

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MSt in Islamic Art and Architecture



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	9 months

About the course

The MSt in Islamic Art and Architecture is a one-year degree that aims to provide tailor-made courses in order to train you for research on the history of Islamic art and architecture (to circa 1900).

Before admission to this course, you will have demonstrated that you possess the necessary qualifications in Arabic or Persian or Ottoman Turkish to use primary sources in the original language for the study of Islamic art.

The structure of the course is flexible and will be tailored to the profile and interests of each student.

You will be expected to meet with your supervisor regularly to complete a thesis, whilst attending tutorials, classes, lectures and seminars as agreed with your supervisor, and completing regular assignments of written work set by your tutors. You will complete a Portfolio of Practical Work, for which you will attend sixteen hours of classes in museums, libraries and historic buildings in Oxford, introducing techniques to describe and analyse buildings and objects in a range of media (such as ceramics, epigraphy, manuscripts, metalwork, numismatics, and textiles). Depending on your research interests, you can either complete short assignments on the whole range for your Portfolio or focus on one medium.

In addition to these compulsory components, you will choose two papers relevant to your research interests in consultation with your supervisor. Available options include; language papers, a broad survey course on the History of Islamic Art and Architecture, text-based option in the language you are studying, and historical papers on various topics depending on availability of staff (eg, Arabic epigraphy and palaeography, Fatimid architecture, Quranic calligraphy, and Ottoman illustrated manuscripts). Language and History of Islamic Art and Architecture papers are year-long courses and tutorials for the latter are spread over three terms. All other options involve sixteen hours of classes and up to six tutorials taught in the first and/or second 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 Khalili Research Centre (KRC) is the University of Oxford's centre for research and teaching in the art and material culture of the Islamic societies of the Middle East and of their non-Muslim members and neighbours. The KRC houses some members of faculty staff, and you will be given your own workspace. The centre has a lecture room with audio-visual and IT equipment; an image digitisation room (available by appointment only); common room, kitchen facilities and a computing officer, as well as a wide range of IT facilities which can be used by staff and students, including network laser printing, audio visual equipment, and scanning equipment. You will also have access to the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies common room and computing rooms.

The KRC adjoins the world-class specialised collections of the Bodleian Art, Archaeology and Ancient World Library and the Nizami Ganjavi Library for the history and literatures of the Islamic world. Some colleges (such as Wolfson College) have additional lending collections of books on Islamic Art and Architecture. You will also have access to the Ashmolean Museum and Weston Library, with their collections of Islamic art and manuscripts.

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.

You will have a supervisor who will guide your progress through the course and who will agree with you a programme of work and a timetable for each term of the course, including: general skills and research specific training, formal teaching and instruction, attendance at lectures and seminars. Most students have the opportunity to meet individually with their supervisor at least twice a term for a detailed discussion on their progress.

Tutors report to your supervisor on your progress at the end of each term, and the supervisor will write a formal report upon your work and progress during the term.

Assessment

Assessment is taken at the end of the course and consists of four elements.

The first is a thesis which should be equivalent to a substantial draft chapter or chapters of a proposed thesis for the MLitt or DPhil.

The second element is either a portfolio which introduces techniques to describe and analyse buildings and objects in a range of media (such as ceramics, epigraphy, manuscripts, metalwork, numismatics, and textiles) or a report or reports on practical work completed on an object or objects that will form part of a proposed thesis for the MLitt or the DPhil.

The third and fourth elements consist of any one of the three options below:

- a. two examination papers, which may be any combination of language and non-language papers (a year-long survey course on Islamic art is among the available options);
- b. two extended essays which may be any two of the following:
 - an essay on the theoretical issues raised by the subject which the candidate is proposing for the thesis for the MLitt or DPhil;
 - an essay on a topic relevant to the subject of the proposed thesis for the MLitt or DPhil; or
 - an essay discussing the historical or literary background, or the source material, relevant to the proposed thesis for the MLitt or DPhil.
- c. one examination paper under (a) above and one essay under (b) above.

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>).