

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



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	21 months

About the course

This two-year degree aims to introduce you to the study of Buddhism primarily in its diverse Asian forms, give you a comprehensive training in one of the main Buddhist canonical languages, and guide you through in-depth explorations of Buddhist history, philosophy, literature and practice.

This degree can be a standalone qualification or preparation for doctoral research.

You will be requested to select a primary Buddhist canonical language. The options currently available are Pali, Sanskrit, Classical Tibetan and Classical Chinese. You may select another of these languages as an optional subject.

The first year focuses on intensive training in all aspects of your chosen language, without presuming previous knowledge of it, and takes advantage of the world class linguistic expertise available at Oxford.

Study of the chosen language is complemented by training in various aspects relevant to the study of Buddhism, including historical, literary, philosophical and ethnographic. Teaching happens through lectures, seminars and tutorials, utilising the small group practice characteristic of Oxford. Your training is also supported by a rich provision of visiting lectures, research seminars and workshops.

This solid base of training is built on in the second year with the in-depth study of important Buddhist texts in the original language in which you are specialising and an analytical approach to Buddhist studies as an academic discipline.

You are also required to choose one optional paper. Possible options are a second primary Buddhist language (Pali, Sanskrit, Tibetan or Chinese) or a paper chosen from a list published annually such as, for example, Buddhist philosophy or Anthropology of Buddhism. These optional courses are subject to availability of teaching each year.

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 has excellent library resources for Buddhist studies, which are kept in collections associated with the different parts of Asia. For South and Inner Asian studies these resources are supported by the Bodleian Libraries.

The Bodleian Asian and Middle Eastern Collections possesses one of the finest collections of pre-modern South Asian manuscripts in the world. For East Asian studies, there are, in addition to the main Bodleian collection, special libraries both for Japanese and for Chinese studies. Other relevant collections are located in the Bodleian Art, Archaeology and Ancient World Library and the Theology Faculty.

Additionally, the Nizami Ganjavi Library at the Faculty of Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies and certain colleges (for example, Wolfson College) also have substantial stocks of books related to Buddhism and primary Buddhist languages.

The Ashmolean Museum and the Pitt Rivers Museum offer classes which can provide important resources for the study of Buddhist art and material culture.

You will have access to the University's centrally provided electronic resources, the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies' IT Officer, and other bibliographic, archive or material sources as appropriate to the topic. There is a computing room for the use of graduate students in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, as well as a common room where tea and coffee are available and staff and students can meet.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern 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 Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

Most students have the opportunity to meet with their supervisor at least once per term.

Assessment

The first year is assessed by a qualifying exam in Trinity term, ensuring that you have fully comprehended the first year's teaching activities.

Your assessment of the second year is specified by the given course instructor.

The final examination of the second year, consists of the following four components:

- a thesis on a subject approved by the Faculty Board;
- an advanced language paper consisting of a translation from seen and unseen texts in the chosen primary Buddhist language, to be assessed by a timed-examination;
- a paper on approaches to the study of Buddhism, to be assessed by an essay submissions; and

EITHER:

- a language paper in a second primary Buddhist language, to be assessed by a timed examination. The second primary Buddhist language can be studied either at a basic or at an advanced level. The former will be assessed by a timed examination in the chosen second primary Buddhist language; the latter by a translation from seen and unseen texts in the chosen second primary Buddhist language, to be assessed by a timed examination. If you intend to study a second primary Buddhist language at an advanced level you must satisfy the Faculty Board that you possess an adequate knowledge of your chosen language;

OR:

- a paper chosen from a list published annually, assessed as specified by the course instructor. This paper will be chosen at the beginning of Michaelmas term preceding the examination.

The examiners may examine any candidate by viva voce if they have concerns about the standard of written examination assessment.

Further information on the course, and the examination process, can be found in the course handbook via the course webpage on the faculty's website.

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	£17,250
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.

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 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.

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>).