

## Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: MSc in Surgical Science and Practice



### Course facts

Mode of study	Part Time Only
Expected length	2 to 4 years

### About the course

The MSc in Surgical Science and Practice is a part-time modular programme which attracts healthcare professionals from around the world and is completed over two to four years.

Please note that this course is currently delivered in collaboration by Oxford Lifelong Learning and Nuffield Department of Surgical Science. A department transfer, for the course to be delivered solely by Nuffield Department of Surgical Science from 2026/27, is currently progressing through the approval processes within the University. If you have any queries regarding this please contact the course administrator (See *Further information and enquiries*).

The taught component of the course comprises six modules, spaced over the year and each a week long, with teaching taking place in person in Oxford. A research project carried out over the course of a year completes the masters. It is usually a work-based project and is supported by an Oxford supervisor.

The modular nature of the course allows you to fit study around your work and the majority of students have full- or part-time clinical roles.

Run in collaboration with Oxford's Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences, the MSc is designed for trainees and consultants in surgical disciplines as well as practitioners of other clinical disciplines interested in better understanding the systems within which they practice and increasing their effectiveness working in those systems. It particularly appeals to those who wish to develop a further dimension to their role, such as a leadership position, academic, teaching or research role, as well as those taking their career in new directions.

The aim of the course is to give you a strong foundation in the most important non-clinical skills you will need to be effective and to lead others in providing safe, high quality, high reliability care. It will prepare you for life as an independent specialist, building skills and knowledge which are not fully represented or are omitted from graduate training curricula. Alumni of the course have used the MSc as a platform to:

- Lead larger teams and take on greater organisational responsibility
- Carry out significant quality improvement initiatives and introduce innovations in practice
- Conduct and publish research
- Take on new leadership and academic roles, either alongside continuing clinical responsibilities or as a new direction in their career
- Develop new educational programmes and training methods

You can read about how some recent graduates have applied what they learned in the student profiles section of the department's website.

Healthcare professionals work as part of multi-disciplinary teams in complex organisations. Thus the syllabus covers leadership, teamwork, management skills, quality improvement and patient safety, development and implementation of new technologies and procedures, principles of educating clinicians and how to appraise evidence to answer clinical questions. Students completing the course will have developed the skills and knowledge to:

- Apply the principles of human factors and ergonomics to understand error in healthcare and design practices that maximise safety and reliability
- Critically appraise clinical evidence and assess its validity and relevance to your practice, including assessing the case for changing diagnostic and therapeutic protocols
- Analyse and improve clinical care pathways and settings of care using quality improvement science and systems analysis methods
- Understand how to develop and implement innovations in healthcare including creating business plans and business cases for your own area of practice
- Develop further as a mentor and educator, understand the practical implications of theories of how adults learn and explore the principles and practices that underpin being an effective and inspiring supervisor
- Understand principles of leading a team, practices that foster a culture of effective teamwork, and skills for influencing other departments and organisational priorities
- Understand the organisational dynamics in healthcare, including financial flows and management systems, and what this means for exerting influence as a clinician

A more detailed description of the course curriculum can be found on the department's website.

## Course structure

An overview of the course structure is provided below. Details of the compulsory elements of the course are provided in the *Course components* section of this page.

The MSc in Surgical Science and Practice is organised around six compulsory week-long modules, plus a work-based research project written up as a dissertation. The programme is normally completed in two or three years, but up to four years can be taken. Students are full members of the University of Oxford and are matriculated as members of an Oxford college.

An important and perhaps unique feature of the course is that the modules can be studied in any order and, as each module runs once a year, you can individualise your pattern of study by choosing which modules to attend in each year of your enrolment.

Each module comprises a period of preparatory study of around four weeks), a week of intensive in-person teaching, followed by a period for assignment work of around six weeks.

In the four weeks running up to each taught week you should expect to dedicate 4-6 hours per week to preparatory reading and activities, accessed via the course's dedicated virtual learning environment (VLE) which also provides support and resources between modules.

The taught week is full-time for five days and involves seminar-style teaching, group work, class discussions, guest lectures and interaction with tutors and lecturers. The taught weeks include practical activities to develop skills including at facilities elsewhere in the University, and beyond, including a dedicated simulation centre and a robotic surgery training facility. Optional evening social activities are organised by students.

Students on the Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) in Patient Safety and Quality Improvement attend some of the MSc modules, in particular the Quality Improvement and Human Factors modules. PGCert students have a range of backgrounds including nurses, allied healthcare professionals and managers as well as doctors. This mix reflects the healthcare workplace and enriches classroom discussions.

In the six weeks following each taught week you should expect to dedicate 10-15 hours per week to researching and writing your module assignment. This is an opportunity to explore areas of particular interest in more depth, and to apply what you have learned your work setting.

The modular nature of the course and the ability to take modules in any order allows you to individualise your pattern of study, including the intensity of study, so long as the course is completed in a maximum of four years. Some examples of patterns of study:

- A. Years 1 and 2: 3 taught modules in each year. Year 3: supervised research project and dissertation. Total duration: 3 years.
- B. Year 1: 4 taught modules. Year 2: 2 taught modules. Year 3: supervised research project and dissertation. Total duration: 3 years.
- C. Year 1: 5 taught modules. Year 2: 1 taught module and supervised research project and dissertation. Total duration: 2 years.
- D. Years 1, 2 and 3: 2 taught modules in each year. Year 4: supervised research project and dissertation. Total duration: 4 years.

## Attendance

This course is part-time. You will be required to attend a week of face-to-face teaching in Oxford for each module. Dates of modules for the current or coming academic year can be found on the department's website. Modules usually run at a similar time each year.

## 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 department provides various [IT facilities \(https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/about/online-support\)](https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/about/online-support), including the Student Computing Facility which provides individual PCs for your use.

## Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences and allocation will usually be performed by the Course Director.

It is sometimes 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 Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences.

## Assessment

To complete the MSc in Surgical Science and Practice, you will need to:

- attend the six compulsory modules which are taught in person in Oxford;
- undertake and pass an assessed assignment for each module; *and*
- after attending all six modules, complete and pass an assessed dissertation based on a work-based research project that will relate to the material studied in the taught modules.

The assignments help you develop and demonstrate your growing knowledge and understanding of the subject areas covered and will provide you with the opportunity to develop your analytical, critical appraisal, and logical thinking skills. The assignments are an opportunity to apply what you have learned to your own work setting or practice, helping you translate classroom learning to your own context.

You will need to be able to write a good standard of academic English to pass the assessments. For those that require a refresher, the Oxford Lifelong Learning offers a 10 week, online course to refresh and improve reading, note-making and essay-writing skills.

You will be given written feedback on each of the assignments you submit, intended to help you continue to develop your critical appraisal and academic writing skills.

- managing surgical/healthcare units and leading surgical/healthcare team
- leading initiatives, such as quality improvement or a new pathway/ procedure
- undertaking surgical and clinical research
- embarking upon an academic career pathway
- becoming a clinical educator.

## Course components

### Compulsory study

Taught by experts in their field, the modules in this course can also be taken as individual standalone courses:

- Becoming a Clinical Educator
- Human Factors, Teamwork and Communication
- Leadership and Management in Health Care
- Quality Improvement Science and Systems Analysis
- Healthcare Innovation and Technology
- Practice of Evidence-Based Health Care.

For detailed information about each module, [please refer to the course page \(https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/about/msc-in-surgical-science-and-practice#Programme%20details\)](https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/about/msc-in-surgical-science-and-practice#Programme%20details), on the department's website.

## 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-](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and)

contract regarding changes to courses.

## Costs

### Modular course fees

The fees for this course are charged on a modular basis. You will pay an annual course fee and an additional fee for each module studied. A minimum of two annual course fees are payable for this course. If this course includes a dissertation, three module fees will be charged for the dissertation.

### Fees for the 2026-27 academic year

Fee status	Annual Course Fee	Fee per module	Total estimated fees
Home	£2,325	£2,905	Please see the department's website for <a href="https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/about/msc-in-surgical-science-and-practice">further details</a>
Overseas	£10,965	£2,905	( <a href="https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/about/msc-in-surgical-science-and-practice">https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/about/msc-in-surgical-science-and-practice</a> ).

### 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](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract) (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract>).

Our [fees and other charges](https://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](https://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](https://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](https://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](https://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 a minimum 15 days per year, and you may incur additional travel and accommodation expenses for this. Accommodation costs in Oxford can start at around £98 per night in a college or around £120 in a hotel (single rate). Students should also factor in costs for meals during their 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, such as travel or accommodation expenses, or research (eg data access) or laboratory expenses. These costs will vary according to the project undertaken and location of study but the Department estimates these may cost between £200 and £2000. 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 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/students/new/contract/graduate-course-information-sheets/2026-27-entry)

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