

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: PGCert in Ecological Survey Techniques



Course facts

Mode of study	Part Time Only
Expected length	12 months

About the course

The Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) in Ecological Survey Techniques is a part-time taught course combining online and field-based learning to develop skills in biodiversity monitoring, data analysis, and ecological field survey design across taxa.

The course can be completed in one year (though two years is possible), and uses a mixture of online, face-to-face and experiential learning, including an independent field survey project, and is led by experienced academics and practitioners.

The PGCert provides the high standard of training needed to design, plan and implement effective ecological field surveys from beginning to end, including handling data and reporting results. The course supports research and professional development in the field, providing students with the skills needed to effectively assess and monitor biodiversity and ecosystems across all biomes.

Course structure

An overview of the course structure is provided below. Details of the compulsory and optional elements of the course are provided in the *Course components* section of this page.

The PGCert comprises one five-day core face-to-face module consisting of classroom and field-based teaching, two online core modules and a choice of two out of four online option modules. You will also undertake a core field project which consists of preparation time (one month), fieldwork (one-two weeks full-time or equivalent) and project writing for submission in September (one month).

The face-to-face week in September includes classroom and field work based teaching, as well as practical exercises including the use of GIS software, this is followed by core and option modules taught online and an independently-researched project with field work.

For the option modules, tutors usually engage online for 6 hours per week distributed across each week and will focus on particular topics, questions and activities. There are only a couple of live lectures per module to accommodate students in different time zones.

You are expected to spend around 15-20 hours per week during the run of a module to participate in online learning and 5-10 hours per week on private study and field project preparations when modules are not running. This may require careful scheduling at times to fit in with your other commitments. Good organisational and time management skills should contribute to successful completion of the course.

Attendance

This course is part-time. You will be required to attend some teaching in Oxford for this course, including a residential session. You may also be required to conduct fieldwork as part of a field project.

Resources to support your study

As a graduate student, you will have access to the University's wide range of resources including libraries, museums, galleries, digital resources and IT services.

The Bodleian Libraries is the largest library system in the UK. It includes the main Bodleian Library and libraries across Oxford, including major research libraries and faculty, department and institute libraries. Together, the Libraries hold more than 13 million printed items, provide access to e-journals, and contain outstanding special collections including rare books and manuscripts, classical papyri, maps, music, art and printed ephemera.

The University's IT Services is available to all students to support with core university IT systems and tools, as well as many other services and facilities. IT Services also offers a range of IT learning courses for students to support with learning and research, as well as [guidance on what technology to bring with you as a new student](https://www.it.ox.ac.uk/what-to-bring) (<https://www.it.ox.ac.uk/what-to-bring>) at Oxford.

The [Rewley House Continuing Education Library](https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/about/library-facilities) (<https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/about/library-facilities>), one of the Bodleian Libraries, is situated in Rewley House. The department aims to support the wide variety of subjects covered by departmental

courses at many academic levels. The department also has a collection of around 73,000 books together with periodicals. PCs in the library give access to the internet and the full range of electronic resources subscribed to by the University of Oxford. The Jessop Reading Room adjoining the library is available for study.

The department provides various [IT facilities \(https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/about/online-support\)](https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/about/online-support), including the Student Computing Facility which provides individual PCs for your use.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Department for Continuing Education and this role will usually be performed by the Course Director.

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 Department for Continuing Education.

In the case of students who require specific help to adjust to an academic programme or to a new range of skills, the supervisor can help to find additional support where appropriate.

Assessment

The course is assessed on a modular basis, with assessments reflecting the learning objectives of the course. During the course, after each module, you will be required to submit:

- one formative assignment, which will be marked with feedback but will not contribute credit towards formal course results;
- four assignments, up to two of which may be submitted as a PowerPoint poster or presentation depending on which option modules are chosen (10 CATS points each); and
- one field project and an online journal (20 CATS points).

The course is ideal for both UK-based and international students who wish to follow a flexible programme of study leading to an Oxford qualification. A choice of modules enables students to explore areas of interest and specialism, and areas which are relevant to their professional needs. Drawing on a rich pool of expertise, teaching is conducted by a highly knowledgeable and diverse team of practitioners and academics engaged directly with ecological issues.

The course page on the department's website contains further information on key IT requirements for undertaking the course and spotlights on past students from the course.

Course components

Compulsory study

Compulsory study comprises:

- one five-day core face-to-face module, 'Introduction to Ecological Survey Techniques in Oxford' consisting of classroom and field-based teaching;
- two online core modules in plant monitoring and in data analysis; and
- a core field project which consists of preparation time (one month), fieldwork (one-two weeks full-time or equivalent) and project writing for submission in September (one month).

Options

The optional components comprise a choice of two out of four online option modules specialising in mammals and reptiles, bird, fish and amphibians, and invertebrate monitoring. These online modules are five weeks in duration and will take no more than 100 hours to complete.

Changes to this course

The University will seek to deliver this course in accordance with the description set out in this course page. 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. The safety of students, staff and visitors is paramount and major changes to delivery or services may have to be made if a pandemic, epidemic or local health emergency occurs. In addition, in certain circumstances, for example due to visa difficulties or because the health needs of students cannot be met, it may be necessary to make adjustments to course requirements for international study.

Where possible your academic supervisor will not change for the duration of your course. However, it may be necessary to assign a new academic supervisor during the course of study or before registration for reasons which might include illness, sabbatical leave, parental leave or change in employment.

For further information please see our page on [changes to courses](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses) (<http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses>) and the [provisions of the student contract](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-contract) (<http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-contract>) regarding changes to courses.

Costs

Annual course fees

The fees for this course are charged on an annual basis.

Fees for the 2026-27 academic year at the University of Oxford

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£7,775
Overseas	£10,420

What do course fees cover?

Course fees cover your teaching as well as other academic services and facilities provided to support your studies. Unless specified in the additional information section 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 costs information below.

How long do I need to pay 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 fees will usually increase annually, as explained in the University's [Terms and Conditions \(//www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract).

Our [fees and other charges \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges) pages provide further information, including details about:

- [course fees and fee liability \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/courses-fees-and-liability\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/courses-fees-and-liability);
- [how your fee status is determined \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/fee-status\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/fee-status); and
- [changes to fees and other charges \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/changes-to-fees-and-charges\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/changes-to-fees-and-charges).

Information about how much fees and other costs will usually increase each academic year is set out in the University's [Terms and Conditions \(//www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract).

Additional costs

Please note that this course requires that you attend in Oxford for a minimum 5 days each year, and you may incur additional travel and accommodation expenses for this. Accommodation costs in Oxford can start at around £98 per night in University accommodation or around £120 in a hotel (single rate). Students should also factor in costs for meals during their stay. In addition, as part of your course requirements, you will need to choose a project topic. This element of the course is mandatory and forms part of the assessment for the course. Depending on your choice of topic and the research required to complete it, you may incur additional expenses, such as travel expenses, research expenses, equipment, materials and field trips. These costs will vary according to the location and length of the fieldwork. You will need to meet these additional costs yourself. There are no other compulsory elements of this course that entail additional costs beyond fees and living costs.

Living costs

In addition to your course fees and any additional course-specific costs, you will need to ensure that you have adequate funds to support your living costs for the duration of your course.

Living costs for part-time study

Your living costs may vary depending on your personal circumstances but you will still need to cover your cost of living on a full-time basis for the duration of your course, even if you will not be based in Oxford throughout your studies. While the range of likely living costs for a single, full-time student living in Oxford in the 2026-27 academic year is between £1,405 and £2,105 per month, living costs outside Oxford may be different.

Part-time students who are not based in Oxford will need to calculate travel and accommodation costs carefully. Depending on your circumstances and study plans, this may include the [cost of a visitor visa to attend for short blocks of time \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs) (if [visitor visa eligibility criteria \(//www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/visitors\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/visitors) are met).

Further information about living costs

The current economic climate and periods of high national inflation in recent years make it harder to estimate potential changes to the cost of living over the next few years. For study in Oxford beyond the 2026-27 academic year, it is suggested that you budget for potential increases in living expenses of around 4% each year – although this rate may vary depending on the national economic situation.

A breakdown of likely living costs for one month during the 2026-27 academic year are shown below. These costs are based on a single, full-time graduate student, with no dependants, living in Oxford.

Likely living costs for one month in Oxford during the 2026-27 academic year

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£315	£545
Accommodation	£825	£990
Personal items	£160	£310
Social activities	£50	£130
Study costs	£35	£90
Other	£20	£40
Total	£1,405	£2,105

For information about how these figures have been calculated as well as tables showing the likely living costs for nine and twelve months, please refer to the [living costs \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs) page of our website.

Document accessibility

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