

## Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: MSc in Education (Higher Education)



### Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	12 months

### About the course

The MSc in Education (Higher Education) is aimed at future academic, policy, and practitioner leaders in higher education. It provides an introduction to research, theory, and policy, considering national, international and global lenses.

During this full-time course, you will have the opportunity to consider a wide range of issues that higher education systems, and, more broadly, tertiary education systems, around the world are facing today. These include:

- the social and economic contributions of higher education (HE)
- graduate employment and employability
- access and widening participation
- equity and social and epistemic justice
- fees and funding
- student mobility
- 'research on research'
- the relationship between HE and vocational and technical education and training
- institutional governance
- rankings.

Teaching sessions will combine tutor input, class discussion, and working in small groups in order to examine these key issues and the discourses that shape them.

### 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.

You will study three core papers in the first two terms which consider a wide range of policy issues across higher education systems and the role higher education plays in the economy and society from theoretical, historical and empirical perspectives. Academic staff will also present their own recent research findings, ensuring that the course content reflects live debates at the cutting edge of the field of higher education studies.

In addition to these three pathway-specific core papers, two core papers in research methods will develop your understanding of key concepts and principles of educational research design and methodology, using quantitative and qualitative methods and data. You will benefit from the expertise available through the Qualitative Methods Hub and the Quantitative Methods Hub at the Department of Education.

You will also choose one assessed option paper in the second term, from a selection offered by academic staff across the department.

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 seminars and public lectures which attract distinguished national and international speakers.

### 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 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

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Department of Education. This will be done on the basis of the topic of research and the availability of individual supervisors. It is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff. However, the HE teaching team have experience of supervising an extensive range of topics in higher education studies. Under exceptional circumstances a supervisor may be found outside the Department of Education.

You will work directly with a supervisor on your dissertation through one-to-one meetings throughout the academic year. You should expect 10 hours of supervision throughout the year.

## Assessment

The five core modules and one option module are currently assessed by coursework. You will also submit a dissertation on a topic that you have selected that has been approved by your supervisor.

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 five core modules are:

- Higher Education: Systems, Structures and Institutions
- Higher Education in the Economy and Society
- Global Higher Education
- Foundations of Educational Research 1: Concepts and Design
- Foundations of Educational Research 2: Strategies and Methods

### Options

You will also choose one assessed option paper in the second term, from a selection offered by academic staff across the department. The following list provides an indication of modules usually available (this is not a guarantee of availability for any particular option in a given year):

- Core Principles of Child Assessment
- Critical Digital Innovation
- Education in Africa
- Education, the Internet and Society
- Intermediate Quantitative Research
- Qualitative Research
- The Implementation of the Rights of Children.

## 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](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/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](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-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	£18,970
Overseas	£40,710

### 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 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 (transport, accommodation, meals), 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 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

If you require a more accessible version of this document please [contact Graduate Admissions and Recruitment by email \(graduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk\)](mailto:graduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk).