

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MSt in Traditional China



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	9 months

About the course

The MSt in Traditional China provides students with an opportunity to develop the skills needed for research on pre-modern and early modern China.

Teaching will be individual or in small groups and you will work closely with members of Oxford's internationally renowned team of specialist researchers at the University of Oxford China Centre.

The course involves a number of different elements.

The first is an option in an area of pre-modern and early modern Chinese philosophy, culture and history. You can choose from a list of options which involve reading Chinese texts, discussing them, and writing tutorials. You will be asked to submit two 5,000 word maximum essays. Each option consists of weekly two hour classes in the Michaelmas and Hilary terms, in which you will read original Chinese documents about your subject and discuss the topics, plus four tutorials in which you will be discussing your essay with your tutor.

The second element of the course is language training. Based on your supervisor's assessment of your abilities and the linguistic needs of your research, you will choose one of the following options:

- Intermediate Classical Chinese. If your classical Chinese is not yet up to the level required for your project, your supervisor may recommend that you choose this option. You will attend the advanced classical Chinese classes in the Faculty, and work with your supervisor on improving your ability to read texts in your field.
- A basic course in another Asian language related to your research, eg Japanese, Korean, Tibetan or Sanskrit. You will focus on mastering the basic script and grammar, working on texts that are linked to your field of specialisation.
- If you have sufficient knowledge of your chosen language you may choose a second option in an area of pre-modern and early modern Chinese philosophy, culture, and history. The level of language knowledge required to take this option will be determined at the beginning of the course by your course coordinator and supervisor by means of an informal test, and in discussion with you.

The language courses are taught alongside students in other degrees and the number of hours will vary, but the focus will be on grammar and reading, you will have lots of preparation to do, and you can typically expect at least two contact hours each week.

The third element is an introduction to Sinology. This course covers the state of the field in different time periods and topics and also introduces various philological, analytical and bibliographical tools. The aim is to lead you towards a questioning and free-standing research style.

The final element is a thesis. This part of the course aims to develop your skills in exposition and analysis. You will be required to document your work in accordance with professional academic standards.

Students dedicate approximately eight hours per week to classes and lectures, and you will have the opportunity to meet your thesis supervisor individually to discuss your project. Typically most students meet with their thesis supervisor once every two weeks where possible.

The China Centre also organises its own weekly seminar, at which speakers include visiting international scholars, members of the Oxford academic staff, and graduate students. Other graduate seminar groups with more a specialised focus, for instance modern history or art and archaeology, also meet regularly.

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 China Centre, brings together academics drawn from across a range of disciplines, who have in common research and teaching interests related to China. The Dickson Poon University of Oxford China Centre building has a 100-seat lecture theatre, a 200-seat dining area and a range of conference and seminar facilities. It also has a dedicated library with study carrels and a reading room, which holds books from the Bodleian Library's China Collection.

In addition to this, you will also have access to the Bodleian Oriental collections and the Nizami Ganjavi Library part of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. Adjacent to the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies is the Ashmolean Museum, which holds comprehensive collections. You will have access to the University's centrally provided electronic resources, the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies' IT Officer, and other bibliographic, archive or material sources as appropriate to the topic. 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 refreshments are available and staff and students can meet. The facilities at the China Centre provide opportunities for interaction with students on a range of China-related degrees as well as lectures and other academic activities.

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.

Assessment

Evaluation of the course takes place throughout the year and is through a combination of examinations, essays as well as a dissertation on an approved topic of your choice, based on primary sources. An oral examination (viva voce) may also be required.

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	£23,400
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
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>).