in Oxford, the Bodleian Libraries offer a number of workshops which you may find useful. Further information is available at [iSkills workshops | Bodleian Libraries](#). If you have any questions about the Bodleian Law Library and its services, you can contact the librarians. Please see 1.5 for contact details.

Please note that college libraries are only open to college members. Your own college (if that is not New College) may also have study spaces, printing and IT facilities.

8.4 IT provision, facilities and support

Please see [IT and digital | Oxford University](#) for guidance on getting started with IT at Oxford, AI tools, email, staying secure online, training and skills, and IT support. For further information on who to contact for IT support depending on the issue, please see 1.5. When you are in Oxford for the summer residences, it may be most useful to contact your college IT office for all enquiries in the first instance.

Study spaces and printing facilities are provided in New College during the summer residences but there are no IT facilities so please ensure you bring your own laptop / device. This should be suitable for doing large amounts of online reading.

Most libraries have study spaces, printing and IT facilities. The Bodleian Law Library and Social Sciences Library (see 8.3) will be the closest and most useful to you when you are in Oxford for the summer residence.

8.5 Summer residence accommodation

This course has two summer residences in Oxford. The course fee includes the cost of all compulsory reading materials plus lunches and dinners at the summer residences, but students will need to pay accommodation ('bed and breakfast') costs while attending the summer sessions (five weeks in Year 1 and four weeks in Year 2). Regardless of your college of matriculation, all students

can opt to stay at [New College](#) during the summer residences, one of Oxford's largest and most beautiful colleges. This accommodation is likely to cost approximately £60-70 daily on a bed and breakfast basis. A confirmed cost will be provided during Michaelmas Term. Students who choose not to stay at New College will need to book accommodation in central Oxford. The estimated cost of this is approximately £2,000 to £3,500 per residence depending on the accommodation you choose.

Past students have found it beneficial to immerse themselves within the MSc in International Human Rights Law community during the residential sessions. If your personal circumstances permit therefore, we strongly encourage you to consider booking your accommodation during the residential sessions with New College, which will be facilitated by the IHRL Course Administrator. This may help you to benefit from what the course offers in terms of additional opportunities for discursive engagement and networking. Lunches and dinners are already included in the course fee and will also be provided at New College. If you have any concerns around this, for example regarding dietary restrictions, please get in touch with the Course Administrator to discuss them.

New College consists of a main site and several smaller annexes. Students will be accommodated on the main site where the dining hall, library, common room and bar are located. The bedrooms on the main site vary in size, age and layout but all bedrooms here are study bedrooms with a private bathroom. These bedrooms are mostly single bedrooms but there are a small number of double rooms, which can be reserved by students wishing to bring partners (for a supplementary charge). Infants of up to six months at the time of the residence may be accommodated with parents in a double room at New College, but we regret that students with children older than six months will need to rent private accommodation in Oxford, as neither the University nor the college has suitable accommodation for families on a short-term basis.

Further information about accommodation will be provided a few months prior to each residence and you will be asked to confirm your plans shortly afterwards.

Please note that smoking is not permitted inside any of the New College buildings including the bar.

8.6 Social events and spaces

During the online parts of the course a common room discussion forum is available on the MSc course Canvas site for all cohorts to chat socially. Posts do not have to be course related. In addition, prior to the summer residence and during the residence itself, students are provided with information about organised social events and social spaces such as the common room and bar at New College, where most students will be accommodated.

A number of social events will be held during the summer residences. These include barbeques, drinks receptions and formal dinners. None of the events is compulsory but they are an opportunity to meet socially with your colleagues so we hope that you will be able to attend as many as possible.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Annual registration, matriculation, academic dress and graduation

Annual registration

All students on postgraduate courses are required to register at the start of their course and each year afterwards. It is very important that you complete Registration each year otherwise your access to libraries, IT facilities and other services may be at risk. In addition, you may not receive any scholarship that you have been awarded and you will not be able to take examinations or receive your degree. Registration is done via [Student Self Service](#) and guidance is available at [Guide to registration | Oxford University](#).

Matriculation

It is a requirement of the University that every student new to Oxford attend in person, a matriculation ceremony in the presence of the Vice-Chancellor or their deputy. This should usually be within two terms but students on this course have special permission to matriculate in the third term due to the structure of the course. The matriculation ceremony is the means by which you formally become a member of the University and failure to attend your ceremony could mean withdrawal from the course. Your matriculation ceremony is expected to take place on **Friday 2 July 2027** unless you have already matriculated for a previous course, or your college has made alternative arrangements for you. Please check directly with your college if you are not sure. Please note that you will need to wear academic dress for your matriculation ceremony and for your examinations (see below). Further information about matriculation is available at [Matriculation | Oxford University](#).

Academic dress

Full academic dress should be worn at all formal University ceremonies including matriculation and degree ceremonies and is also required when sitting examinations. Sub fusc (from the Latin sub fuscus meaning very dark) should be worn beneath an academic gown and with a mortar board or soft cap. Please see [Academic dress | Oxford University](#) for full details about sub fusc, and which academic gown is required. You should note that if you do not appear dressed in the correct clothing you may be refused entry to the examination under university rules.

Most colleges hire out academic gowns and mortar boards or caps but if your college does not offer this service these can be purchased from several Oxford outfitters. Please see your college handbook/website for further information or contact your college directly if you have questions.

Graduation

Degrees are conferred at degree ceremonies, which take place in the Sheldonian Theatre or in Examination Schools. In Michaelmas Term of your second year, you should receive an email inviting you to book a place at a degree ceremony. If you do not receive an invite at this time, [contact the Degree Ceremonies team](#). The date or dates available will depend on when your member college has chosen to present students, but it is likely that you will be offered dates in one or more of November, March, May, and June following your completion of the course. Once you have received your invitation, we advise that you liaise with your friends regarding the dates you have all been given before making your booking as the University cannot arrange for groups to attend together

due to the limitations with degree spaces and when each college attends. Once you have chosen the date, you will not be able to change it, though you will be able to change your attendance mode to in absentia, or decline. For this reason, you might wish to consider what your preferred date is, and liaise with your potential guests, before booking a ceremony. For further information, please visit [Degree ceremonies | Oxford University](#).

Appendix B: Referencing and bibliography

A good way of understanding when, where and how to use references is simply to look at a selection of books and articles in the international human rights law field.

For your Fundamentals assignments, all footnotes can be given in the shortest, accurate manner (e.g. Alston and Goodman, p. 45; or Thornberry, p. 313) with full citations being given in a bibliography in accordance with the [Oxford Standard Citation of Legal Authorities \(OSCOLA\)](#). The latest edition of OSCOLA is the 5th edition. Please note that quotes in assignments should be taken from scholarly sources only – i.e. you should not include quotes from the discussion forums.

Whilst you need to use OSCOLA only for the bibliography of your Fundamentals assignments, *all* references (i.e. footnotes *and* bibliography) for your dissertation must be in accordance with OSCOLA.

A bibliography is a list of books, articles, etc. which you have actually cited in writing your assignment or dissertation. There are a number of ways to construct a bibliography, but essentially it is a list in alphabetic order of author's surnames, with titles, places and dates of publication. You should construct your bibliography in accordance with OSCOLA. A bibliography is a requirement for both your written assignments and the dissertation and should appear at the end of your work.

There is also a range of software that you can use to keep track of your sources and automatically format your footnotes and bibliography (e.g. EndNote, EndNote Online, Refworks, Mendeley, Zotero) should you wish to use them. Most of these are free and web-based but others must be purchased and downloaded to your desktop. Further information on the various options is available at [Home - Managing your references - Oxford LibGuides at Oxford University](#). For your Fundamentals assignments, you could try one of the referencing tools or you could simply do your references by hand. For your dissertation, where you are likely to have many more citations, you will probably want to use one of the referencing tools and one system may be preferable over another depending on your topic – e.g. Endnote is better at referencing cases and judgements if you are citing a lot of these. Further guidance about the various reference management tools will be provided during the final week of your first summer residence, which is devoted to dissertation-related activities and sessions.

At [OSCOLA styles for EndNote, LaTeX, Refworks and Zotero](#), you will find 'OSCOLA styles' for some of the most popular referencing systems. These are programmes you can download to run alongside whichever referencing software you may be using, to help you format cases, legislation, articles and books in compliance with OSCOLA. Previous students have also found [Cite This For Me](#) useful though we recommend you use it with caution, as the Bodleian Law Library was not involved with its development.

If you have questions about OSCOLA that you cannot find answered on any of the sites listed above, please email oscola@law.ox.ac.uk.

If you have questions about any of the reference management tools please email reference-management@bodleian.ox.ac.uk.

Other than referencing and the bibliography, the presentation of your assessed coursework assignments for the online Fundamentals of International Human Rights Law module is relatively flexible. For the dissertation however, as well as following the OSCOLA guidelines for referencing

and the bibliography, the presentation must conform to a number of other strict guidelines. These are set out in a separate Dissertation Handbook which will be available in March/April of your first year.

Appendix C: Avoiding plagiarism - advice provided by the Law Faculty for its students

In addition to the information provided at 4.4 above (good academic practice, including avoiding plagiarism, use of artificial intelligence and referencing), below is further advice written particularly for law students, including examples.

Getting ideas from other students work

Law students often “borrow” work from other students in their own year or from students in the year above. If the work is directly copied, then this will clearly be an obvious form of plagiarism, but you also need to be aware that taking the structure and ideas from this work can also be plagiarism unless the source is acknowledged. Although it may sometimes be helpful to see how others have tackled issues, an important part of the learning exercise in Oxford is to work out how to present an answer yourself. This is often an intellectual struggle, but it is an important part of the educational process. By borrowing the work of others, you therefore not only risk plagiarism but you are also less likely to develop your own intellectual abilities fully.

Articles etc.

You will be expected to read many articles as part of your preparation. Students often find it difficult to know how to incorporate these into their own written work. The temptation is there to “lift” bits from the introduction and conclusion of the article, or odd sentences from it. Usually, an article will be presenting an argument which is, to some extent, original and the author makes the case for this argument in the detailed text. You may wish to use this article in a variety of different ways, but it is important to bear in mind that it is not only verbatim quotations and paraphrases that need to be properly referenced but also the overarching argument that the author makes. Therefore, even if you are not using any of the detailed wording of the article, you must still acknowledge the author’s intellectual input if you are drawing on the argument they make.

A brief example:

Source text, from S Bright and B McFarlane, *Proprietary Estoppel and Property Rights* (2005) 64 Cambridge Law Journal, 449, 455.

It can therefore be argued that proprietary estoppel, like wrongs, unjust enrichment and other non-consensual sources of rights, always gives rise to an underlying personal liability which may, in some circumstances, be coupled with a property right. As A’s personal liability will persist after a transfer of the land in respect of which the proprietary estoppel claim arose, it may well be that B has no need of a property right to protect his reliance: instead, B is adequately protected through his personal right against A.

Plagiarised

Proprietary estoppel always gives rise to personal liability and may also generate a property right, but a person to whom a representation is made will not always need a property right to adequately protect his reliance.

(This is plagiarism. Even though there is little verbatim copying it paraphrases the argument of Bright and McFarlane without acknowledging the source of this argument.)

“Proprietary estoppel, like wrongs, unjust enrichment and other non-consensual sources of rights, always gives rise to an underlying personal liability”¹ and sometimes the courts will give a property right if necessary to protect reliance.

(This is also plagiarism. Although the first part of the sentence is correctly attributed, the implication is that the second part is the original idea of the writer.)

Non-Plagiarised

Bright and McFarlane argue both that proprietary estoppel gives rise to personal liability and, further, that this will sometimes be coupled with a property right, but only if it is necessary to protect the reliance of the person to whom the representation was made.²

(This is not plagiarism as it clearly attributes the whole of the argument to Bright and McFarlane, and cites the source).

Textbooks and cases

A particular challenge for law students is how to use textbooks correctly. The most obvious form of plagiarism is where students closely follow the wording of textbook writers. This often occurs (unintentionally) where students have taken notes from a textbook and then use these notes to form the basis of their essay.

It also occurs where students use the structure adopted by a textbook writer in order to organise the essay.

By way of illustration, the author of a textbook may set out that a general principle can be manifested in one of three ways, and then set out those three ways. To the student, this may appear uncontroversial and as ‘the only’ way that the topic can be understood. It is likely, however, that other writers will present the material differently. The breakdown of the principle into those three ways is the author’s work, and if this structure is adopted, the author must be acknowledged.

Students often use textbooks too closely without being aware that this constitutes plagiarism and will say to tutors: “...but X put it so clearly and I could not put it better”, or “...lots of writers break down this principle into those three ways”. This does not justify plagiarism. If a textbook writer is being relied on, the writer must be acknowledged.

The same applies with respect to cases. The reasons for citing a case are therefore two-fold: first, as an *authority* for a proposition of law, in which case you will generally be citing the case itself; and second, as the *source* of a statement about the law, in which case you will generally be citing the court or a judge.

If, having referred to the above and to the University website, you are still unsure how to reference your work properly, and would like further advice, you should contact your Tutor or Director of Studies for guidance.

Appendix D: Word count matrix

Masters in International Human Rights Law Word count guidance

Course:	MSt in International Human Rights Law	Included in word count for dissertation?	Included in word count for Fundamentals coursework?
Document front:	Coursework/ assignment title/ question	No	No
	Table of contents/ figures/ authorities/ list of illustrations etc	No	NA
Document main body or referred to from main body:	Chapter/ section headers	Yes	Yes
	Abstract	No	NA
	Text body	Yes	Yes
	In-text reference	Yes	Yes
	In-text citation	Yes	Yes
	Footnote	Yes	Yes
	Endnote	Yes	Yes
	Table content	Yes	NA
	Table caption	Yes	NA
	Figure (chart) content	Yes	NA
	Figure (chart) caption	Yes	NA
	Illustration caption	Yes	NA
	Screenshots	Yes	NA
Document end:	Appendices (normally student-produced)	No	No
	Bibliography	No	No
	Descriptive catalogue	No	NA
	Supplementary information not produced by student for the assessed work	No	NA
	Index	No	NA

Please note that you are not required to include every relevant category for your Fundamentals assignment/dissertation.

You should follow the guidance in your Fundamentals syllabus/course handbook/dissertation handbook for items that MUST be included in your written work. Other items MAY be included if relevant.

For example, tables/figures are not a requirement for your dissertation but, if you use them, the content and caption will be included in the word count.