

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



Course facts

Mode of study	Part Time Only
Expected length	12 months

About the course

The MSt in Historical Studies is the second year of a two-year part-time graduate course that focuses on British, Western European and imperial history and promotes a broad approach to historical research across the historical disciplines. It provides systematic training in research methods and the opportunity to research a substantial dissertation.

The course forms part of Oxford University Department for Continuing Education's graduate programme in historical studies. Successful completion of the PGCert in Historical Studies is mandatory for admission to this master's year.

The MSt course builds upon the skills and knowledge developed in the PGCert and encourages students to engage actively with theoretical and historiographical approaches underpinning modern historical research.

Course structure

There are three units:

Unit 1: Using Archives and Analysing Sources

In this unit you will examine the key documentary and material sources and resources for your specialist period selected from three parallel strands covering the medieval, early modern and modern periods. You will be encouraged to sharpen your critical and analytical skills and to reflect upon the challenges and opportunities particular sources or categories of source present to users. You will be introduced to the main historical methods informing the design of research projects, for example macro and micro approaches, quantification and the use of material evidence. Training is also offered in the use of electronic search engines, catalogues and databases and guidance provided on using archives and their catalogues.

Unit 2: Theoretical Approaches to History

You will examine themes and theoretical approaches that have provided the critical framework for, or have influenced, approaches to historical research. Four seminars are offered each year. In the first instance, these will cover gender, space, violence and identity. There is assigned reading but you will also be encouraged to consider the application of the chosen approaches to your own research and to subjects that interest you. You will be required to give short presentations, for example, introducing key texts.

Unit 3: Writing History

You will be encouraged in this unit to reflect upon the challenges historians face in framing, structuring and presenting their research findings. A visiting lecturer and members of the course team will share their experience of planning and writing books and handling conceptual issues such as causation, problem solving and controversy and the challenges of presenting qualitative and quantitative research findings and using digital data. You will give a short presentation on your dissertation and take questions and comments from tutors and students. There is a workshop on the organisation and presentation of the dissertation.

Teaching and learning

The units are taught in three weekend residences providing 38 hours of teaching, seminar discussion and presentations. Most students also have the opportunity to receive up to five hours individual supervision for their dissertations. You will be expected to spend at least fifteen hours per week in private study preparing for the weekend residences and researching and writing your dissertation.

You will also have access to the extensive range of seminars, lectures and training sessions offered by this department and other departments, faculties and centres within the University. The Humanities Division and History Faculty offer a wide range of graduate seminars, lectures and training and special events.

Attendance

This course is part-time. You will be required to attend three weekend residences in Oxford.

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.

In addition to Rewley House's well-stocked Continuing Education Library, you will have access to University libraries such as the Bodleian Library, Weston Library, History Faculty Library, and the Bodleian Art, Archaeology and Ancient World Library. Library access includes full online access to history and other journals and to a wide range of historical data bases and document collections, available anywhere.

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. Under exceptional circumstances a supervisor may be found outside the Department for Continuing Education.

Assessment

The graded assessment for these units is provided by the dissertation, supplemented by three summative assessment exercises marked pass/fail, namely a survey of secondary literature for the dissertation, a survey of primary sources for the dissertation and a dissertation proposal.

The final grade awarded for the MSt subsumes the grade awarded for the Postgraduate Certificate in Historical Studies, with a weighting of 60% applied to the MSt grade and 40% to the PGCert grade.

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	£7,455
Overseas	£14,330

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

This course has residential sessions in Oxford. You will need to meet your travel and accommodation costs in attending these sessions. Further, as part of your course requirements, you may 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.

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.

If you are studying part-time your living costs may vary depending on your personal circumstances but you must still ensure that you will have sufficient funding to meet these 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>).