

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MSt in Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics (Research Preparation)



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	9 months

About the course

The MSt in Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics (Research Preparation) is a nine-month taught course offering a range of options for those seeking a graduate qualification in language studies and wishing to specialise in general linguistics (including phonetics but not applied linguistics), in historical and comparative linguistics, or in the linguistics of a specific language.

This course is designed for applicants who have studied linguistics as undergraduates to a more advanced level and who thus already have a solid background in all core areas of general linguistics; they will typically have a degree in which linguistics forms at least 50% of the teaching and assessment, or who can otherwise demonstrate that they have studied linguistics to an equivalent level.

In order to be admitted on this course, applicants will have already identified, by means of a detailed research proposal, a topic in which they have received relevant prior training and on which they will want to write a master's thesis.

Course Structure

Students will be working on their master's thesis from their first term. They will attend the Faculty's training in research methods and in addition, they may attend some more advanced classes that are of relevance to their thesis work.

Students will study for two option papers that are of particular interest to them. Options are chosen from those listed in Option B, Option C, or in Option D below. Those intending to study options chosen from C or D below should normally have, and may be required to demonstrate, some knowledge of the chosen (group of) language(s), and those intending to offer options chosen from C will normally be expected to be able to read secondary literature in French and German.

If students would like to specialise fully in Indo-European comparative philology via Option C, they are strongly encouraged to apply for the MPhil in Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics instead. There is also scope for some work in historical and comparative linguistics in the MSt via the module in Historical and Comparative Linguistics under Option B, and via options in the history and structure of specific languages.

Please note that not all options may be offered every year, depending on the availability of teaching.

Option B

You will select two options from the following range:

- Phonetics and Phonology
- Syntax
- Semantics and Pragmatics
- Historical and Comparative Linguistics
- Psycholinguistics and Neurolinguistics
- History and Structure of a Language.

You may also ask for one option in another subject in general linguistics; approval will be subject to the availability of proper instruction and provision for examination. There are two other Option B papers, which are not normally available to MSt students unless they have substantial training in that subject sufficient to begin work on these options from their first term on the course:

- Experimental Phonetics
- Computational Linguistics.

Option C

You will select two options from the following three subjects:

- The comparative grammar of two Indo-European languages or language groups
- The historical grammar of the two languages or language groups selected

- Translation from, and linguistic comment upon, texts in the languages selected.

Option D

You may select either ancient (eg Latin, Sanskrit) or modern languages (eg French, Italian, German, Slavic languages), for two of the following:

- The history of one language, or of two or more historically related languages
- The structure of the language or languages selected
- One of the following:
 - translation from, and/or linguistic comment upon, texts in the language or languages selected
 - any paper from B (above) except History and Structure of a Language
 - a project on an aspect of the structure or history of the language, or family of related languages, studied.

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

The Faculty of Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics will be based in the Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities, a brand-new building at the University of Oxford, which will accommodate seven faculties, two institutes, a new library, a large number of well-equipped teaching and seminar rooms, and performance and arts venues. Each faculty will have its own centre and social hub within a building which will also facilitate interdisciplinary and collaborative work. At the heart of the building is a large atrium – called the Great Hall – which will be a beautiful space, bringing light into the building, and serving as a space for informal work, relaxation, meeting with friends, taking breaks, having refreshments – and much more.

The building will enable the recently-established Cultural Programme to flourish, with a 500-seat world class concert hall, a theatre, experimental performance venue, 100-seat cinema, and exhibition hall. Many of these venues will support academic and student-led activities, as well as performances and creative works by professional artists. The cultural programme will enrich the lives of students, and will also provide opportunities to get involved.

Phonetics Laboratory

The experimental area consists of a recording studio, an acoustics and speech processing laboratory, a physiological laboratory and a speech perception laboratory. Hardware for physiological study, available to students and staff, includes labial electromyography, oral/nasal aerometry (measurement of air pressures and flow) and ultrasound tongue imaging.

The studios, for recording and for running experiments, are equipped with high-quality microphones and digital recording equipment, and computer systems for the presentation of visual and/or auditory stimuli.

Language and Brain Laboratory

The language and Brain Laboratory offers research staff and students bespoke facilities and specialist equipment to conduct a wide variety of behavioural, eye-tracking and neurolinguistics experiments. There is a common room for tutorials and meetings.

The laboratory has separate spaces for Neurolinguistics, Eye-Tracking, Production, and Behavioural studies. We have two electronically shielded sound-proofed climate-controlled EEG booths for recording brain waves. EEG recordings are made using high-impedance (300 Mohms) active electrode systems: we are currently conducting experiments on two systems: BioSemi and Brain Vision. An additional soundproof room is used for high quality audio recordings and eye-tracking studies. Our state-of-the-art SR Research Eyelink1000 eye tracker can be used on its own, or in combination with our EEG equipment.

One of the largest spaces is the Behavioural Lab, where there is bespoke equipment and software to run experiments such as lexical decision tasks or timed forced choice experiments. Eight participants can currently run simultaneously at individually screened desks, or up to 16 participants with a projector setup. All of the testing rooms have an associated control room to monitor the experiments and analyse the results.

Library provision

Oxford's library provision in linguistics is one of the largest in the country. Oxford's libraries are superbly provided with material on theoretical linguistics, the structure and history of European languages, ancient Indo-European languages, and non-Indo-European as well as Indo-European languages of Asia.

There will be 340 general reader seats, and around 80 graduate study seats – with a further 320 formal and informal study seats throughout the building outside the library.

Open-shelf lending collections will be complemented by access to electronic resources, scan on demand, and material requested from the Bodleian's Collections Storage Facility. As well as the Library's extensive staffed hours, there will be a 24/7 study space, including smart lockers for self-collect of borrowable items out of hours. Subject support is provided by a team of subject librarians.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Faculty of Linguistics, Philology & Phonetics 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 Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics.

Most students have the opportunity to meet with their course supervisor at the beginning and end of each term to receive advice about useful lectures and seminars and to review the progress made.

Assessment

You will produce a thesis which needs to be submitted in the final term of your course. In addition, assessment of your two option papers, involving exams and/or submissions depending on which options you chose, will take place in the final term of your course.

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	£16,900
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

Depending on the student's choice of options, and especially the choice of thesis project, some fieldwork or experimental work may be required. Some thesis options will require laboratory experiments, for which a budget of £75 is available to pay participants. Some may require overseas fieldwork, for which the Faculty has a budget of £500 towards travel and subsistence costs. The Faculty makes available some funding for language training, where relevant.

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>).