

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MPhil in Egyptology



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	21 months

About the course

The MPhil in Egyptology is a two-year taught graduate degree that offers a satisfying and tailored advanced course of study in the languages, cultures, and history of ancient Egypt. While the MPhil functions as a course in its own right, it is also designed to take students to the stage where they can embark on doctoral research in Egyptology.

The MPhil in Egyptology normally has two distinct paths through the curriculum. The first, Syllabus A, allows those with previous training in Egyptology to pursue their study of the subject to a higher level, to gain specialised expertise, and to begin advanced research in an area of their choice. The second, Syllabus B, enables graduates in another discipline to convert to Egyptology through a graduate level course that offers a certain amount of specialisation, including a significant element of advanced research. In both cases, syllabuses are tailored to the interests of individual students as much as possible and as far as planned teaching and supervising specialism allows.

The study of ancient Egyptian language and textual culture lies at the heart of the degree and is generally a major component of Syllabus A. The principal focus throughout both syllabuses is on detailed familiarity with the primary textual sources, studied in the original language and through the original manuscripts where possible, and with various methods and approaches. Use of a range of interpretive and analytical approaches to the primary sources is integral to the course, including, for example, historiographical and/or literary-critical frameworks; overall there is an emphasis on texts as artefacts in a material context.

The syllabuses can also be designed with an archaeological and/or material-culture focus where teaching allows. You will have the opportunity to develop your skills in working with Egyptian artefacts from the extensive and diverse collections of the Ashmolean Museum. Options that are regularly offered for Syllabus A students and second year Syllabus B students include: Art and iconography; Deir el-Medina, sources and analysis; Coptic language and texts; Demotic language and texts; Greco-Roman hieroglyphic texts; Hieratic texts; Egyptian literary and/or religious texts; Egyptian letters; aspects of material culture.

The MPhil is a very intensive course. For example, you must treat the University vacations as integral parts of your work time and you will be expected to take relatively limited holidays. Where possible, if you have not been to Egypt before you should ideally try to visit before the end of the course, to experience something of the landscape and country (some colleges offer travel grants). Currently, it is usually not possible to engage in fieldwork in Egypt, but there can be possibilities for fieldwork elsewhere.

The number of students accepted for the course each year is very small. This ensures that teaching can be tailored to the research interests and training requirements of individual students. Teaching is also very much focused around small groups and one-on-one tutorials and supervisions for which small cohorts are vital. In the first year of Syllabus B you will share Middle Egyptian language classes (three hours a week) and lectures on history and culture (two hours week) with first year undergraduates. Some other classes may also be shared with undergraduates and graduates on other degrees where appropriate for your research training needs. Depending on options, there are usually on average six to nine contact hours a week.

During the teaching term, Egyptology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies holds a regular research seminar with invited speakers. These are usually on Tuesday afternoons and you are expected to attend regardless of the specialism of the speaker. All seminars offer perspectives on method and analysis which can be useful for your own project development.

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.

You will have access to the facilities and resources of the Griffith Institute, which is home to one of the most significant Egyptological archives in the world and two major research projects, the Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Statues, Reliefs and Paintings, and the Online Egyptological Bibliography. It is possible for archive holdings to form the basis of dissertation work or special fields. Volunteering in the archive or for the institute's projects offers excellent training in the management of primary sources as well as archival practices.

The Griffith Institute, as well as teaching rooms and staff offices, is located in a wing of the Bodleian Art, Archaeology and Ancient World Library. This library houses the principal collection of books on Egyptology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, and is one of the finest libraries for the subject in the world. The Bodleian Art, Archaeology and Ancient World Library also includes general archaeology, Classical civilisation, and Western and Eastern art. An additional Egyptology resource is the Peet library in The Queen's College (accessible to all Egyptology students, regardless of college affiliation).

A further vital University resource in Egyptology is the Ashmolean Museum. You will be strongly encouraged to make yourself familiar with the collections, both on display and in the stores. You may like to consider working with a specific category of material in the museum for a special field or dissertation. It may also be possible to gain museum work experience on a voluntary basis in the Department of Antiquities. Artefact classes for Egyptology undergraduates are held in the museum, and MPhil students are strongly encouraged to attend these where possible. Another Oxford museum with an Egyptian collection is the Pitt Rivers Museum. You may wish to explore the possibility of working with its collection, as well as those of other museums in the UK, such as the British Museum.

As well as these facilities, you will also be able to use the Nizami Ganjavi Library at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies and the Bodleian Asian and Middle Eastern Collections. 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, or co-supervisor, may be found outside the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

Most students have the opportunity to meet individually with their supervisor 2-3 times per term in the first year and every second week of term in the second year, with further meetings outside term as needed and if possible.

Assessment

Students on Syllabus A are normally required to sit one or two qualifying examinations in the language(s) and/or language phase(s) they are specialising in, during or after the end of Trinity term of their first year. Students on Syllabus B will sit two qualifying examinations in Middle Egyptian during or after the end of Trinity term of their first year.

During the second year, you will write a dissertation. This will give you the opportunity to identify and design your own research project and to develop advanced research skills. You should expect to spend the Easter vacation finishing your dissertation, which must be submitted half way through Trinity term.

Two research essays developed out of work done for one part of the course must be submitted by the end of Hilary term of the second year. Depending on the course design, there can also be a take-home examination at the start of Trinity term of the second year.

The final examinations are sat towards the end of Trinity term. Different examination provision may be made for students who have chosen options that are offered in other faculties, such as Classics or Archaeology.

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>).