

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MSc in Sustainable Urban Development



Course facts

Mode of study	Part Time Only
Expected length	2 years

About the course

The two-year MSc in Sustainable Urban Development will provide a rigorous and critical understanding of the policy and practice of sustainable urban development. The course exposes students to sustainable urbanism as both an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary subject at global, national and local scales.

Attention is paid to the intellectual history of sustainable urban development, its current and future applications and practice, and the contemporary relevance of research to sustainable urban policy and practice across cities of the Global North and South.

The programme attracts a lively and engaged group of students, who combine postgraduate study with their professional lives, and an active alumni network. Students on the course come from a wide international background and share a variety of work experiences in urban development and the built environment.

The MSc is designed for those operating in a range of urban contexts worldwide - public, private or third sector organisations - and fosters collaboration, creativity, perspective-sharing and effective networking skills. The MSc runs in partnership with The Prince's Foundation and is accredited by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

The course is delivered by University academics, industry experts, urban researchers and practitioners in the built environment. Regular contributors include the University's Transport Studies Unit.

Course structure

You will attend eight intensive residential teaching weeks during the two years of study, six held in Oxford with the Department for Continuing Education and two held in London at The Prince's Foundation. Each teaching week addresses a core theme of the course.

In the first year, you will study five interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary teaching weeks:

- Introducing Sustainable Urban Development
- Climate Change and the Built Environment
- Place-making and Urban Design
- Financing Sustainability
- Sustainable Transport

During teaching weeks, you will also follow foundation courses in urban theory and urban economics tailored to sustainable urban development, comprising sessions on the intellectual history of sustainable urbanism, paradigm shifts and challenges in sustainable development and the economics of sustainability.

In the second year, you will study three interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary teaching weeks:

- Urbanism, Community and City-Building
- Urbanisation in the Global South
- Leadership, Governance and Future Cities

You will spend the latter half of the second year working on a 15,000-word dissertation. You will choose the topic with the guidance of your supervisor. Research methods are taught from the start and give students an understanding of research strategies, fostering the skills needed for designing, conducting, analysing, interpreting and reporting a small-scale research study that is required for the dissertation.

Teaching

The course is delivered through a mix of teaching and learning methods, including seminars, site visits, peer-review, research workshops and individual tutorials. Classes are seminar-based, encouraging active participation and enabling students to learn from each other. You will prepare for sessions by reading a selection of recommended books, book chapters and articles. Typically, there are six to eight weeks between each teaching week, during which time you should expect to spend an average of 20 hours per week of independent study.

You will be allocated a course tutor who will support your academic development, and with whom you will meet during each teaching week for a tutorial. In the second year, you will be allocated a dissertation supervisor. You will also have a college advisor whom you may consult on issues concerning your personal wellbeing.

Attendance

This course is part-time. You will be required to attend some teaching in Oxford for this course.

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 Rewley House Continuing Education Library, one of the Bodleian Libraries, is situated in Rewley House. The department aims to support the wide variety of subjects covered by departmental courses at many academic levels. The department also has a collection of around 73,000 books together with periodicals. PCs in the library give access to the internet and the full range of electronic resources subscribed to by the University of Oxford. The Jessop Reading Room adjoining the library is available for study.

The department provides various IT facilities, including the Student Computing Facility which provides individual PCs for your use.

The MSc in Sustainable Urban Development provides an interactive, course-specific virtual learning environment, with a repository of all course materials.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Department for Continuing Education and this role will usually be performed by the Course Director.

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 Department for Continuing Education. Students typically meet with their Course Supervisor during each teaching week. During year two, students usually meet with their Dissertation Supervisor. Between the last teaching week and dissertation submission deadline, students can have up to five online tutorials with their Dissertation Supervisors. These are arranged between the student and the Dissertation Supervisor considering the Supervisor's other work commitments and summer annual leave.

Assessment

For each teaching week, you will complete an essay on that theme. The first essay is formative and will provide you with valuable feedback at the start of your studies. The remaining seven essay assignments are summative and count towards your MSc assessment.

You will also submit a research dissertation. It is expected that you will define your own dissertation topic in consultation with your allocated supervisor. Training in research skills is built into the course delivery, in order to help you make the most of this opportunity.

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

Modular course fees

The fees for this course are charged on a modular basis. You will pay an annual course fee and an additional fee for each module studied. A minimum of two annual course fees are payable for this course. If this course includes a dissertation, three module fees will be charged for the dissertation.

Fees for the 2025-26 academic year

Fee status	Annual Course Fee	Fee per module	Total estimated fees
Home	£12,025	£2,640	Please see the department's website for further details
Overseas	£12,025	£2,640	

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

This course has residential sessions in Oxford. You will need to meet your travel and accommodation costs in attending these sessions. Further, as part of your course requirements, you may 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>).