

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MPhil in Islamic Art and Architecture



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	21 months

About the course

The MPhil in Islamic Art and Architecture is a two-year course combining comprehensive training in the history of Islamic art and architecture, research, and language instruction. The course is designed for students with little or no background in Islamic art and architecture who also wish to learn Arabic, Persian, Turkish, or another relevant language.

The MPhil in Islamic Art and Architecture is suitable either as a stand-alone course or as a stepping stone to doctoral research.

In the first year, you will attend language classes throughout the three terms, whilst taking a broad year-long survey course entitled History of Islamic Art and Architecture, consisting of weekly lectures and discussion sessions (two hours per week), and bi-weekly individual tutorials.

During the second year, you will build up your independent research and critical skills by writing a thesis, while continuing to receive intensive language training. You will also complete a Portfolio of Practical Work, and take a specialist option relevant to your thesis research. For your Portfolio of Practical Work, you will attend sixteen hours of classes in museums, libraries and historic buildings in Oxford, introducing techniques to describe and analyse buildings and objects in a range of media (such as ceramics, epigraphy, manuscripts, metalwork, numismatics, and textiles). Your specialist option could either be a text-based option in the language you are studying, or a historical paper relevant to your research.

Available options will be given to you during the induction process and may include various topics depending on staff availability. Previous topics have included:

- Arabic epigraphy and palaeography
- Fatimid architecture
- Quranic calligraphy
- Ottoman illustrated manuscripts.

Up to sixteen hours of classes and up to six tutorials for this specialist option will be taught in the first and/or second term of your second 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.

Islamic Art and Architecture is based at the Khalili Research Centre (KRC), where you will have most of your classes, lectures and tutorials. The KRC is the University of Oxford's centre for research and teaching in the art and material culture of the Islamic societies of the Middle East and of their non-Muslim members and neighbours. The KRC houses some members of faculty staff, and you will be given your own workspace.

The centre has a lecture room with audio-visual and IT equipment; an image digitisation room (available by appointment only); common room, kitchen facilities and a computing officer, as well as a wide range of IT facilities which can be used by

staff and students, including network laser printing, audio visual equipment, and scanning equipment. You will also have access to the Asian and Middle Eastern studies common room and computing rooms.

The KRC adjoins the world-class specialised collections of the Bodleian Art, Archaeology and Ancient World Library and the Nizami Ganjavi Library for the history and literatures of the Islamic world. Some colleges (such as Wolfson College) have additional lending collections of books on Islamic Art and Architecture. You will also have access to the Ashmolean Museum and Weston Library, with their comprehensive collections of Islamic art and manuscripts.

Supervision

You will have a supervisor at the Khalili Research Centre, who will guide your progress through the course and who will agree with you a programme of work and a timetable for each term of the course, including:

- General skills and research specific training
- Formal teaching and instruction
- Attendance at lectures and seminars
- Meetings with the supervisor for discussion on your progress.

Tutors and language instructors report to your supervisor on your progress at the end of each term, and the supervisor will write a formal report upon your work and progress during the term.

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.

Assessment

At the end of the first year of the course you must sit the qualifying examination, consisting of a language examination in Arabic or Persian or Turkish, which will test progress in the elementary study of the relevant language made during the year.

In the second year, the final examination is taken, which consists of five elements:

- An examination on the History of Islamic Art and Architecture
- A language examination, in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, or another relevant language
- An option paper to be selected in consultation with your supervisor (either take-home research paper or written examination)
- The Portfolio of Practical Work
- The thesis.

You will be expected to spend part of the vacation between years one and two engaged in language study and/or fieldwork in a region appropriate to your area of interest.

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

You will normally be expected to spend the summer after your first year attending an intensive language course in the Middle East. The faculty estimates the cost of attendance to be between £1,400 and £3,000, depending on the country and the fees charged by the various institutes that provide such courses. This estimate includes tuition fees, living expenses (both housing and food) and airfare. The faculty currently provides some funding toward these costs.

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>).