

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MSc in Sociology



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time	Part Time
Expected length	12 months	2 years

About the course

The MSc in Sociology is a one-year master's degree if studying full-time, or two years for part-time students. Students are given high-quality research training in sociology, which includes knowledge of relevant theoretical approaches, an understanding of their application to substantive problems and skills in the use of major research techniques.

There is also a significant element of self-directed study, including further reading and research, that will complement the hours of teaching. The time spent on further research will be determined partly by your academic background so far, and partly by your own interest in and curiosity for the subject.

You will have the opportunity to attend lunchtime sociology seminars with many interesting speakers participating. Most of the classes and lectures will take place at the Department of Sociology.

Course structure

The MSc Sociology consists of the following four elements.

Sociological analysis

In Michaelmas term, the course consists of eight lectures, followed by seminars where the class is split into groups. Part-time students take this course in the first term of their second year of study.

It examines the nature of different sociological explanations, their potentials and methodological implications and their relationship with concepts from other disciplines. It also examines the interrelationships between description and explanation, theory and empirical data.

Research methods

This course comprises three sections: research design, qualitative methods and statistics. The statistics section consists of eight statistics lectures and eight computer-based sessions (Michaelmas term). The qualitative methods section (Michaelmas term) consists of eight lectures. The research design section (Hilary term) consists of eight lectures and classes. Part-time students take the three sections of the research methods course in the listed term of the first year of study.

Option papers

In Hilary term, you will prepare for two option papers. You should note that the options available may vary from year to year; a typical offering is listed below:

- Advanced Quantitative Methods
- Sociology of Mafias
- Social Movements
- Political Sociology
- Causality
- Social Stratification
- Sociology of Gender
- Sociology of Latin America
- Sociology of China
- Sociology of the Family
- Sociology of Cybersecurity
- Critical Social Theory and its Impact

There are normally eight weekly classes for each paper. Part-time students take one option paper in the second term of each year of study.

Dissertation

You will write an MSc dissertation which you will carry out under the guidance of your supervisor.

Part-time students will write their dissertations in the third term of their second year and submit by 1 September of that second year, but will be encouraged to start planning their thesis from their first year.

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 degree and expectations for both modes of study are equally rigorous: part-time students take their classes with the full time students, but spread their study over two years to accommodate work and personal circumstances. Regardless of whether you choose to apply for the part-time or full-time course, you will be part of a close-knit cohort of students from diverse backgrounds.

As a part-time MSc Sociology student, you will be required to attend all seminars and lectures and meetings with your supervisor in Oxford. Teaching is typically scheduled for 3 days per week in the first and second terms of each year of study, and 1 day per week in the third term of each year. There is no flexibility in the pattern of attendance for scheduled teaching events. Supervisor meetings typically take place at least twice per term on dates determined by mutual agreement with your supervisor. Attendance at supervisor meetings may be required outside of term-time, particularly over the long vacation during which you will be expected to write your thesis.

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 Social Science Library is the largest freestanding social science library in the UK and is located in the Manor Road Building.

Hot-desking areas with access to printing are available in the department.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Department of Sociology 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 Sociology. You can typically expect to meet with your supervisor at least twice a term, and at least three times over the summer vacation when you are writing your thesis.

Assessment

Assessment will be conducted either by timed examination or submission. At the end of the year you will submit a dissertation of up to 10,000 words, which will consist of a sociological analysis.

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	£25,300
Overseas	£38,410

Part-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£12,650
Overseas	£19,205

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

You will normally be required to carry out a small fieldwork training exercise as part of the qualitative methods course. This may require a short trip out of Oxford, but usually not an overnight stay. You will need to cover any costs (eg travel) related to this training exercise, which the department estimates to range from between £20 to £100. As part of your course requirements, you may need to choose a dissertation, a project or a thesis topic. You are not formally required to undertake field research for your dissertation. However, if you decide to undertake fieldwork as part of your studies, you should note that you will ordinarily have to meet all the costs yourself. These costs are likely to include, but may not be limited to travel, accommodation and living expenses, insurance premiums and, where appropriate, visa and medical fees (eg for vaccinations). Costs can vary considerably according to the duration and location of the fieldwork, but the department would generally expect the cost of such field research to range from £200 to £1,000. If you choose to collect your own data, you may also incur transcription costs. There may also be costs if you choose to acquire quantitative data from non-ESRC sources. The department has no funds available to help with these costs, however, you may be able to apply for small grants from your 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 may need to choose a dissertation, a project or a thesis topic. Depending on your choice of research topic and the research required to complete it, you may incur additional expenses, such as travel expenses, insurance, research expenses and field trips. There may also be costs if you choose to acquire data. You will need to meet these additional costs, although you may be able to apply for small grants from your 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>).