

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2023-24: MPhil in Islamic Studies and History



About the course

The MPhil in Islamic Studies and History is a two-year course intended primarily for students who desire an intensive introduction to Islamic history and thought in the pre-modern period. The course is an excellent preparation for subsequent doctoral study.

The course focuses on the political, social, and intellectual history of the central Islamic lands (Egypt, the Fertile Crescent, the Arabian Peninsula, Iran, Central Asia and Anatolia) up until c. 1800, and differs from analogous MPhil courses at other universities in the significance it places on language instruction in classical Arabic, Persian and Turkish, and the study of primary sources.

If you are already capable of carrying out research in one of these languages, you will be strongly encouraged to take up a second. Instruction and supervision are carried out by several members of the faculty's teaching staff.

The first year of the course is devoted to intensive language instruction, six to eight hours per week. During the first year, students also attend weekly lectures on pre-modern Islamic history and on the main genres of Islamic religious writing. These lectures are accompanied by a weekly graduate seminar devoted to discussing important research literature and student essays. An induction meeting is normally scheduled for new students during the first week of Michaelmas Term, ie, the week before the beginning of full term.

You will normally spend the summer between years one and two in the Middle East for language study and/or research connected with thesis work.

The second year is devoted to continuing language instruction, more focused work on two elective papers, and a thesis. Available elective papers may vary from year to year, but topics that are frequently taught include the Qur'an and Qur'anic exegesis, hadith, Islamic law, Sufism, Islamic theology, Arabic philosophy, conversion to Islam in the Middle Ages, and Islamic art and architecture. Past students have also taken options in Arabic and Persian literature. Elective papers normally involve a weekly meeting of two hours devoted to the reading and primary sources, student presentations, informal lecturing, and the discussion of student essays. Students spend a significant amount of time preparing for these meetings by working through primary texts, reading secondary literature, and writing essays.

Supervision

You will be assigned a supervisor who is responsible for offering academic guidance throughout the course.

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.

Assessment

At the end of the first year, you will sit a qualifying examination in the language you have been studying. You will also be set two essays during your first year in Islamic Studies and History which will count towards your second year examinations. Throughout the second year, candidates will take a set of examinations: a language examination; two examinations on a candidate's elective papers; and a thesis.

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 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	£14,710
Overseas	£29,700

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

You will normally be expected to spend the summer after your first year attending intensive language tuition. The faculty estimates the cost of attendance to be around £1,200, including tuition fees, living expenses (both housing and food) and airfare. The faculty currently provides some funding toward these costs. Colleges may also be able to provide additional funding, however amounts vary depending on the college and the demand each year.

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>).