

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2023-24: MSt in English (650-1550)



About the course

The English master's programmes are designed to serve both as an autonomous degree for students wishing to pursue more advanced studies in English literature, and as a solid foundation for doctoral research.

The MSt in English Language and Literature 650–1550 offers the knowledge and understanding, research materials and opportunities, and the skills and techniques, for undertaking the study of the languages and literatures produced in England, Scotland and Wales before 1550.

We aim to broaden students' experience of the literature produced in the British Isles and related areas across nearly a millennium. We also offer unrivalled training in the core skills for research in medieval studies. This includes reading, understanding and editing medieval manuscripts and early printed books; developing skills in languages such as Old English and Old Norse; and debating a wide range of approaches and methods in the study of medieval literature and culture. Optional courses with leading scholars help to focus students' interests, and a dissertation provides the chance to pursue in-depth research to a high quality.

The range of the literature and approaches likely to be encountered is challenging and rewarding. We have no one method or theoretical approach; the course gives you time to learn which sort of medieval studies you wish to practise, or invent. Whatever your past experience and expected career path, the course can help you to become an accomplished medievalist with a wide range of expertise.

Course structure

The MSt programme consists of four main components as outlined below.

A. Core course: Literature, contexts and approaches

This core course is not formally assessed. Seminars over the first two terms introduce a range of medieval literatures composed between 650 and 1550, and a variety of topics and approaches for consideration, such as voice and writing, authorship, form and formalism, and historicism. Students give presentations in the weekly seminars.

B. Core course: Bibliography, theories of text, history of the book, manuscript studies

This core course provides extensive training in handling and thinking about the 'material text' – how we read, date, interpret, and edit from primary sources – including coursework studying some of Oxford's astounding holdings of manuscripts and early printed books. Such training will transform the way you think about medieval literature, bringing it to archaeological life, and open up new resources for research as well as new kinds of research.

Seminars over the first two terms introduce skills in transcription, palaeography, codicology and editing, and reflection on the significance of studying the material forms and textual transmission of medieval literature.

C. Special options

Students take two special option courses, one in the first term and one in the second term, choosing from a range of about six which change each year. Recent years' courses have included Anglo-Saxon riddles, Cynewulf, archetypes of the high Middle Ages, early Middle English women's religious writing, post-Conquest literature, Chaucer's places, intellectual dissidence and dissent in the fifteenth century, the language of Middle English literature, and the languages and literatures of medieval Wales and Ireland. Students are also welcome to choose a course offered by another MSt strand, for example in another period, or in the English Language.

Option courses are taught in weekly small-group seminars.

D. Dissertation

In discussion with faculty members, each student devises a research project of their own on any subject concerning the language, literature, or cultural history of the British Isles and the Norse world in the Middle Ages. They receive one-to-one supervision on that research and complete a dissertation of 10,000-11,000 words by the end of the third term (June). These dissertations bring to bear the skills and perspectives acquired throughout the course on one focused piece of research.

The MPhil

For those who would like to take their studies further, the MPhil runs over two years, with the same first-year syllabus as that of the MSt course. It includes further taught courses, opportunities for more linguistic training, and a second, longer dissertation in the second year. It is possible to apply for this course from the outset or apply to switch onto it at the end of the MSt.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Faculty of English 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 English.

Assessment

In addition to the dissertation, students sit a short transcription test and submit a piece of coursework. relating to the 'B' core course as well as two further essays relating to the two special options courses taken.

Students normally take all four components to fulfil the requirements of the degree. All course work will be completed by the end of the second term (Hilary term), leaving the summer term (Trinity term) for the writing of the dissertation, which is submitted in early June.

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	9 months

Costs

Annual fees for entry in 2023-24

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£14,410
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 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 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>).