

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MSc in Criminology and Criminal Justice



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time	Part Time
Expected length	9 months	21 months

About the course

A stimulating and demanding programme, involving intensive learning in small groups, the MSc in Criminology and Criminal Justice will equip you with an advanced understanding of crime and criminal justice, comprising courses in criminological theory, the study of criminal justice, and training in research design and methodology.

The MSc in Criminology and Criminal Justice is offered on both a full-time (one-year) and part-time (two-year) basis. The degree and expectations for both modes of study are equally rigorous. Part-time students take their classes with the full-time students, but spread over two years to accommodate work and personal circumstances.

The MSc is comprised of compulsory courses, option subjects and a dissertation.

Full-time students will be expected to spend around 40 hours studying each week during term, and to undertake some further study during vacations. During the first two terms you will be advised to divide your time between the core course and your other courses as follows:

- At least ten hours per week preparation for the core course
- At least eight hours per week preparation for each option/compulsory course
- Four and a half to six hours per week in seminars (90 minutes for each course).

Please see the full-time MSc webpage for further details of the full-time course.

Part-time students will be expected to commit to a proportional workload.

A part-time student has the following schedule:

Year 1:

- Michaelmas Term: Core Course (compulsory), Research Design and Data Collection (compulsory),
- Hilary Term: Core Course (compulsory), one Option Course
- Trinity Term: Academic Skills course (compulsory)

Year 2:

- Michaelmas Term: two Option Courses
- Hilary Term: two Option Courses
- Trinity Term: Dissertation (compulsory), Academic Skills Course (recommended).

Please see the part-time MSc webpage for further details of the part-time course.

Compulsory courses

Compulsory courses run weekly during the first two terms: Criminological Theories and Criminal Justice in Michaelmas and Hilary terms and Research Design and Data Collection in Michaelmas Term. A further compulsory (but non-examined) course is run weekly in the third term.

Criminological Theories and Criminal Justice

The course begins by exploring the key cross-cutting themes of race, gender, and global approaches in criminology. This course develops understanding of the organising categories and central claims of a range of modern criminological perspectives of crime and social control. It will equip you to recognise the main problems, questions, dichotomies and ideas that have shaped modern criminological thought, to understand the nature of 'theory' and 'explanation' within criminology, and to both appreciate and critique the history and development of criminological thought.

The course explores criminological and global understanding of criminal justice/penal institutions and processes. The course introduces you to research on these processes, their underlying competing theoretical perspectives, and contemporary issues and controversies in criminal justice and punishment. The course encourages you to think about the role of the state/criminal law in the regulation of human behaviour and the place and limitations of criminal justice interventions in producing safe societies.

Part-time students take this course in their first year of study.

Research Design and Data Collection

This compulsory course, which runs in the first term, is focused on the challenges and the opportunities that different methods of data collection have for validity and reliability of data. Methods include experiments and quasi-experiments; questionnaires and survey research; field research, and the collection of written documents. The scientific method, theory testing and research design will also be discussed. Ethical concerns are given special emphasis. Part-time students take this course in the first term of their first year of study.

Academic Skills for Criminologists

This final compulsory course runs in the third term. Weekly seminars focus on developing academic skills and supporting students in the development of their dissertations.

Option subjects

Full-time students will take five option modules over the first and second terms of the year. Part-time students take a total of five option modules across the two years of study. Option modules run for seven weeks in each term. Recent option modules have included:

- Crime and the Family
- Criminal Justice, Migration and Citizenship
- Criminology and the Car
- Death Penalty
- Politics of Crime Control
- Prisons
- Psychology, Law and Criminal Justice
- Public and Private Policing
- Qualitative Methods
- Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists
- Race and Gender
- Risk, Security and Criminal Justice
- Sentencing
- Theorising Punishment
- Transitional Justice
- Youth Justice

Please note that not all options run every year.

You will be encouraged to attend the All Souls Criminology Seminars with invited speakers, held fortnightly on Thursdays during term time.

The centre arranges several events throughout the year to which all MSc students, along with other members of the centre such as MSc course tutors, MPhil and DPhil students, research officers and associates are invited. You will also have the opportunity to broaden your knowledge via the great number of lectures in other courses and public seminars offered by both the centre and other departments and colleges within the University.

You will have the opportunity to meet and hear presentations from leading scholars from around the world, as well as practitioners working in criminal justice through the centre's active academic visitor's programme.

Attendance

The course can be studied full-time or part-time with both modes requiring attendance in Oxford. Full-time students are subject to the University's Residence requirements. Part-time students are required to attend course-related activities in Oxford for a minimum of 30 days each year.

The full-time programme is studied over 9 months, the part-time programme has the same requirements, but is studied over 21 months.

Although there will be no requirement to live in Oxford, part-time students must attend the Centre for Criminology at least two days per week in term-time for seminars, and supervision meetings.

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 have access to the Bodleian Law Library and Bodleian Social Science Library. Training on how to use the library's legal and journal database is jointly provided by the Faculty of Law and the Bodleian Social Sciences Library.

You will also be able to draw on the many resources and provisions of the Faculty of Law and the Social Sciences Division. Throughout the term, the Faculty of Law and various departments in the Social Sciences division host lectures, seminars and social events of interest to criminology students. You will also have the opportunity to pursue your interests through Oxford Pro Bono Publico, Oxford Transitional Justice Research and a number of interdisciplinary student bodies.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Centre for Criminology and it is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff. Under exceptional circumstances a supervisor may be found outside the Centre for Criminology. Students usually meet with their supervisor once a term.

Assessment

The Criminological Theories and Criminal Justice course assessment will be conducted by a timed in-person examination.

Research methods courses are examined by means of an assessment to be submitted at the end of the relevant term. These courses also have some term-time assignments which are assessed on a pass/fail basis.

All other options are examined by means of an assessed essay, also to be submitted at the end of the term in which the option runs.

In addition to the options you take, you will write a dissertation during the third term. Part-time students will write their dissertations in the third term of their second year, but will be encouraged to start planning their dissertation from their first year. The dissertation will be researched and written independently, with only minimum guidance from your dissertation supervisor. This is also supported by a compulsory but non-assessed course, Academic Skills for Criminologists, attended by both full-time and part-time students.

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

Full-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£20,230
Overseas	£32,200

Part-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£10,115
Overseas	£16,100

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

Full-time study

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.

Part-time study

Please note that this course requires that you attend in Oxford for teaching, and you may incur additional travel and accommodation expenses for this. Further, as part of your course requirements, you will need to choose a dissertation, a project or a thesis topic. 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.

If you are studying part-time your living costs may vary depending on your personal circumstances but you must still ensure that you will have sufficient funding to meet these 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>).