

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MSc in Education (Higher Education)



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	12 months

About the course

The MSc Education (Higher Education) at the University of Oxford is aimed at future academic, policy, and practitioner leaders in higher education (HE). It provides a critical introduction to research, theory, and policy in this complex field, taking into account a range of national, international and global lenses.

During this full-time course, you will have the opportunity to consider a wide range of issues that higher education systems, and, more broadly, tertiary education systems, around the world are facing today. These include:

- the social and economic contributions of HE
- graduate employment and employability
- access and widening participation
- equity and social and epistemic justice
- fees and funding
- student mobility
- 'research on research'
- the relationship between HE and vocational and technical education and training
- institutional governance
- rankings.

Teaching sessions will combine tutor input, class discussion, and working in small groups in order to examine these key issues and the discourses that shape them.

You will study three core papers in the first two terms, which consider a wide range of policy issues across higher education systems and the role higher education plays in the economy and society from theoretical, historical and empirical perspectives. Academic staff will also present their own recent research findings, ensuring that the course content reflects live debates at the cutting edge of the field of higher education studies.

In addition to these three pathway-specific core papers, two core papers in research methods will develop your understanding of key concepts and principles of educational research design and methodology, using quantitative and qualitative methods and data. You will benefit from the expertise available through the Qualitative Methods Hub and the Quantitative Methods Hub at the Department of Education.

The five core modules are:

- Higher Education: Systems, Structures and Institutions
- Higher Education in the Economy and Society
- Global Higher Education
- Foundations of Educational Research 1: Concepts and Design
- Foundations of Educational Research 2: Strategies and Methods

You will also choose one assessed option paper in the second term, from a selection offered by academic staff across the department. The following list provides an indication of modules usually available (please note, this is not a guarantee of availability for any particular elective in a given year):

- Core Principles of Child Assessment
- Critical Digital Innovation
- Education in Africa
- Education, the Internet and Society
- Intermediate Quantitative Research
- Perspectives and Debates in Qualitative Research
- The Implementation of the Rights of Children

Research in the department is organised around three major themes:

- Language, Cognition and Development
- Policy, Economy and Society

- Learning: Pedagogy, Learning and Knowledge.

Within each of these themes there are several research groups and centres. All staff and doctoral students belong to one or more of these research groups, each of which has its own seminar programme to which graduate students often contribute. In addition, the department as a whole sponsors seminars and public lectures which attract distinguished national and international speakers.

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.

The Bodleian Education Library, located at the centre of the Department of Education, specialises in material on education and related fields. As well as a print collection of books, journals and statistics, the library provides access to a wide range of electronic resources. The library also houses a collection of teaching resources, primarily in support of subjects covered by the department's secondary PGCE course. The Social Sciences Library provides valuable additional resource to students pursuing programmes in the Department of Education.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Department of Education. This will be done on the basis of the topic of research and the availability of individual supervisors. It is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff. However, the HE teaching team have experience of supervising an extensive range of topics in higher education studies. Under exceptional circumstances a supervisor may be found outside the Department of Education.

You will work directly with a supervisor on your dissertation through one-to-one meetings throughout the academic year. You should expect 10 hours of supervision throughout the year.

Assessment

You will complete six modules each assessed by coursework, and a dissertation on a topic selected by the student and approved by the supervisor.

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	£38,410

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

There are no compulsory elements of this course that entail additional costs beyond fees and living costs. As part of your course requirements, you will need to choose a dissertation topic. Please note that, depending on your choice of topic and the research required to complete it, you may incur additional expenses, such as travel expenses, research expenses, and field trips. You will need to meet these additional costs yourself, although you may be able to apply for small grants from your college to help you cover some of these expenses.

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>).