

## Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MPhil in Islamic Studies and History



### Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	21 months

### About the course

The MPhil in Islamic Studies and History is a two-year course intended primarily for students who desire an intensive introduction to Islamic history and thought in the pre-modern period. The course is an excellent preparation for subsequent doctoral study.

The course focuses on the political, social, and intellectual history of the central Islamic lands (Egypt, the Fertile Crescent, the Arabian Peninsula, Iran, Central Asia and Anatolia) up until c. 1800, and differs from analogous MPhil courses at other universities in the significance it places on language instruction in classical Arabic, Persian and Turkish, and the study of primary sources.

If you are already capable of carrying out research in one of these languages, you will be strongly encouraged to take up a second. Instruction and supervision are carried out by several members of the faculty's teaching staff.

The first year of the course is devoted to intensive language instruction, six to eight hours per week. During the first year, students also attend weekly lectures on pre-modern Islamic history and on the main genres of Islamic religious writing. These lectures are accompanied by a weekly graduate seminar devoted to discussing important research literature and student essays. The weekly seminar also touches on the field of classical Arabic literature. An induction meeting is normally scheduled for new students during the eighth week of Michaelmas term, ie the week before the beginning of full term.

You will normally spend the summer between years one and two in the Middle East for language study and/or research connected with thesis work.

The second year is devoted to continuing language instruction, more focused work on two elective papers, and a thesis. Available elective papers may vary from year to year, but topics that are frequently taught include:

- the Qur'an and Qur'anic exegesis
- hadith
- Islamic law
- Sufism
- Islamic theology and philosophy
- Medieval Middle Eastern and Islamic history
- Islamic art and architecture
- Arabic literature
- Persian literature

Elective papers normally involve a weekly meeting of two hours devoted to the reading and primary sources, student presentations, informal lecturing, and the discussion of student essays. Students spend a significant amount of time preparing for these meetings by working through primary texts, reading secondary literature, and writing essays.

### 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 Nizami Ganjavi Library part of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. The library, comprising approximately 80,000 volumes of books, periodicals and pamphlets, housed both on and off-site, supports students of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Eastern Christianity, South and Inner Asian Studies and Korean. The library's Middle Eastern and Islamic collections have a strong focus on language, literature, and pre-1800 history, religion, philosophy and culture which is complemented by the modern Middle East collections of St Antony's Middle East Centre Library. The Nizami Ganjavi Library provides access to publications in both vernacular languages (ie Arabic, Persian, Turkish and others) as well as European languages.

Adjacent to the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies is the Ashmolean Museum, which houses superb collections.

You will have access to the University's centrally provided electronic resources, the faculty's IT Officer, and other bibliographic, archival or material sources as appropriate to your course. 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.

You will be assigned a supervisor who is responsible for offering academic guidance throughout the course.

### **Assessment**

At the end of the first year, you will sit a qualifying examination in the language you have been studying. At the beginning of your second year, you will be set two essays in Islamic Studies and History, which will count towards your final result. Throughout the second year, candidates will take further examinations: a language examination; one examination on each one of a candidate's elective papers (which often take the form of one-week take-home essays); and a thesis.

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 intensive language tuition. The faculty estimates the cost of attendance to be around £1,200, including tuition fees, living expenses (both housing and food) and airfare. The faculty currently provides some funding toward these costs. Colleges may also be able to provide additional funding, however amounts vary depending on the college and the demand each year.

## 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
<b>Food</b>	£330	£515
<b>Accommodation</b>	£790	£955
<b>Personal items</b>	£200	£335
<b>Social activities</b>	£45	£100
<b>Study costs</b>	£40	£90
<b>Other</b>	£20	£40
<b>Total</b>	£1,425	£2,035

### Likely living costs for nine months

	Lower range	Upper range
<b>Food</b>	£2,970	£4,635
<b>Accommodation</b>	£7,110	£8,595
<b>Personal items</b>	£1,800	£3,015
<b>Social activities</b>	£405	£900
<b>Study costs</b>	£360	£810
<b>Other</b>	£180	£360
<b>Total</b>	£12,825	£18,315

### Likely living costs for twelve months

	Lower range	Upper range
<b>Food</b>	£3,960	£6,180
<b>Accommodation</b>	£9,480	£11,460
<b>Personal items</b>	£2,400	£4,020
<b>Social activities</b>	£540	£1,200
<b>Study costs</b>	£480	£1,080
<b>Other</b>	£240	£480
<b>Total</b>	£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](http://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](mailto:graduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk)) or via the online form (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/ask/form>).