

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2023-24: MSc in Public Policy Research



About the course

The MSc in Public Policy Research is a one-year taught degree course that offers an outstanding education on how to conduct robust, applied and impactful research that informs and influences public policy.

The MSc will give you a keen understanding of the relationship between research evidence and other major influences on the public policy process, such as ideologies and institutions; you will be able to design and undertake a range of policy-relevant research methods to the highest standards; and you will be skilled in effectively communicating research findings to a wide range of audiences including policymakers and the general public.

The curriculum for the course is delivered via a series of lectures, seminars and workshops across three terms.

The current curriculum includes the following elements:

- Theories and Approaches in Public Policy Research
- Research in a Public Policy Context
- Research Design
- Statistics for Public Policy
- Qualitative Methods
- Thesis Development Seminars
- Option module
- Thesis.

In the first term, a foundational module in Theories and Approaches in Public Policy Research will enable you to learn how concepts and theories help researchers to identify and define public policy problems, construct explanations about causes and effects, and generate applied research questions and hypotheses that can be tested empirically to tackle real-world problems. You will begin working on your thesis, initially focusing on the development of a research proposal, on an applied public policy problem.

In the second term, you will take an innovative foundational module on Research in a Public Policy Context aimed at providing you with an understanding of the constraints and opportunities that exist in research in government, as distinct from research in academia. You will also learn how research evidence sits alongside other types of influence on the public policy process; and be provided with the skills necessary to conduct and communicate robust research that informs policy design and implementation.

You will complete a module in Research Design and Methods in the first and second terms comprising three linked sub-modules on:

1. Research Design
2. Statistics for Public Policy
3. Qualitative Methods for Public Policy Research.

In addition, you will continue working on the research for your thesis.

In the third term, you will take an option module that enables you to explore in depth a particular public policy topic of your choice, selected from the wide range of option modules that are offered each year to students on the Blavatnik School's Master of Public Policy. Some of these options are taught by the School's faculty, but more than half are taught by world leading academic experts from other departments in Oxford or expert practitioners.

Finally, you will write a thesis and produce an accompanying policy brief that distils insights from the research for decision-makers in government. The thesis will be supervised by a member of the Blavatnik School faculty or an academic working in a policy-focused research group or centre elsewhere in Oxford. In addition to the academic supervisor, you will also be assigned a policy advisor from a public policy organisation to provide advice and feedback on the research from a practitioner perspective.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Blavatnik School of Government and it is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming students to work with a particular member of staff. A supervisor may be found outside the Blavatnik School of Government.

You will meet with your academic supervisor to discuss the progress of your studies; they will help you to identify your research topic, devise an important and researchable question, formulate and execute an appropriate research design, and produce a methodologically sound and impactful thesis. The Blavatnik School of Government will assign supervisors at the start of the year on the basis of the intellectual and policy interests expressed by students.

In addition to the academic supervisor, you will benefit from advice on the development of your thesis provided by a senior official from a public policy organisation in a relevant area who will act as your policy advisor. It is recommended that all students meet with their supervisors at least once a term.

Assessment

You will undertake a mixture of types of summative assessment (eg essay, policy memo, short research proposal, presentation, practical data exercise), reflecting the breadth of the material being taught and the skillset required of public policy research professionals. You will also complete formative work to provide practice opportunities for each type of summative assessment, and to build a repertoire of practical research skills that will assist with completing your thesis and prove attractive to future employers. The scheduling of summative assignments has been designed to be stretching but realistic for students, to spread the workload across the year, and to support progression of the thesis, from conception through to analysis and write-up.

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

	Full Time Only
Expected length	12 months

Costs

Annual fees for entry in 2023-24

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£38,900
Overseas	£38,900

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.

Deposits

If your application is successful, you will be asked to pay a deposit against your course fees at the application stage as a condition of your offer. The deposit amount and date by which payment must be made are shown below.

Amount of deposit	Date by which deposit must be paid
£5,850	31 May 2023

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 and vaccination expenses, conference attendance, 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.

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>).