

## Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MSt in English (650-1550)



### Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	9 months

### About the course

The MSt in English (650-1550) is designed to serve both as an autonomous degree for students wishing to pursue more advanced studies in English literature, and as a solid foundation for doctoral research.

The MSt in English Language and Literature 650–1550 offers the knowledge and understanding, research materials and opportunities, and the skills and techniques, for undertaking the study of the languages and literatures produced in England, Scotland and Wales before 1550.

We aim to broaden students' experience of the literature produced in the British Isles and related areas across nearly a millennium. We also offer unrivalled training in the core skills for research in medieval studies. This includes reading, understanding and editing medieval manuscripts and early printed books; developing skills in languages such as Old English and Old Norse; and debating a wide range of approaches and methods in the study of medieval literature and culture. Optional courses with leading scholars help to focus students' interests, and a dissertation provides the chance to pursue in-depth research to a high quality.

The range of the literature and approaches likely to be encountered is challenging and rewarding. We have no one method or theoretical approach; the course gives you time to learn which sort of medieval studies you wish to practise, or invent. Whatever your past experience and expected career path, the course can help you to become an accomplished medievalist with a wide range of expertise.

### Course structure

The course consists of four main components spread over three academic terms, through which you have the opportunity to pursue interests within your chosen MSt strand, as well as across period boundaries.

In the first two terms, you will take a core course (A) and a course in book history and theories of text (B), both tailored to your MSt. You will also choose two courses from a wide range of options (C).

Under the guidance of a specialist supervisor you will also research and write a dissertation, which is submitted in the final term.

You will also have the opportunity to hear lectures and papers by leading writers, critics, and theorists from inside and outside the University. You are encouraged to participate in the many research seminars and reading groups that run throughout term time, many of which are coordinated by graduates themselves. There is an active and lively graduate organisation funded by the faculty, English Graduates at Oxford (EGO), that organises study skills, training and career development seminars, as well as social events and conferences.

#### A. Core course: Literature, Contexts and Approaches

This is the core course and is compulsory for all students. The A Course for this strand runs over the first two terms.

Classes on literature, contexts and approaches introduce representative key texts and current debates on the literature and cultural history of the period.

There is no formal assessment for the A Course, but written work and/or oral presentations may be required.

#### B. Core course: Bibliography, Theories of Text, History of the Book, Manuscript Studies

This is a compulsory, assessed course, taught via a range of lectures and seminars in the first two terms.

It introduces students to the methodology and theory of bibliography, manuscript studies, textual scholarship and book history.

#### C. Special options

Students take two special option courses, one in the first term and one in the second term. Options change from year to year, depending on the availability of faculty members and on their current teaching and research interests.

The courses are taught in weekly, small group seminars.

You are not constrained to follow option courses in the designated period and, indeed, option courses often traverse the boundaries of the broad periods and subject groups.

Recent C course options for this strand have included 'Old English poetry: Cynewulf and the Cynewulf canon', 'Old Norse Literature', 'After the Conquest: Reinventing fiction and history', 'Contemplative Worlds, 700-1450', 'Wycliffite and Related Literatures' and 'Andrewes and Donne: Performing Religious Discourse'.

#### **D. Dissertation**

You will write a dissertation on a subject of your choice, but related to the work you have been doing over the year. You will be assigned to a member of academic staff who will act as your supervisor.

Students will have the opportunity to present their dissertation ideas at a one-day conference that they organise, usually at the start of Trinity term.

#### **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 Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities**

The Faculty of English Language and Literature will be based in the Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities, a brand-new building at the University of Oxford due to open in 2025, 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. The faculty will have its own centre and social hub within the building which will also facilitate interdisciplinary and collaborative work. At the heart of the building will be 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 library, part of the Bodleian Libraries, will house lending collections for English. 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 English 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 English.

#### **Assessment**

In addition to the dissertation, students sit a short transcription test and submit a piece of coursework relating to the 'B' core course as well as two further essays relating to the two special options courses taken.

Students normally take all four components to fulfil the requirements of the degree. All course work will be completed by the end of the second term (Hilary term), leaving the summer term (Trinity term) for the writing of the dissertation, which is submitted in early June.

#### **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

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
<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>).