

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MSt in Diplomatic Studies



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	12 months

About the course

The Oxford University Diplomatic Studies Programme (DSP) is one of the world's oldest and most prestigious diplomacy programmes. It comprises a one-year, full time Master's degree of mixed academic and vocational study. Customised for professionals, it equips participants with the knowledge and skills they require to conduct diplomacy in a complex, interdependent world.

The Master of Studies (MSt) in Diplomatic Studies comprises four taught courses and requires the successful completion of a dissertation.

The taught courses are as follows:

- Diplomatic Practice focuses on both diplomatic skills (oral, written and strategic) and key manifestations of professional diplomacy, inter alia digital, economic and public diplomacy. The course is complemented by practical exercises, simulations and workshops in international negotiations, crisis management, media interview techniques and effective public speaking.
- International Politics treats key concepts in International Relations leading to central issues in world politics, with particular emphasis on current dynamics in the international system.
- Public International Law expounds the principles, processes and institutions of a key foundation of international society, namely international law. Legal reasoning is applied to the issues that populate the contemporary diplomatic agenda.
- International Trade and Finance covers the basics of international trade theory and macroeconomics, and focuses on such applied and political economy topics as trade liberalisation, globalisation, international resource transfers and development.

In addition to the four taught courses above, the MSt in Diplomatic Studies requires completion of a substantial individual research project. A supervised dissertation of up to 15,000 words is done on an approved course-related topic of personal interest. To help students plan, structure and conduct their research, the DSP includes a compulsory introductory course in research methods for the social sciences.

Optional, supplementary courses include English language classes (to help non-native speakers of English polish their oral and written proficiency in the language) and Academic Literacy, which assists students to develop advanced skills in preparing and presenting their academic work.

The programme is delivered through a variety of lectures, seminars, workshops and small group tutorials. While the number of contact hours is likely to vary each year, these typically amount to 180 lectures/seminars and 24 tutorials.

As part of the course in diplomatic practice, the DSP normally includes study visits to government departments, international organisations and business and media institutions in the United Kingdom and Europe. A study tour to Ireland or Scotland may also take place.

Diplomatic Studies Programme (DSP) participants are typically mid-career diplomats who resume their careers on successful completion of the course, but applications are also accepted from candidates with professional experience and academic qualifications in related fields. The annual intake has a global reach, and participants come from a wide range of countries. This creates a rich and immersive experience, where students learn as much from their peers as they do from the world-class scholars and practitioners who lecture on the programme. The resulting networking opportunities are a major attraction of the DSP.

Every DSP participant is encouraged to take advantage of the broad range of opportunities available to them as a member of the University and one of its colleges, such as attending lectures, engaging in debates and participating in Oxford's numerous clubs and societies.

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.

The Rewley House Continuing Education Library, one of the Bodleian Libraries, is situated in Rewley House. The department aims to support the wide variety of subjects covered by departmental courses at many academic levels. The department also has a collection of around 73,000 books together with periodicals. PCs in the library give access to the internet and the full range of electronic resources subscribed to by the University of Oxford. The Jessop Reading Room adjoining the library is available for study.

The department provides various IT facilities, including the Student Computing Facility which provides individual PCs for your use.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Department for Continuing Education and this role will usually be performed by the Course Director.

It is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff. A supervisor may be found outside the Department for Continuing Education.

Most students have the opportunity to meet with their supervisor up to 14 times (in hourly sessions). However, such sessions may be replaced with the equivalent time spent on the provision of written feedback.

Assessment

In addition to the dissertation, the four taught courses are assessed by four year-end examinations. These include mainly essay questions, but they may also require answers in the form of a position paper, a report, a speech, a mini case study or in a specific professionally-structured format (such as a diplomatic telegram).

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	£34,120
Overseas	£34,120

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

Please note that this course requires that you attend in Oxford for teaching, and you may incur additional travel and accommodation expenses for this. Further, as part of your course requirements, you will need to choose a dissertation, a project or a thesis topic. 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. During any study tours that take place as part of the course, accommodation will be provided however you will be expected to cover your meal 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>).