

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: MSc in Educational Assessment



Course facts

Mode of study	Part Time Only
Expected length	2 years

About the course

The MSc in Educational Assessment is a two-year, part-time professional development course aimed at researchers and professionals working in the field of educational assessment, including in awarding bodies, test agencies, schools and universities.

High-quality educational assessment is recognised as a core element of a strong education system. In the compulsory elements of this MSc, you will study the history of educational assessment, the different paradigms that underpin approaches to assessment (psychometric, curriculum-embedded and outcomes based), debates regarding key concepts such as validity and fairness, and approaches to assessment design and evaluation, and how to use research synthesis techniques to develop policy and practice.

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.

This course includes three core modules. In the optional element, you will study a specialist topic such as research methods to investigate educational assessment issues or classroom-based assessment. Throughout the MSc, you will be supported to develop your technical and statistical skills.

The course combines a number of residential teaching sessions within the department and online support through the University's Virtual Learning Environment (Canvas).

Each of the four papers will comprise eight teaching sessions that include lectures, seminars and practicals, and a small-group tutorial. The student cohort come from a range of professional backgrounds, from around the world, making group discussions rich and diverse.

For each paper, you will be expected to spend approximately 64 hours during non-residential times for the preparation of the papers and the formative pre-paper assignments.

In the second year of the course you will receive supervision of dissertation projects from a University supervisor with expertise in a particular subject. The topic of the dissertation is selected in consultation with a supervisor, and must be relevant to the course. In consultation with your supervisors and employers, dissertation work may be informed by activity in employment.

Research in the department is organised around three major themes:

- Language, Cognition and Development
- Policy, Economy and Society
- Learning: Pedagogy, Learning and Knowledge.

Within each of these themes there are several research groups and centres. All staff and doctoral students belong to one or more of these research groups, each of which has its own seminar programme to which graduate students often contribute. In addition, the department as a whole sponsors regular seminars and public lectures which attract distinguished national and international speakers.

Attendance

This course is part-time. You will be required to attend a number of residential teaching sessions in Oxford during the course including one week in Michaelmas term, one week in Hilary term and two weeks in Trinity term.

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.

As the MSc is a part-time course for researchers and professionals, the department takes pride in providing high quality IT support for your learning when you are away from Oxford. This includes the University's Virtual Learning Environment (Canvas) where resources such as recorded lectures, activities, reading lists and links to external online resources are provided. If you wish to work in the department when you are visiting Oxford, there is a computer room with desks which also has points for personal laptop computers.

The Bodleian Education Library, located at the centre of the Department of Education, specialises in material on education and related fields. As well as a print collection of books, journals and statistics, the library provides access to a wide range of electronic resources. The library also houses a collection of teaching resources, primarily in support of subjects covered by the department's secondary PGCE course. The Social Sciences Library provides valuable additional resource to students pursuing programmes in the Department of Education.

Supervision

Specialist supervision will be arranged for students writing their dissertation. Each student will have the opportunity to meet with a supervisor who provides academic guidance, oversees the progress and supervises work for the dissertation.

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Department of Education 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 Department of Education.

Students have the opportunity to receive regular contact with their supervisor throughout the academic year. Some of this contact is likely to be by email. However, as a minimum, students are also encouraged to organise at least two virtual meetings with their supervisor in each term.

Assessment

In the first year students will complete four modules each assessed by coursework, in the form of submitted essays or reports. In the final term of the second year, the dissertation will be assessed via a submitted report.

The Department of Education will undertake a comprehensive review of its assessment methods during the 2025–26 academic year, taking into account recent developments in Artificial Intelligence. As a result, some assessment methods may be subject to change. Applicants and offer-holders will be informed of the revised approach to assessment prior to starting the course.

Course components

Compulsory study

The three core modules are:

- Assessment Issues and Practices
- Assessment Design and Evaluation
- Research synthesis for development of policy and practice.

You must also submit a dissertation in your second year of study. The topic of the dissertation is selected in consultation with a supervisor, and must be relevant to the course.

Options

You will study a specialist topic such as research methods to investigate educational assessment issues or classroom-based assessment.

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	£9,485
Overseas	£18,085

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 teaching, and you may incur additional travel and accommodation expenses for this. The average cost of a hotel room in Oxford is around £150 per night, although the price will vary depending on the type of accommodation, time of year and day of the week. You should also factor in costs for meals during your 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 (transport, accommodation, meals), 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. Many students complete their projects in their regular places of work and so incur no extra costs. 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](#)

(<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs>), (if [visitor visa eligibility criteria](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs) (<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](https://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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