

## Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MSc in Nature, Society and Environmental Governance



### Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	12 months

### About the course

The MSc in Nature, Society and Environmental Governance (MSc NSEG or NSEG) is grounded in the conviction that responding to contemporary global challenges demands intellectual rigour, innovation and flexibility.

Some of the most pressing environmental issues of our time have politics intensely at their core, interwoven with the complexities of historical institutions, social practices, beliefs and material infrastructures. Understanding these complex phenomena requires multiple perspectives and the ability to think across disciplinary boundaries.

Over the year, you will encounter a broad range of expertise from human and political geography, anthropology, science studies, the environmental humanities and environmental sciences. The overarching objective is not to offer a singular view of nature, society, or governance, but to present a set of theoretical and practical insights alongside scholarly debates which are alive and in flux.

This course will enable you to develop a theoretically sophisticated and empirically grounded understanding of the dynamic relations between environments and societies. Students should expect to engage with theoretical material and deconstruct some of the basic assumptions underpinning terms like 'society', 'governance', 'environment' and 'nature' to develop conceptual tools to understand contemporary global change.

This is not an 'environmental policy' programme - it is a programme that will prepare you to grapple with contemporary global challenges from the perspectives of critical social theories informed by a range of disciplines.

### Course aims/objectives

The course aims to:

- provide broad and critical engagements with key debates in the environmental social sciences, focusing on the relations between nature, society, and environmental governance;
- foster an understanding of the politics of environmental knowledge claims, how such claims are formulated and asserted, and their effects in practice;
- develop students' conceptions of, and skills in, the methods and practices of contemporary environmental social sciences, providing critical foundations for further research;
- integrate students into world-leading research taking place in the School of Geography and the Environment, providing core teaching and supervision by research-active staff; and
- enhance students' personal and professional development.

### Intended learning outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- identify and evaluate key theoretical approaches from the social sciences (especially human geography) through which to understand environment-society relations;
- apply concepts from a range of critical social theories to appraise and analyse environmental knowledge claims, governance practices and environmental/social outcomes;
- design qualitative research projects, select and implement appropriate research methodologies, and produce research outputs in a variety of formats; and
- explain and synthesize analyses of environmental contexts in written and oral formats to persuade and inform professional and public audiences.

### Course structure

The MSc is organised according to three themes:

1. Multiple Natures;
2. Environment, Politics and Justice; and
3. Research Skills.

It is assessed through a series of written coursework assignments and presentations (live/recorded) that are staged in four portfolios due at different stages of the year of study, culminating in an independent research dissertation (15,000 words).

Teaching takes place through lectures and seminars which provide in-depth exploration of key environmental issues. Students are required to engage in significant periods of self-study to prepare for lectures/seminars and to consolidate learning. Field trips are also an important component of the teaching delivery and include an induction field course in the UK and a residential field course.

### **Core modules**

The MSc is organised into six core modules:

1. Social Theory for the Anthropocene;
2. Environment, Governance and Politics;
3. Environmental Justice;
4. Science & Politics;
5. Research Design; and
6. Research Methods and Practices.

### **Elective modules**

The elective modules are shared with the other MSc courses in Geography and thus encourage interdisciplinary thinking. They offer a teaching and discussion environment within smaller groups, based on a suite of contemporary research themes linked to the themes of the course, that reflect the specific interests of core faculty and visiting research associates. The teaching aim is to foster discussion and debate between academic staff and students to identify and explore theory, methods and practice in an academic space that encourages a critical dialogue.

### **Dissertation**

An independent and original dissertation is an integral component of the course. In order to equip you with the necessary skills to undertake high quality research, a suite of training activities is offered to develop key transferable skills in order for you to be able to execute high quality independent and original research. The dissertation will expose you to applied research methods used widely in academic and professional research.

The department has several research clusters, in biodiversity, ecosystems and conservation; climate systems and policy; landscape dynamics; technological life; economy and society; environmental interactions; and political worlds, which hold seminars throughout term-time. Graduate students are encouraged to attend these seminars.

Research skills' training is provided in preparation for your dissertation. Throughout the course, fieldtrips and visits to external organisations support the lectures and seminars and deliver valuable skills training.

### **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 University of Oxford has an extensive library system and the Radcliffe Science Library is the main lending service within the University for the material required for the course. The Social Sciences Library also holds collections which are valuable for students pursuing geography programmes.

There is a dedicated social space for MSc students where you can meet and discuss your studies. Where appropriate, you will be able to use the departmental laboratories for your dissertation research.

### **Supervision**

The course has an Academic Director and a Course Director who looks after the day to day running of the course. You will have a dissertation supervisor who is normally a member of the School's academic staff.

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the School of Geography and the Environment 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 School of Geography and the Environment. Students will usually have eight hours of supervision.

### **Assessment**

The programme consists of eight summative assessments which use a diverse range of methods including written assignments, oral presentations, a fieldwork report, a research proposal and final dissertation.

### **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	£25,300
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

Most costs associated with compulsory fieldwork are paid for by the department. This excludes the costs associated with obtaining the appropriate visa required to attend the non-UK based field trips. Non-EEA nationals might require a visa in order to travel to the country where the field trip is being held and any costs associated with obtaining the appropriate travel visa is the responsibility of the student. Students will also have to pay for some meals during the field course. Furthermore, as part of your course requirements you need to develop and research a dissertation topic. Depending on your choice of topic and the field work research required to complete it, you may incur additional costs (eg relating to travel, accommodation, field assistants, lab fees and/or research visas). You will need to meet these additional costs, although you may be able to apply for small grants/bursaries 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>).