

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: MSc in Modern South Asian Studies



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	9 months

About the course

The MSc in Modern South Asian Studies is a nine month, taught master's course, offered jointly by the Oxford School of Global and Area Studies (OSGA) and the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

You will study this important region, with its rich history and its complex present-day societies, from a number of disciplinary and analytical perspectives, culminating in a thesis.

The MSc in Modern South Asian Studies is an exciting degree bringing together Oxford's wealth of expertise on South Asia in a single course. You will receive rigorous training in one of two tailored modules in research methods, and subject to timetabling and demand, may have the opportunity to build in Hindi, Urdu, Classical Hindi/Hindavi, Persian, Gujarati, Bengali, Marathi or other language training. You may pursue any combination of interests, including history, literature, language, religion, economy and interstate relations.

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 MSc course comprises five components: the core course, a module in research methods, two option papers and the thesis. For much of the course, you will work alongside those taking the 21 month [MPhil in Modern South Asian Studies](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/mphil-modern-south-asian-studies) (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/mphil-modern-south-asian-studies>). You will experience a variety of teaching modes, including lectures, seminars, classes, student presentations, and small group teaching.

Students with at least an intermediate or colloquial knowledge of any South Asian language also have the opportunity to take language training either continuing at an advanced level, to develop reading skills to attain a research proficiency, or beginning a new language. Students interested in taking Persian, either at advanced or beginner level, are asked to mention this in their personal statement.

During the course of Michaelmas term, you will select a topic for your thesis and you will be appointed a thesis supervisor. You will be required to gather relevant materials for your thesis during the course, usually by working in libraries and archives in the UK but potentially also via fieldwork. Applicants are advised to consider the research interests of relevant faculty teaching on the course and to choose a topic where appropriate supervision can be provided. Applicants with a research interest in art history should note that supervision is only available for research that relates specifically to items held in the Ashmolean's collection.

The MSc is jointly taught by staff within the Social Science and Humanities Divisions, who will also assess your application. The application process is administered by the Oxford School of Global and Area Studies. Since the MSc is taught jointly by staff across multiple departments, students will be part of a large community of teachers, researchers and students with interests in South Asia.

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>) at Oxford.

You will have access to the libraries, study spaces, common rooms and IT facilities of the Oxford School of Global and Area Studies, and of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, as well as to the social and networking events organised by these two university centres.

The Bodleian Libraries offer unparalleled library and archive facilities for South Asia, including one of the richest collections of official archival materials on South Asia in the UK. The main reference collection is accessed via the Charles Wendell David Reading Room at the Weston Library. Other important open shelf collections can be found in the Upper Camera, the Nizami Ganjavi Library and the Social Science Library. Students may access other Bodleian Libraries sites as necessary.

Oxford also offers a wealth of resources for the study of South Asian art and material culture. The Ashmolean Museum contains collections encompassing art from the Islamic world, the Indian subcontinent and South-East Asia. The Pitt Rivers Museum holds important collections of ethnographic material from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Tibet, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The Museum of the History of Science houses an unrivalled collection of historic scientific instruments, including astrolabes and other instruments, with Persian, Arabic or Sanskrit inscriptions, manufactured by artisans in India.

In addition to the faculties and departments who share in teaching for the MSc, Oxford contains outstanding collegiate centres for study and research in relation to South Asia and its many regions, at Somerville College and St Antony's College. Research seminars at these collegiate centres are open to all students.

Supervision

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

All students are assigned a general supervisor at the start of term, who is usually a member of the core teaching staff on the MSc in Modern South Asian Studies. The role of the general supervisor is to guide you through your course of study. If your research interests fall outside the expertise of your general supervisor, they will assist you in identifying appropriate expertise within the University, and help you approach suitable scholars for supervision.

Depending on the range of your research interests, therefore, it is possible for you to have more than one supervisor - a general supervisor who oversees your general academic progress, and a different supervisor for your thesis. Your supervisor(s) will discuss your progress, and answer any questions before you submit assessed work. Supervision for the thesis will be offered as a series of individual meetings between you and your thesis supervisor, who will read one draft of your thesis provided this is submitted by the deadline.

In the case of students who require specific help to adjust to an academic programme or to a new range of skills, the supervisor will work with them to ensure that they have additional support.

Assessment

In order to receive the MSc degree, you must obtain pass marks in all five assessment components:

1. Research Methods (comprising two assignments, one in Michaelmas and one in Hilary term)
2. Core Course Essay (submitted at the beginning of Trinity term)
3. Option 1
4. Option 2
5. Thesis (submitted by Friday of week 6 of Trinity term)

In addition to this, students are required to undertake formative assessment (essays, presentations etc) throughout the course.

Course components

Compulsory study

All students attend the core course, introducing modern South Asia across the disciplines. Delivered by faculty members with a range of specialisations, the course explores both individual states within the region and the connections and comparisons between them.

You will receive training in research methods through one of the following specially tailored programmes:

- research methods for area studies, both qualitative and quantitative

- research methods in humanities, including qualitative methods in literature, language and history.

For parts of the research methods course, you will be taught alongside those studying for other MSc and MPhil courses offered by the Oxford School of Global and Area Studies, as well as doctoral students, opening up further possibilities for interdisciplinary learning and exchange.

You will also submit a final thesis.

Options

You will also choose two papers from a list of available options:

- International Relations of South Asia
- Trade and Exchange in South Asia: Transcultural Objects, Relations and Identities
- The Anthropology of South Asia
- Advanced language (for students who already have a grounding in a South Asian language). Languages offered include: Hindi (elementary); Literary Hindi; Urdu Prose Texts; Classical Hindi/Hindavi; and, subject to availability and demand, Bengali (elementary or classical); Gujarati (elementary or classical); Marathi (elementary or classical); Persian (elementary or advanced - subject to timetabling) Please note that options will change from time to time, and not all will be run every year.

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	£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, please note that, depending on your choice of research 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
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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