

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2023-24: MPhil in International Relations



About the course

The MPhil in International Relations is a two-year (21-month) course which combines intellectually rigorous training in theoretical and conceptual approaches to international relations with the study of the recent history of world politics, as well as providing methodological training and personalised guidance for the production of high-quality original research.

The MPhil International Relations course equips you with the knowledge and skills you require to pursue further research and study at an advanced level and also to undertake many forms of professional work in the field. This MPhil is a very popular course, attracting students from the world's leading institutions. Entry is very competitive and students come from a wide range of backgrounds and nationalities.

The Department of Politics and International Relations (DPIR) is internationally recognised as a leader in research in the field of international relations. DPIR is ranked first for research overall in the most recent THES global university rankings for Politics and International Studies, consolidating its position as one of the top four in the world which it has held in the QS rankings since 2017.

The objective of the course is to give you, in your first-year, a thorough mastery of the major facts, methodologies and perspectives in the field, as well as to develop research skills. This is supplemented in the second year by specialised course work on two optional subjects and a thesis.

In the first year as an MPhil in International Relations student, you must complete core classes in the development of the international system and contemporary debates in international relations theory, and a course on research design and methods in international relations, which includes the writing of a research design proposal in preparation for the MPhil thesis. Methods training spans a variety of approaches, both quantitative and qualitative, and is intended to provide the skills necessary to both critically evaluate existing work and produce rigorous original research.

In your second year you will write a thesis and complete two specialist option papers. Options offered in recent years have included:

- The Making of Modern International Society
- Strategic Studies
- The International Relations of the Developing and Post-Colonial World
- The International Relations of East Asia
- U.S. Foreign Policy
- The USSR and Russia in International Relations
- Main Themes in Israeli Society and Politics.

The approach to teaching comprises intensive and interactive work between you and your supervisor and course teachers, combined with a carefully planned programme of classes, seminars and lectures, as well as directed self-study.

Work on the thesis is individually supervised.

The course provides an excellent foundation for doctoral work in terms of substantive knowledge of the field, methods training, and the experience of conducting original research and thesis-writing.

Those continuing on to the DPhil in Oxford can incorporate their MPhil thesis into the doctorate and progress as full doctoral students. Progression to the DPhil depends on meeting defined criteria. In most years a good percentage of the class moves on to the doctoral programme.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Department of Politics and International Relations and it is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff. Supervisors are usually selected from the academic staff within the Department of Politics and International Relations. Under exceptional circumstances a supervisor may be found outside the Department of Politics and International Relations.

You will be assigned an academic supervisor who will advise and guide you as you progress through the different stages of your MPhil studies. Students can expect to meet with their supervisor approximately three times each term.

Assessment

First year

The core course culminates in an examination at the end of the first year. Research design and methods training is assessed by tests and coursework throughout the first year. Progression to the second year is conditional on passing these examinations and assessments.

Second year

At the end of the course, you are required to sit two written examinations in the option papers of your choice and submit a thesis.

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	21 months

Costs

Annual fees for entry in 2023-24

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£20,770
Overseas	£31,540

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 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>).