

## Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: MSc in Economic and Social History



### Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	11 months

### About the course

The MSc in Economic and Social History is a taught one-year course at Oxford. It combines core training in historical methods with options in economic history, social history, and demography, culminating in an independent research project.

Economic and Social History is the study of economic activities, institutional change, and social organisation in the historical past. It encompasses a range of methods and topics but typically studies the past using social scientific rather than humanities-focused approaches.

The MSc in Economics and History offers a wide range of options and allows you to specialise in economic and/or social history, or historical demography, although the boundaries between these areas are deliberately permeable. It is intended to introduce you to the wide variety of methods used in the study of economic and social history, as well as to the subject itself.

The explicitly interdisciplinary nature of this MSc means that the History Faculty collaborates with other divisions and departments within the University. The MSc in Economic and Social History is a joint enterprise involving both the Faculty of History and the Department of Economics.

History research at Oxford stretches from around c. 300 to the present and embraces an exceptionally broad geographical range. It comprises an active research community of up to 800 academics and graduate students.

The MSc in Economic and Social History can be taken as a free-standing degree or used as a springboard to doctoral study. If you wish to apply for the DPhil following the MSc, you will be encouraged to develop your doctoral proposal during the first few months of the course, so that you will be well placed to make doctoral applications.

### 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 course comprises two compulsory core courses, two option courses, and a research project.

The two core courses provide an opportunity to evaluate a range of different qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches; they impart a common language, and create a close and friendly community, in which ideas are shared, and strong personal ties are forged, developing a community that provides a base from which to venture out and experience the intellectual, social and cultural rewards of Oxford.

For the option courses, you will take two advanced papers, usually taught in small classes, mostly during Hilary term.

You will work on an original research project on a topic of your choice, approved by your supervisor.

The faculty's research is organised around historical periods, research centres, or in collaborative and individual research projects, and graduates are key participants in the wide range of seminars, workshops and conferences run by the History Faculty.

Further opportunities for exchange are provided by the interdisciplinary communities fostered within individual colleges, which also offer dedicated support for graduates by means of personal advisors. [The Oxford Centre for Research in the Humanities \(TORCH\)](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/) (<http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/>), offers a stimulating range of interdisciplinary activities. You are also encouraged to join the [Oxford History Graduate Network \(OHGN\)](https://www.history.ox.ac.uk/oxford-history-graduate-network) (<https://www.history.ox.ac.uk/oxford-history-graduate-network>), which fosters friendships, conversations and collaboration.

### Attendance

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

You are also able to draw on the specialist resources offered by the Bodleian History Faculty Library which provides dedicated support and training courses for all graduates. They also have access to the many college libraries and to college archives which can house significant collections of personal papers as well as institutional records dating back to the middle ages.

## Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Faculty of History and it is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff. Offers will only be made if appropriate supervision is available.

It is usual practice that MSc students have one supervisor, but a co-supervisor will be appointed if additional specialist knowledge is required. For degrees in Economic and Social History, one supervisor must be a permanent member of the History Faculty or department of Economics.

Your supervisor(s) is there to provide advice, guidance, and support throughout your MSc. You should arrange to meet your supervisor(s) early in your first term to establish a clear framework for your research and writing, and identify any skills training needed to undertake your research. There is no set timetable for the frequency of future meetings, but it is recommended that you arrange to meet your supervisor several times a term, to discuss progress of your research and writing. You should also agree a timetable for the submission and return of drafts of your dissertation.

## Assessment

The first core course, What happened and why, is evaluated by essay, submitted in Hilary term. The second core course, Quantitative Methods, is evaluated by assignment, submitted in Hilary term.

For the two advanced option papers, assessment varies but is normally by timed examination, or by submitted extended essay.

The research project is examined by a 15,000-word dissertation, submitted at the beginning of Trinity term.

All MSc students and first-year MPhil students in Economic and Social History are required to make a presentation of their dissertation research at the Annual Graduate Workshop in Economic and Social History held in the first week of the Trinity term.

## Course components

### Compulsory study

#### 1. What happened and Why

An introduction to themes and approaches in economic and social history, focusing on social sciences methodologies and approaches, and taught through a series of lectures and parallel classes during Michaelmas term.

#### 2. Quantitative methods

You can take either the standard or advanced course in quantitative methods, depending on your previous statistical and/or econometric training.

The standard course is a simple and very informal introduction to elementary quantitative methods covering some of the techniques most widely used in research in the historical and social sciences and emphasising the relevance of the historical issues. No prior knowledge of mathematics or statistical theory is expected.

The advanced course is intended for students who have already been introduced to some form of quantitative methods, with the first few sessions serving as a refresher course in elementary quantitative methods. The course aims to ensure that you

are aware of the range of quantitative techniques available for analysing problems in economic and social history. You will be taught how to use a number of popular statistical and econometric packages.

Teaching sessions will involve computer classwork. Under certain circumstances, very accomplished students may undertake a more advanced statistics paper from elsewhere in the University, such as the MPhil in Economics.

### Research Project

You will work on an original research project on a topic of your choice, approved by your supervisor. You will agree the title with your supervisor in Michaelmas term of year one, and work on it throughout year.

### Options

You will take two advanced papers, usually taught in small classes, mostly during Hilary term. Examples of recent courses include:

- History of Economic Thought
- International Money and Finance after 1945
- Social and Cultural Change in France 1600 – 1720
- Topics in African Economic History.

Please note that not every option listed may be on offer every year, depending in part on levels of student demand.

### 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	£19,150
Overseas	£43,730

### 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

In addition, as part of your course requirements, you may need to choose a dissertation, project or thesis topic. Depending on your choice of topic and the research required to complete a dissertation, you may incur additional expenses, such as travel expenses, research expenses, equipment, materials and field trips. These costs will vary according to the location and length of the research. You will need to meet these additional costs yourself, although you may be able to apply for small grants from the department. 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**

	<b>Lower range</b>	<b>Upper range</b>
<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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