

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MPhil in Japanese Studies



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	21 months

About the course

The MPhil in Japanese Studies is a two-year course offered jointly by the Oxford School of Global and Area Studies (OSGA) and the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies that combines intensive language courses, three courses about Japan, research methods courses and a 30,000-word thesis. Native speakers of Japanese take two additional courses about Japan.

The MPhil in Japanese Studies is designed as a two-year, six-term taught course that comprises advanced research training focusing on developing language skills and on deepening your understanding of contemporary Japan.

It acts either as a foundation for those intending to seek employment working in Japan or with Japan, or as a preparation for further research on Japan on a doctoral programme at Oxford or elsewhere. It is taught by full-time members of the Nissan Institute (within the Oxford School of Global Area Studies) and the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies and all the courses are designed for master's-level students.

The department does not teach Japanese for beginners but rather aims to develop your existing language skill to the level at which you can use it to conduct research about Japan. The department's courses aim to take you from a minimum of JLPT Level 3 up to and beyond Level 1.

Course structure

In total, there are eight components to the MPhil in Japanese Studies course.

Year one

During your first year, you will undertake

- one core course on research methods
- two option courses (see list below)
- a Japanese language course (or a further option course if you have native-speaker level competence in Japanese).

Year two

During your second year, you will undertake:

- one or more research methods courses in the appropriate department
- one option course (see list below)
- one advanced Japanese language course (or a further option course if you have native-speaker level competence in Japanese)
- a dissertation of 30,000 words.

Option courses

You will choose your option courses about Japan from the following list. Please note that not all options may be offered every year:

- Classical Japanese Language (There are prerequisites to study this option)
- Classical Japanese Literature
- Economy and Business of Japan
- Japanese Linguistics (The History and Structure of Japanese)(There are prerequisites to study this option)
- Japanese Politics and International Relations
- Japanese Social Anthropology
- Modern Japanese Literature
- Modern Transnational History of Japan
- Japanese Society
- Bodies in Japan, from 1945 to the 21st Century

The option courses about Japan have been designed for students at graduate level and most students studying them will be on the MSc or MPhil course. Some courses may also be taken by students who are studying elsewhere in the university. For

example, the course on Japanese Politics is an option for both students in Japanese studies and students on the MPhil in Politics (Comparative Government).

The Nissan Institute Seminar runs weekly over the Michaelmas (autumn), Hilary (spring) and well into Trinity (summer) terms. Each week, speakers with a national and international reputation in Japanese studies are invited to present a paper about their current research. Attendance at the Nissan Institute Seminar is an integral part of the programme.

In addition, the Nissan Research Seminar provides an arena for graduate students working on Japan to meet weekly during Michaelmas and Trinity terms to exchange ideas about their work in progress. Master's students are welcomed into this graduate research community.

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.

Oxford University IT Services runs courses on various computer programmes and can offer help and guidance.

The Bodleian Japanese Library (BJL) is the main lending service within the University for the material you will require. A large part of its material can be borrowed for a limited period. It is located within the same building as the Nissan Institute. A tutorial on using the library and IT facilities will be provided during the first weeks of the programme by the librarian of the BJL.

The Nissan Institute provides students with the use of a study room that has desk space and chairs. Individual lockers are provided for storage of student belongings. Wireless internet access is available throughout the building. The student room also contains a collection of Japanese and English books and dictionaries. This room is available to all students on the MSc and MPhil courses during normal office hours.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Oxford School of Global and Area Studies 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 Oxford School of Global and Area Studies.

You should try to see your supervisor two or three times each term.

Assessment

A range of assessment methods is used:

- the research methods course is assessed on the basis of projects and tasks set in the course of teaching;
- the language course is assessed through a combination of tests and quizzes set during the year and a final examination;
- the courses about Japan are assessed by a written examination in English in the chosen subjects; and
- a thesis.

Progression to the second year is conditional on satisfactory performance in the first year.

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	£14,350
Overseas	£28,420

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

There are no compulsory elements of this course that entail additional costs beyond fees and living costs. However, please note that, depending on your choice of research 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. Standard travel insurance can be provided by the University. However, students may be required to pay any additional insurance premiums associated with travel to areas with an increased level of risk, and should factor this into their planning for fieldwork.

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>).