Course Information Sheet for entry in 2023-24:
MSc + DPhil in Social Data Science

About the course

The combined multidisciplinary MSc + DPhil in Social Data Science provides the social and technical expertise needed to analyse unstructured heterogeneous data about human behaviour, thereby informing understanding of the human world.

The growing field of social data science sits at the intersection of data science approaches to information retrieval, modelling, and prediction with social science approaches to theory-driven analysis, critiques of social processes, and linkages between policy and practice. The Social Data Science MSc + DPhil track seeks students with training or a demonstrable aptitude for social science work and programming to refine and extend their skills through the generation, analysis, and critique of large-scale social data. The tools for such an approach are multifaceted and evolve quickly. Our programme embeds recent machine learning approaches to prediction, scalable strategies for ingesting and managing large scale data, analytical statistics for explanations, and specialist approaches such as computer vision, natural language processing, and network science. As a social science degree these approaches are generally applied to questions of social scientific relevance such as social inequality, censorship, hate speech, cohesion, and wellbeing.

Please note that the MSc component is also offered separately as the MSc in Social Data Science.

It is possible to study the DPhil component of the combined programme on either a full-time or part-time basis. Over the course of the full-time DPhil component you are expected to produce an important and original piece of scholarship that will make a significant contribution to the dynamic area of Social Data Science. On completion, you will have the qualities and transferable skills necessary to excel in teaching, research, policymaking or business. The part-time version of the DPhil component has the same high standards and requirements as the full-time version, but is spread over 6-8 years. Please visit the department website for further details on part-time doctoral study or contact the department using the details provided under *Further information and enquiries*.

Due to the intensive nature of the taught portion of this course, there is no part-time option available for the MSc year. However, students continuing on to doctoral study have the option of studying the DPhil in Social Data Science part-time.

As a part-time DPhil student you will be required to attend seminars, supervision meetings and other obligations in Oxford for a minimum of 30 days each year. Attendance will be required during term-time a minimum of one day each week. There will be limited flexibility in the dates and pattern of attendance, which will normally be determined by the fixed teaching and seminar schedule during term. Attendance may be required outside of term-time on dates to be determined by mutual agreement with your supervisor. You will have the opportunity to tailor your part-time study in liaison with your supervisor and agree your pattern of attendance.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Oxford Internet Institute and it is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff. Supervision for the MSc in Social Data Science spans multiple departments (a full list of faculty members eligible to supervise students for this programme can be found on the department's website - see *Further information and enquiries*). A supervisor may be found outside the list on the course webpage, and co-supervision is also possible.

While an MSc student, you can typically expect to meet with your supervisor 8 to 102 times over the course of the degree. Once you have progressed to the DPhil programme, you can normally expect to meet with your supervisor around three to four times a term.

Assessment

During your full-time MSc year, you will take a combination of core and option papers and produce a thesis with the support of a supervisor. The thesis provides you the opportunity to apply the methods and approaches you have covered in the other parts of the course and carry out a substantive piece of academic research.

MSc students take two foundation papers related primarily to social science theory and practice, and one intensive paper spanning programming, data science, and introductory machine learning during the first term. Two more foundation papers (a second theory course and a course on research design) occur in the second term. Additionally, in the second term, students write two option papers drawing from our range of option courses such as:

- Natural language processing,
- Data-driven network science,
- Fairness and accountability in Machine Learning,
- Internet economics,
- Applied machine learning.

Students admitted directly to the MSc + DPhil in Social Data Science will still need to meet the normal admissions requirements and any conditions set to progress to the DPhil in Social Data Science.

During the DPhil element of the course, all students will be initially admitted to the status of Probationer Research Student (PRS). Within a maximum of four terms as a full-time PRS student (or eight terms part-time), you will be expected to apply for, and achieve, transfer of status from Probationer Research Student to DPhil status.

A successful transfer of status from PRS to DPhil status will require satisfactory completion of such lectures, seminars and classes as the Graduate Studies Committee of the OII shall determine. Following successful transfer, students will need to apply for and gain confirmation of DPhil status to show that the work continues to be on track. This will need to be completed within nine terms of admission to the DPhil if full-time or eighteen terms part-time.

Both milestones involve an interview with two assessors (other than your supervisor).

Students will be expected to submit an original thesis of not more than 100,000 words three or, at most, four years from the date of admission if full-time and six to eight years if part-time. To be successfully awarded a DPhil in Social Data Science you will need to defend your thesis orally (viva voce) in front of two appointed examiners.

Changes to courses

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 registration. These may include significant changes made necessary by a pandemic (including Covid-19), 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).

Expected length of course

	FT Only	FT + PT
Expected length of MSc component	10 months full time	10 months full time
Expected length of DPhil component	3-4 years full time	6-8 years part time

Costs

Annual fees for entry in 2023-24

During the first year of the course you will be charged course fees at the MSc in Social Data Science fee rate. These fees are shown in the table below.

Annual MSc in Social Data Science (first year) fees for the 2023-24 academic year

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£25,760
Overseas	£30,910

You may apply to study the DPhil component of the course on either a full-time or part-time basis. In each subsequent year, you will be charged course fees at the relevant DPhil in Social Data Science fee rate for that year of study. For an indication of costs, the tables below show the annual full-time and part-time DPhil course fees for the 2023-24 academic year.

Annual DPhil in Social Data Science fees for full-time study in the 2023-24 academic year

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£13,050
Overseas	£28,020

Annual DPhil in Social Data Science fees for part-time study in the 2023-24 academic year

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£6,525
Overseas	£14,010

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.

Graduate students who have reached the end of their standard period of fee liability may be required to pay a termly University and/or a college continuation charge.

The University continuation charge, per term for entry in 2023-24 is £572, please be aware that this will increase annually. For part-time students, the termly charge will be half of the termly rate payable by full-time students.

If a college continuation charge applies (not applicable for non-matriculated courses) it is likely to be in the region of £100 to £600 per term. Please contact your college for more details.

Additional cost information

MSc component

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 will need to choose dissertation, project or thesis topics. 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.

DPhil component (full-time study)

There are no compulsory elements of this programme that entail additional costs beyond fees and living costs. However, please note that, depending on your choice of research 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.

DPhil component (part-time study)

Please note that you are required to attend in Oxford for a minimum of 30 days each year, and you may incur additional travel and accommodation expenses for this. Also, depending on your choice of research topic and the research required to complete it, you may incur further 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, 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 2023-24 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	£300	£470
Accommodation	£715	£860
Personal items	£180	£305
Social activities	£40	£90
Study costs	£35	£80
Other	£20	£35
Total	£1,290	£1,840

Likely living costs for nine months

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£2,700	£4,230
Accommodation	£6,435	£7,740
Personal items	£1,620	£2,745
Social activities	£360	£810
Study costs	£315	£720
Other	£180	£315
Total	£11,610	£16,560

Likely living costs for twelve months

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£3,600	£5,640
Accommodation	£8,580	£10,320
Personal items	£2,160	£3,660
Social activities	£480	£1,080
Study costs	£420	£960
Other	£240	£420
Total	£15,480	£22,080

When planning your finances for any future years of study at Oxford beyond 2023-24, it is suggested that you allow for potential increases in living expenses of 5% or more each year – although this rate may vary significantly depending on how the national economic situation develops.

More information about how these figures have been calculated is available at www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/livingcosts.

Document accessibility

If you require an accessible version of the 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).