Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26:
MSc in Software and Systems Security

Course facts

Mode of study	Part Time Only
Expected length	2 to 4 years

About the course

The MSc in Software and Systems Security teaches the principles of systems security, with a particular emphasis upon the security properties and implications of software and information technologies. It offers working professionals the opportunity to learn more about the application of these principles, current best practice and the latest advances in the field, through a course of part-time study at one of the world's leading universities.

The Department of Computer Science offers professional courses in around 15 different subjects in the area of systems security: from design to forensics; from governance to malware; and from wireless networks to cloud platforms. It also offers courses in around 30 subjects within computer science or software engineering. To earn an MSc in Software and Systems Security, you must complete courses in ten different subjects, the majority of which must be in the area of systems security.

Each course is delivered by an expert in the subject, and is based around a single, intensive teaching week of classes, practical sessions, and group work; class sizes are kept small to facilitate interaction and to promote effective learning. Each subject is taught at least once a year, some are taught two or three times, and most can be studied in any order. Most students will spend three or four years completing the 10 courses required for the MSc. Each course involves an expectation of about 150 hours' work - typically 35 intensive contact hours during the teaching week, 10 hours before the teaching week for pre-study and 25 hours afterwards on the assignment, and the remainder of time spent on self-directed reading and related exercises. As a rule of thumb, the project and dissertation represent the same effort as two more courses.

An assignment is typically distributed on the last day of the teaching week. This builds upon the learning of the week, allowing you to test and extend your understanding through application outside the classroom.

You will also complete a short project and associated dissertation in the area of software and systems security. The project must be an original demonstration of ability and understanding, but there is no requirement to advance the state of the art in the field. You only need to choose and apply an appropriate selection of existing ideas and techniques provided that your choice, the process of application, and any outcomes are properly explained.

The project assessment involves compulsory attendance at a one-week project course, at which you will present and refine your proposal, and attend teaching sessions on research skills, engineering in context, and social, legal and ethical issues

The Department of Computer Science offers another master's degree, the MSc in Software Engineering, available to those who take the majority of their courses, and their project and dissertation, in that area.

Attendance

As a part-time student you will be required to attend ten modules, mostly held in-person in Oxford (though some may be online). Each module consists of an intensive week of lectures and practicals held on Monday to Friday, usually with a half day on the Friday. You have a flexible choice of modules, subject to availability of places.

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 Department of Computer Science has dedicated teaching facilities for the Professional Master's Programme, including lecture and lab space, tea and coffee making facilities, and a student break area. When attending a course, each student has sole use of a desk and Apple computer, with all relevant software; or you may bring your own laptop.

The Department of Computer Science Library contains books, monographic series, journals, technical reports and past theses covering the main research interests of the department. It is principally for use by graduate students and staff. You will also be able to access other relevant libraries elsewhere in the University such as the Radcliffe Science Library, the Whitehead Library (at the Mathematical Institute for numerical analysts and formal mathematicians), and the Engineering Science Library (especially for those interested in robotics and machine vision).

The Department of Computer Science houses lecture theatres and seminar rooms, and students are welcome to attend public seminars.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Department of Computer Science 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 Department of Computer Science.

You will be assigned a supervisor at the beginning of your period of study. Supervisors can provide advice on all academic matters including course selection, the choice of a suitable project and the preparation of a dissertation. Your supervisor may change when you start work on your dissertation.

Assessment

The mode of assessment for the course is written assignments that are distributed on the last day of the teaching week. Assignments are to be submitted within a six-week time frame.

You will need to complete a short project and associated dissertation in the area of software and systems security. The results of the project work are presented in a dissertation format. This forms the basis for formal assessment of the project, just as the written assignments form the basis for assessment of the taught modules. The dissertation can be submitted at any time during the allowed period of study, although it is usually the last piece of work undertaken.

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 one programme or registration fee and an additional fee for each module studied. The registration fee is split into four instalments, which are due at or before the beginning of each year of study. This MSc can be undertaken in a minimum of two and a maximum of four years and all instalments will be due regardless of duration of study. Students must complete ten modules, together with a masters'-level project and dissertation. The cost of the project module is included in the MSc registration fee. Extension fees will apply at £100 per term beyond the four years.

Fees for the 2025-26 academic year

Fee status	Registration Fee	Fee per module	Total estimated fees
Home	£12,630	£3,095	Please see the department's website for further details
Overseas	£21,065	£3,095	

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

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 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).