

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: PGCert in Historical Studies



Course facts

Mode of study	Part Time Only
Expected length	9 months

About the course

The Postgraduate Certificate in Historical Studies can be studied as a stand-alone course or form the first year of the MSt in Historical Studies. Students explore five themed units and complete a dissertation on a topic of their choice.

Course structure

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

The course is made up of five taught weekend units and three online modules.

There are five weekend units, during which supported learning will be provided in a variety of formats: presentations, tutor-led discussion, group discussion, and student presentations on prepared topics. During the final, Special Subject weekend (Unit 5), there will also be one to one tutorials with the dissertation supervisor.

You will have the opportunity to attend a wide range of lectures and research seminars organised by the University of Oxford's History Faculty and other departments, faculties and centres within the University. The Humanities Division offers a wide range of graduate seminars, lectures and training and special events.

The department runs training sessions, a termly research seminar and dinner, an arts and humanities seminar series and social events.

It is anticipated that you will need to spend about 14-16 hours per week in private study; as you will work on the online modules, read widely, and research and prepare your assignments and dissertation.

Attendance

This course is part-time. You will be required to attend five weekend residences in Oxford during the course, usually in October, November, January, February and April.

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.

In addition to Rewley House's well-stocked Continuing Education Library, you will have access to University libraries such as the Bodleian Library, Weston Library, History Faculty Library, and the Bodleian Art, Archaeology and Ancient World Library. Library access includes full online access to history and other journals and to a wide range of historical data bases and document collections, available anywhere.

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.

Assessment

The Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) in Historical Studies is assessed through coursework comprising:

- four essays
- two source-based exercises
- a dissertation.

You will write one essay following each of the first four units and the dissertation following the fifth and final unit. There will be a wide choice of assignment subjects for each unit and you will select a dissertation topic relating to your special subject with the advice of the course team. You will be asked to write a non-assessed book review following the first pre-course online module and the source-based exercises will follow the second and third online modules. Assignment titles, submission deadlines and reading lists will be supplied at the start of the course.

Course components

Compulsory study

You will complete five weekend units and three online modules. For Unit five, you will write and submit a dissertation.

Weekend taught units

Unit one: Princes, States, and Revolutions

The first unit examines the interaction between the state and the individual from medieval to modern times and focuses upon authority, resistance, revolution and the development of political institutions.

Unit two: European Court Patronage c.1400

The second unit explores cultural patronage in late medieval Europe and examines the diverse courtly responses to shared concerns and experiences, including the promotion of power and status; the relationship between piety and power; and the impact of dominant cultures.

Unit three: Religious Reformations and Movements

The third unit examines the role of organised religion and religious movements in the lives of people in the past.

Unit four: Memory and Conflict

The fourth unit focuses upon a central theme in the study of twentieth-century European history: how societies have chosen to remember (and forget) violent conflicts, and the relationship between public and private memory.

Unit five: Special Subjects

In the final unit, you will study a source-based special subject and research and write a dissertation on a related topic of your own choice.

Online modules

The first module provides a pre-course introduction to history and post-graduate study skills.

The second focuses on the analysis and interpretation of material sources, such as buildings and images.

The third module focuses on the analysis and interpretation of a range of documentary sources.

All online modules include a range of self-test exercises.

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 \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses) and the [provisions of the student contract \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-contract\)](https://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	£6,450
Overseas	£12,745

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 residential sessions, 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 dissertation 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, and materials. 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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