

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: Master of Fine Art (MFA)



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time
Expected length	9 months

The tutorial system is at the heart of teaching on the MFA and you will be supported by tutors of the highest calibre, with a student-to-staff ratio and contact time that are exceptional in UK art schools. The MFA studios are all located on the first floor of Ruskin's Bullingdon Road building, with easy access to workshops and media facilities downstairs.

The programme encompasses a diversity of disciplines including painting, sculpture, printmaking, photography, writing, installation, video, sound, performance, and other expanded forms in contemporary art. It aims to encourage experimentation and nurture a critical focus for your work.

Your artistic interests and those of your peers will be embedded in tutorials, seminars, and presentations, determining the direction of your creative development. You will engage with what it means to work as an artist today, considering how an artist's work and ideas register in different artistic, social, historical, and theoretical contexts. You will be guided and supported by tutors in one-to-one tutorials and weekly seminars, focused on your making, key concerns, ideas, and their interdependent development.

Studio-based learning is facilitated through regular group reflection, which is characterised by collective participation in generous and robust discussion. A programme of dedicated masterclasses and skills workshops is designed specifically for the MFA. Facilities, such as the media lab and editing suites, printmaking workshop, casting, metal, and wood workshops, are on site in the Bullingdon Road building (<https://www.rsa.ox.ac.uk/study/resources>).

Ruskin students benefit from being part of a large University, with access to lectures and seminars in other departments and colleges and to specialist libraries and collections. The city offers varied cultural organisations include the Ashmolean Museum, Pitt Rivers Museum, and Modern Art Oxford. Students can freely access the Botanical Gardens with a university card and enjoy many other green spaces in and around Oxford.

The MFA is built around three compact eight-week terms, with students expected to continue working through the winter and spring breaks. A typical week on the MFA during the first two terms (Michaelmas and Hilary) includes: a research or practice seminar, an individual tutorial, and a skills workshop or masterclass.

The rest of your time on the course is dedicated to independent study: artistic practice and research in the studio, utilising Ruskin's workshops and facilities and using the libraries. At the end of second term (Hilary), you will submit an Extended Text in support of the studio project. The last term (Trinity) is focused on the preparation of artwork for the final exhibition and a digital portfolio of studio practice for examination. MFA students and staff work together to curate and install the degree show in the MFA space at Bullingdon Road, which opens at the end of term.

Attendance

The course is full-time and requires attendance in Oxford. Full-time students are subject to the University's Residence requirements.

Resources to support your study

As a graduate student, you will have access to the University's wide range of world-class resources including libraries, museums, galleries, digital resources and IT services.

The Bodleian Libraries is the largest library system in the UK. It includes the main Bodleian Library and libraries across Oxford, including major research libraries and faculty, department and institute libraries. Together, the Libraries hold more than 13 million printed items, provide access to e-journals, and contain outstanding special collections including rare books and manuscripts, classical papyri, maps, music, art and printed ephemera.

The University's IT Services is available to all students to support with core university IT systems and tools, as well as many other services and facilities. IT Services also offers a range of IT learning courses for students, to support with learning and research.

Studio and technical resources

The Ruskin has dedicated studio space for all students to work together or individually, as well as workshops for specialist training in digital, 2D and 3D media. The project space at the Ruskin's Bullingdon Road site is equipped for contemporary art practices, from performance and digital installations to painting and sculptural work. There is also a communal kitchen,

shared by all Ruskin programmes, which has facilities for some food preparation. More information about the Ruskin's facilities (<https://www.rsa.ox.ac.uk/study/resources>) is available on the department's website.

Museums and galleries

Oxford holds some of the world's richest collections of art and artefacts. The Pitt Rivers Museum, the Museum of Natural History and the Ashmolean Museum are important centres for the research and display of artefacts and artworks within the University of Oxford. The Ruskin has excellent connections with the museums' network of curators, facilities and holdings.

Oxford also hosts important exhibitions of modern and contemporary art. For example, Modern Art Oxford has a national and international reputation for the quality of its exhibitions of contemporary art, and for its accompanying community and education programmes. The Ruskin has worked closely with Modern Art Oxford in the provision of its academic courses, and Ruskin students and staff have participated in exhibitions and public presentations at Modern Art Oxford.

Libraries and archives

Ruskin has its own specialised library of more than 7,000 volumes, including lending and reference collections focused on art history, art theory, art techniques, exhibition catalogues and artists' monographs. The Ruskin holds around 20 sets of art journals and more than 2,000 art-related pamphlets. The library is fully integrated into the University's electronic circulation system and a digital archive of the slide collection, comprising 15,000 images, is available on the departmental server. Ruskin library terminals offer full access to the electronic resources of the University of Oxford.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Ruskin School of Art and it is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff.

MFA students see their allocated Studio Practice tutor and their allocated Extended Text tutor regularly for individual and group tutorials throughout the year. Most students have the opportunity to meet with their tutors a minimum of three times a term.

Assessment

The MFA has three main modes of assessment:

Final Exhibition

A presentation of fully realised artwork, or body of works, made during the MFA programme. This requires students to develop, create and present a coherent, thoughtful installation of work within a group exhibition.

Portfolio of Studio Practice

A digital portfolio of studio practice documented by photographic or other means. Throughout the programme, students are encouraged to construct approaches to documentation appropriate to their practice and research.

Extended Text

A written text of 4-6,000 words in support of the studio project. Students are encouraged to take an experimental approach to writing as they develop an account of the methodology used in the final project, an exposition of its theoretical framework, or an essay on a topic of direct relevance to their practice.

Changes to this course

The University will seek to deliver this course in accordance with the description set out above. However, there may be situations in which it is desirable or necessary for the University to make changes in course provision, either before or after you commence your course. These might include significant changes made necessary by any pandemic, epidemic or local health emergency. For further information, please see the University's Terms and Conditions (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/terms>) and our page on changes to courses (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges>).

Costs

Annual fees for entry in 2025-26

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£17,900
Overseas	£41,250

Information about course fees

Course fees are payable each year, for the duration of your fee liability (your fee liability is the length of time for which you are required to pay course fees). For courses lasting longer than one year, please be aware that fees will usually increase annually. Information about how much fees and other costs may increase is set out in the University's Terms and Conditions (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/terms>).

Course fees cover your teaching as well as other academic services and facilities provided to support your studies. Unless specified in the additional cost information (below), course fees do not cover your accommodation, residential costs or other living costs. They also don't cover any additional costs and charges that are outlined in the additional cost information.

Additional cost information

The fees do not include the costs of materials that you may use as part of your course. Each MFA student receives a materials grant of £500 from the Ruskin School of Art, shortly after arrival. On application to the Ruskin School of Art Graduate Studies Committee up to a further £150 is available for preparing and installing work for the final show. The school stocks a wide range of materials, which you can purchase at cost, and students are able to borrow an extensive selection of equipment on a sign-up basis. There is no expectation for students to arrive with any additional equipment or materials beyond those they may already possess. Some basic materials with very low unit costs - eg basic ironware for fixtures and fittings, glue, etc. - are available without charge. You will need to meet any course-related costs incurred in excess of the £500 plus £150 grants. In the first week of the first term, all students pay an equipment deposit of £100. The deposit system is to secure against the borrowing of departmental equipment and the deposit is returned to the student, less any costs incurred by the School for loss or damage, at the end of the course. MFA students stage a public exhibition of their work following the final examination and they collectively raise funds for this through sponsorship, drawing sales, and other activities.

Living costs

In addition to your course fees and any additional course-specific costs, you will need to ensure that you have adequate funds to support your living costs for the duration of your course.

The likely living costs for the 2025-26 academic year are published below. These costs are based on a single, full-time graduate student, with no dependants, living in Oxford. We provide the cost per month so you can multiply up by the number of months you expect to live in Oxford.

Likely living costs for one month

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£330	£515
Accommodation	£790	£955
Personal items	£200	£335
Social activities	£45	£100
Study costs	£40	£90
Other	£20	£40
Total	£1,425	£2,035

Likely living costs for nine months

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£2,970	£4,635
Accommodation	£7,110	£8,595
Personal items	£1,800	£3,015
Social activities	£405	£900
Study costs	£360	£810
Other	£180	£360
Total	£12,825	£18,315

Likely living costs for twelve months

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£3,960	£6,180
Accommodation	£9,480	£11,460
Personal items	£2,400	£4,020
Social activities	£540	£1,200
Study costs	£480	£1,080
Other	£240	£480
Total	£17,100	£24,420

When planning your finances for any future years of study at Oxford beyond the 2025-26 academic year, it is suggested that you allow for potential increases in living expenses of 4% each year – although this rate may vary depending on the national economic situation.

More information about how these figures have been calculated is available at www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/livingcosts.

Document accessibility

If you require a more accessible version of this document please contact Graduate Admissions and Recruitment by email (graduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk) or via the online form (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/ask/form>).