

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MSc in Public Policy Research



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	12 months

About the course

The MSc in Public Policy Research is a one-year taught degree course that offers an outstanding education on how to conduct robust, applied and impactful research that informs and influences public policy.

The MSc will give you a keen understanding of the relationship between research evidence and other major influences on the public policy process, such as ideologies and institutions; you will be able to design and undertake a range of policy-relevant research methods to the highest standards; and you will be skilled in effectively communicating research findings to a wide range of audiences including policymakers and the general public.

The curriculum for the course is delivered in-person. Teaching styles vary and include lectures, seminars, tutorials, student presentations, or workshops across three terms.

The curriculum may vary from year to year. The below lists the curriculum that has been offered recently:

- Theories and Approaches in Public Policy Research
- Research in a Public Policy Context
- Research Design
- Statistics for Public Policy
- Qualitative Methods for Public Policy Research
- Thesis Development Seminars
- Option module
- Thesis.

In the first two terms, foundational modules including Theories and Approaches in Public Policy Research, and Research in a Public Policy Context will enable you to learn how concepts and theories help researchers to identify and define public policy problems.

As the Blavatnik School of Government is committed to research with impact and is home to researchers engaging in profoundly independent and academically vigorous research relevant to the world's most pressing policy issues, you will learn from and work with world-class researchers, through those modules, to generate applied research questions and hypotheses that can be tested empirically to tackle real-world problems and communicate robust research and data that informs policy designs and implementation.

You will begin working on your thesis, initially focusing on the development of a research proposal, on an applied public policy problem.

You will also take courses in Research Design and Methods, incorporating:

1. Research Design
2. Statistics for Public Policy
3. Qualitative Methods for Public Policy Research.

In the third term, you will take an option module that enables you to explore in depth a particular public policy topic of your choice, selected from the wide range of option modules that are offered each year to students on the Blavatnik School's Master of Public Policy.

Finally, you will write a thesis and produce an accompanying research brief that distils insights from the research for decision-makers in government.

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.

There are study spaces available in the Blavatnik School building, some of which can be pre-booked.

Students also have access to the student common room, in addition to the communal facilities such as the café and the Inamori Forum. The school runs an extensive range of events and brings public policy leaders to the school to inspire and mentor students.

The Blavatnik School does not have its own library because most reading material is made available electronically. However, you will have access to the Social Science Library in addition to other University libraries and centrally-provided electronic resources.

The Blavatnik School benefits from its own ICT team, which provides support and advice to students. Students are expected to bring their own laptop.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Blavatnik School of Government and it is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming students to work with a particular member of staff. The supervisor will normally be a member of the Blavatnik School of Government's faculty, but may be from one of Oxford's other departments.

You will meet with your academic supervisor to discuss the progress of your studies; they will help you to identify your research topic, devise an important and researchable question, formulate and execute an appropriate research design, and produce a methodologically sound and impactful thesis. The Blavatnik School of Government will assign supervisors at the start of the year on the basis of the intellectual and policy interests expressed by students.

In addition to the academic supervisor, you will benefit from advice on the development of your thesis provided by an experienced policy advisor with substantive practical expertise in the area of your research discipline.

Assessment

You will undertake a mixture of types of summative assessment (eg essay, policy memo, short research proposal, practical data exercise), reflecting the breadth of the material being taught and the skillset required of public policy research professionals. You will also complete formative work to provide practice opportunities for each type of summative assessment, and to build a repertoire of practical research skills that will assist with completing your thesis and prove attractive to future employers. The scheduling of summative assignments has been designed to be stretching but realistic for students, to spread the workload across the year, and to support progression of the thesis, from conception through to analysis and write-up.

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	£41,250
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.

Deposits

If your application is successful, you will be asked to pay a deposit against your course fees at the application stage as a condition of your offer. The deposit amount and date by which payment must be made are shown below.

Fee status	Annual Course fees
£6,190	26 May 2025

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 and vaccination expenses, conference attendance, 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>).