

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MSc in History of Science, Medicine and Technology



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	11 months

About the course

This specialist one-year course offers a range of options in the history of science, medicine and technology. You may specialise in the history of science and technology or the history of medicine, although the boundaries between these areas are deliberately permeable.

The history of science, medicine, and technology is a long-established discipline in Oxford. R. T. Gunther and Charles Singer were among the pioneers of the subject early in the twentieth century, and since the 1920s the Museum of the History of Science has housed an outstanding collection of scientific instruments and a fine specialist library. In the early 1970s, the creation of the chair of the history of science and the establishment of the Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine gave the subject additional strength and allowed important new departures. The Oxford Centre for the History of Science, Medicine and Technology (HSMT) was created in 2017 in order to build on the teaching and research capacity of the numerous historians working on HSMT subjects in Oxford-based projects and in various museums, colleges and faculties.

The expertise of scholars in Oxford covers most of the main areas and periods of the history of science, medicine, and technology. A varied programme of seminars, lectures, and conferences enables you to obtain knowledge of subjects beyond your chosen speciality and to meet visitors from elsewhere in Britain and abroad.

The explicitly interdisciplinary nature of this MSc means that the Faculty of History collaborates with other divisions and departments within the University.

In the field of history of science, technology and medicine the study environment is particularly enhanced by The Oxford Centre for the History of Science, Medicine and Technology (HSMT) and the Museum of the History of Science, as well as by a large number of academic experts with interest in these fields across the collegiate University. You will benefit from a variety of interdisciplinary resources, including weekly seminars.

More generally, working as an Oxford graduate student is an exhilarating experience. History at Oxford stretches from around 300 AD to the present and embraces an exceptionally broad geographical range. It comprises an active research community of up to 800 academics and graduate students.

The course consists of a compulsory core course, two option subject courses, and a research project:

1. Core course: Methods and Themes in HSMT, taught in classes during Michaelmas term, and reinforced by lectures on specific issues
2. Option courses: Two advanced option courses, usually taught in small classes and mostly during Hilary term.
3. Research project: You will work on your original research project throughout the year, under the guidance of your supervisor and you are expected to commit the Easter vacation to archival research and writing.

More information about core and option courses are given on the faculty website (see the *Further information and enquiries* section for further details). Please note that not every optional subject listed may be on offer every year, depending in part on levels of student demand.

The MSc History of Science, Medicine, and Technology can be taken as a free-standing course or used as a springboard to doctoral research. If you wish to apply for the DPhil you will be encouraged to develop your doctoral proposal during the first few months of the course, so that you will be well placed to make a doctoral application.

The faculty's research is organised around historical periods, research centres, or in collaborative and individual research projects, and graduates are key participants in the wide range of seminars, workshops and conferences run by the Faculty of History.

The Oxford Centre for Research in the Humanities (TORCH) offers a stimulating range of interdisciplinary activities, as does the Oxford Martin School and the Wellcome Centre for Ethics and Humanities. You are also encouraged to join the Oxford History Graduate Network (OHGN), which fosters friendships, conversations and collaboration.

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.

You will also be able to draw on the specialist resources offered by the Bodleian History Faculty Library which provides dedicated support and training courses for all graduates. They also have access to the many college libraries and to college archives which can house significant collections of personal papers as well as institutional records dating back to the middle ages.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Faculty of History and it is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff. Offers will only be made if appropriate supervision is available.

It is usual practice that MSc students have one supervisor, but a co-supervisor will be appointed if additional specialist knowledge is required. One supervisor must be a member of the Faculty of History but a co-supervisor can be appointed from a different department.

Your supervisor(s) is there to provide advice, guidance, and support throughout your MSc. You should arrange to meet your supervisor(s) early in your first term to establish a clear framework for your research and writing, and identify any skills training needed to undertake your research. There is no set timetable for the frequency of future meetings, but it is recommended that you arrange to meet your supervisor several times a term, to discuss progress of your research and writing. You should also agree a timetable for the submission and return of drafts of your dissertation.

Assessment

The Methods and Themes in HSMT course is assessed through a methodological essay, submitted in week 10 of Michaelmas term.

The two option courses are usually assessed by essay, submitted at the end of Trinity term.

The research project is assessed through a dissertation of 15,000 words, submitted in the August following the end of Trinity term.

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	£18,070
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

There are no compulsory elements of this course that entail additional costs beyond fees and living costs. However, as part of your course requirements, you may need to choose a dissertation, a project or a thesis 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, although you may be able to apply for small grants from your department and/or 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>).