

## Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: MSc in Contemporary Chinese Studies



### Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	9 months

### About the course

The MSc in Contemporary Chinese Studies is a three-term, nine-month course offered jointly by the Oxford School of Global and Area Studies (OSGA) and the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

The course is designed to provide high quality graduate research training with an emphasis on an appreciation of research methods and on deepening your understanding of contemporary China.

You will develop or extend your knowledge and understanding of:

- the key approaches to the social scientific study of modern and contemporary China
- research methods, strategies and ethics that will be of relevance to the social scientific study of China
- critical analysis of sources and ability to present findings effectively, both verbally and in sustained writing exercises
- framing and executing a workable research topic
- interdisciplinary research and its potential.

Modules involve lectures as well as seminar or class discussions, for both of which you will receive reading lists. It is a fundamental component of the Oxford educational system that you engage in individual reading and study in order to broaden and deepen your knowledge of your chosen field. You will also have the opportunity to meet with a supervisor on a one-to-one basis, to help guide you in your dissertation research. In addition to your supervisor, other staff members will be available to advise you on reading, literature and topics. Students normally have some familiarity with Chinese language.

### 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 teaching on the MSc course is built around two core courses.

In addition to the two core courses you will choose two option courses and complete a research dissertation.

The overall structure of the course is as follows:

- Compulsory core course on The Study of Contemporary China
- Compulsory core course in Research Methods for Area Studies
- Two elective papers
- Research supervision in preparation for a 12,000 word thesis.

### Attendance

The course is full-time and requires attendance in Oxford. Full-time students are subject to the [University's Residence requirements](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/accommodation/residence-requirements). (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/accommodation/residence-requirements>)

### 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 Dickson Poon University of Oxford China Centre building, based on Canterbury Road, brings together academics drawn from across a range of disciplines, who have in common research and teaching interests related to China. The building has a lecture theatre, a dining area and a range of conference and seminar facilities. These facilities provide opportunities for interaction with students on a range of China-related degrees as well as lectures and other academic activities.

The [Bodleian Chinese Studies Library \(http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/csl\)](http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/csl) and the [Bodleian Social Science Library \(http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ssl\)](http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ssl) are the main read-only and lending services respectively, for the material you will require. Reading lists and copies of course PowerPoint slides will be made available to you on Canvas across the academic year. In addition to this, there is a world-renowned collection of Chinese rare books housed in the Bodleian Oriental collections and the superb collections of the Ashmolean Museum.

## Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Oxford School of Global and Area Studies and 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 Oxford School of Global and Area Studies and the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

Students would normally expect to have 9-10 meetings with their supervisors from the start of the course until thesis submissions at the end of week 6 of Trinity term.

## Assessment

Assessment for Research Methods comprises two parts, each weighted equally: a take-home paper in the collection and analysis of qualitative data at the end of Michaelmas term, and a take-home paper in quantitative analysis at the end of Hilary term.

The Study of Contemporary China core course is assessed by one unseen exam at the beginning of Hilary term. Option courses are assessed by either unseen exams or officially submitted essays in Trinity term.

Finally, from the start of Michaelmas term and continuing across the next two terms, including during the Easter vacation, until submission on Friday of Week 6 of Trinity term, you will research and write a dissertation on a topic of your choosing, subject to approval by the Graduate Studies Committee. Your research topic for your dissertation will be formally approved by your supervisor and Course Director during Michaelmas term.

## Course components

### Compulsory study

The first core course, Research Methods, will introduce you to the strengths and weaknesses of contrasting discipline-based approaches to Area Studies, and the study of China. It explores both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

The second core course, The Study of Contemporary China, teaches foundational knowledge of modern Chinese history, politics and society needed for further study or research in all disciplines, and introduces the different disciplinary approaches to the study of modern China.

You will also submit a final thesis.

### Options

Candidates must choose two option papers from a list published annually by the Contemporary Chinese Studies Management Committee

## 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 \(http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-provisions-of-the-student-contract\)](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-provisions-of-the-student-contract)

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	£24,800
Overseas	£38,430

### 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

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 to help you cover some of these expenses. Standard travel insurance can be provided by the University. However, students may be required to pay any additional insurance premiums associated with travel to areas with an increased level of risk, and should factor this into their planning for fieldwork.

### 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 full-time study

For the 2026-27 academic year, the range of likely living costs for a single, full-time student is between £1,405 and £2,105 for each month spent in Oxford. We provide the cost per month so you can multiply up by the number of months you expect to live in Oxford. Depending on your circumstances, you may also need to budget for the [costs of a student visa and immigration health surcharge \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs) and/or [living costs for family members or other dependants \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs#field\\_listing\\_content\\_content-item--2\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs#field_listing_content_content-item--2) that you plan to bring with you to Oxford (if [dependant visa eligibility criteria \(//www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/family\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/family) 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
<b>Food</b>	£315	£545
<b>Accommodation</b>	£825	£990
<b>Personal items</b>	£160	£310
<b>Social activities</b>	£50	£130
<b>Study costs</b>	£35	£90
<b>Other</b>	£20	£40
<b>Total</b>	£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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