

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



About the course

The multidisciplinary MSc in Social Data Science provides the social and technical expertise needed to collect, critique, and analyse unstructured data about human behaviour.

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 degree 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.

Students will be expected to spend around 40 hours studying each week during term, and to undertake further study and complete assessments during termly vacation periods. During Michaelmas and Hilary Terms, MSc students are advised to allocate between 10 and 15 hours each week for each course they undertake.

In the first term (Michaelmas), this includes:

- At least 20 hours per week on reading, preparation and formative assignments (ten hours for the intensive course, five hours for each of the two foundation courses)
- 16 to 20 hours per week in classes (typically one and a half to two hours of lectures daily, one and a half to two hours of tutorials and practical exercises three-four days a week, plus additional seminars or workshops on certain courses)

In Hilary term, this equates to:

- At least 24 hours per week on reading, preparation and formative assignments (6 hours for each core/option course)
- Ten to 12 hours per week in classes (typically one and a half to two hours of lectures per course, plus a one hour seminar or workshop on certain core and methods-based courses)

Due to the intensive nature of the taught portion of this course, there is no part-time option available. However, students continuing on to doctoral study have the option of taking a part-time DPhil. The course is primarily taught using the Python programming language with small exceptions for specialist work where necessary.

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.

MSc students can expect to meet with their supervisor 8-10 times over the course of the degree. Students are assigned a course supervisor in their first term who will be the point of contact for keeping an eye on academic progress. In the second term (Hilary term), supervisory matching is reassessed to ensure that student needs and skills are properly matched. Supervisors are also responsible for giving written feedback on at least one complete draft of the student's thesis prior to submission as well as additional advice on research design, data access, and analysis methods.

Assessment

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.

As a student, you will be generally able to apply to access, review, and make use of resources from our option courses even if you don't attend that specific course for credit. During each course you will receive regular feedback on formative exercises, assignments, and essays. This feedback does not count towards your final mark but prepares you for the graded summative work due after the completion of each course.

Finally in the third term, students are assessed by a thesis on a topic of their choosing in consultation with their academic supervisor. Planning for this thesis takes place in the second and third terms. In the third term this partially occurs through a non-graded research seminar where students showcase their work in progress.

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	10 months

Costs

Annual fees for entry in 2023-24

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

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 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.

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>).