

## Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: MSc in Sustainability, Enterprise and the Environment



### Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	12 months

### About the course

The MSc in Sustainability, Enterprise and the Environment is a taught course addressing climate and development challenges through economics, finance, and science, equipping students to lead the transition to a zero-carbon, sustainable future.

The course addresses two pervasive and unmet challenges of our time: making the transition to a zero-carbon and environmentally sustainable economic model, whilst simultaneously enabling sustainable development for all. The MSc views these challenges through the lenses of finance, economics and enterprise – both public and private – whilst also leveraging the environmental, systems, and data sciences.

The MSc will equip current and future thought-leaders and decision-makers with the rigorous academic knowledge and applied skills needed to understand and accelerate the transition to a zero-carbon, environmentally sustainable economic model.

The objectives of the MSc are three-fold:

1. Develop a critical understanding of the nature, drivers and trajectories of climate change and economic development.
2. Examine the role of enterprise and its relationship to environmental and development challenges across a range of risks, technological innovations, investment opportunities and policy responses.
3. Enable students to integrate and apply their interdisciplinary knowledge, advanced methodological skills and science-policy-enterprise network to foster innovation and scalable progress toward net zero and sustainable development.

The Programme Learning Outcomes of the MSc will equip students with knowledge, skills and networks to understand:

- the nature, science and trajectories of the net zero and sustainable development challenge (NZSD)
- the scope and limits of innovation and the different roles of enterprise – public and private - in effective responses to NZSD
- the data and methods required to measure progress to NZSD and attribute impact, and a critical appreciation of data
- the economic frameworks, methods and tools to apply to measure the NZSD problem and accelerate progress towards it
- the broad range of socio-technical drivers that can accelerate progress to NZSD
- the theory and practice of sustainable finance and investment, and how to engage with sector stakeholders
- the drivers reshaping economical social and environmental relationships
- the scope for markets to spur conservation and investment.

In addition, the course aims to equip graduates with a range of person and professional skills; in particular, leadership competencies.

The course caters for – and is intentionally designed for – a wide range of life and career stages: just-finished undergraduates, recent graduates and early- to mid-career professionals. It combines directed teaching, self-regulated learning, structured engagement, formal assessment, and regular interaction with practitioners.

The course objectives are addressed through ten core modules, two electives and a dissertation.

### 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.

Teaching takes place through lectures, seminars, workshops and field trips, which provide in-depth exploration of key issues. The elective modules offer a tutorial-style teaching and discussion environment in smaller groups. Teaching is delivered by core faculty from the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment and School of Geography and the Environment - as well as from other departments across the University - and guest lecturers from enterprise, including some of the Smith School's Business Fellows.

The course is structured across three terms, following a progression from broad-based concepts and skills to increasing application and engagement.

- Nature and sources of climate emergency and development challenges, including scientific underpinnings and conceptual building blocks aimed at framing and understanding the problems and trade-offs posed by NZSD: Michaelmas term.
- Integrated assessment of potential solutions and pathways, offering applications and solutions: Hilary term.
- Implementation of knowledge and solutions through the enterprise forum and dissertation preparation: Trinity term.

Training in qualitative and quantitative methods, data and research design and research skills will help you to develop transferable skills, carry out independent and original research and master methods used widely in academic and professional research. This will also form part of work towards a final course dissertation by all students.

The course aims to equip students with knowledge, skills and networks to understand and accelerate NZSD. As such, the theme of achieving impact runs through all course modules, and is integrated in a number of specific ways:

- The enterprise forum will run in parallel with the core modules throughout course. It will form the focal point for engagement with enterprise, and will give students the chance to work with enterprise from the outset and put their learnings into practice, bringing to life the key concepts explored in the core modules. The enterprise forum will include leadership skills development, mentorship, and case-based learning, as well as being an incubator for dissertations. The enterprise forum will also be a standing feature of weekly course meetings, providing a roadmap for the field trips, group projects and dissertation research involving enterprise partners
- Regular guest lectures from enterprise partners will complement the core modules, and enterprise partners will help to identify and possibly participate in dissertation projects
- Weekly business case workshops
- The course will involve practicums with partners in public and private enterprise, such as innovative workshops, hackathons and related activities
- Field trips will explore the role of enterprise in tackling the NZSD challenges. Two one-day trips will take place in each of Michaelmas and Hilary terms. An induction field trip will also take place in Michaelmas term introduction week. In addition, a field trip at the end of Hilary term will be a week-long capstone, where students will visit a selected region to connect individual companies and their supply chains in order to bring to life key concepts and enable students to apply their learning.

Research skills' training is provided in preparation for your dissertation. As well as developing an understanding of the research process, these sessions will cover such things as social surveys, data analysis and statistical techniques.

Throughout the course, field trips and visits to external organisations support the lectures and seminars and deliver valuable skills training.

## 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 University of Oxford has an extensive library system and the Radcliffe Science Library is the main lending service within the University for the material required for the course. The Social Sciences Library also holds collections which are valuable for you if you are pursuing a geography programme.

There is a dedicated social space for MSc students where you can meet and discuss your studies. Where appropriate, you will be able to use the departmental laboratories for your dissertation research.

## Supervision

The course has an Academic Director and a Course Director who looks after the day to day running of the course. You will have a personal advisor who is a member of the School's academic staff and who provides academic welfare support.

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the School of Geography and the Environment (SoGE) 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 School of Geography and the Environment.

Dissertation supervision will equate to approximately eight hours in total per student, in line with SoGE guidelines. As such, it is likely that a student will meet with their supervisor at a minimum once a fortnight or most likely once a week. The frequency of supervision meetings will likely change depending on the stage of the dissertation that the student is at and their unique needs. Supervision meetings will commence late in Hilary Term and conclude at the end of Trinity term.

The Course Director will work closely with each student to try and match their theoretical and contextual interests with an appropriate supervisor. Regarding differences between part-time and full-time versions of the course and according adjustments to supervisor arrangements, this does not apply as the MSc is only offered on a full-time basis. For any students doing the MSc alongside an MBA as part of the 1+1 programme, any necessary adjustments to supervision will be made.

## Assessment

Assessments will consist of either written examination and/or coursework which may include written and/or oral tasks. You will also be assessed on your individual dissertation, which will have been produced independently and contain original work.

- By connecting science and enterprise for academic excellence: The MSc in Sustainability, Enterprise and the Environment is at the intersection of research on economics, finance and governance, leveraging interdisciplinary science. The course will be anchored in theoretical and methodological innovations to understand and respond to challenges at an applied level.
- Through direct practitioner knowledge within core teaching staff.
- Focus on outcomes through the enterprise forum and business case seminar series

## Course components

### Compulsory study

The course objectives are addressed through three core courses:

- Transitions from Net Zero and Sustainable Development
- Economics, Markets and Society for Sustainability
- Enterprise, Finance and the Environment

The core courses are delivered through ten teaching modules, as listed below. You will also take two electives and submit a dissertation.

### Climate Change and Net Zero

- Define and situate the concept of net-zero and related terms
- Understand the nature, drivers and trajectories of climate change and analyse mitigation strategies
- Analyse the interdependencies between ecological, social and economic systems in getting to net zero

### Sustainable Enterprise

- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the role of private enterprise (business) as a cause of – but also solution to – social and environmental challenges
- Summarise the ideas of shareholder-primacy vis-a-vis stakeholder views of business, and relate these ideas to the concepts of sustainability; corporate social responsibility (CSR); triple bottom line; Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG); social licence to operate; legitimacy; and business ethics
- Understand and apply key concepts pertaining to business structure, strategy and organisational change
- Understand key concepts pertaining to human behaviour that explain interactions, interests and incentive drives in organisations and society

### Economics of Sustainability

- Identify the limitations of conventional economic models for addressing NZSD
- Become comfortable using analytical frameworks that capture multiple equilibria, coordination, complementarities, lock-in, path dependence, and tipping points
- Draw insights from complex datasets such as patent, social, and export networks
- Acquire the ability to go from real-world problems with these features to possible solutions

### Spaces, Infrastructure and Technology for Net Zero and Sustainable Development

- Understand and contextualise disruptive drivers that are re-shaping economic, social and environmental relationships
- Engage critically with these issues through the lens of infrastructure and technology and debate the implications of globalization and urbanization for NZSD
- Develop an applied understanding of constructive responses to these disruptive drivers

### Methods and Data

- Critically analyse the role of the scientific method of inquiry in the production of knowledge and evaluate how and why scientific data is used by different actors within society
- Understand and apply qualitative and quantitative methods to measure progress and attribute impact pertaining to NZSD
- Comprehend the strengths, weaknesses and limitations of different methodological approaches and demonstrate sound judgement in selecting and applying the optimal approach to the given context
- Apply a critical lens to data and data-driven methods – including biases – and analyse how data is used in decision-making pertaining to NZSD

### **Sustainable Finance**

- Develop sufficient understanding to navigate and critically analyse the key aspects and developments in sustainable finance and investment
- Engage critically with systems and theories in sustainable finance and investment
- Consider how to translate knowledge into strategies for effective engagement with the financial sector

### **Socio-technical Interventions and Sustainable Law**

- Compare and critique frameworks for contextualising, understanding, and applying the dynamics of socio- technical transitions and interventions that might drive and accelerate change towards net zero sustainable development
- Engage critically with this goal through the lens of understanding the speed of transition possible in each of the socio-technical frontiers of policymaking, finance, law, behaviours and norms, and technologies, and understand their potential for cascading interaction
- Identify and constructively stimulate interventions in each of these socio-technical frontiers to drive sustainable decarbonisation, and critically analyse the strengths, weaknesses, and trade-offs of different approaches
- Engage in benchmarking and comparative exercises, through case studies, to critically analyse both successful and less successful transitions and interventions and derive practical takeaways from their example

### **Business Strategy for Sustainability**

- Identify and compare approaches of companies to developing strategies for sustainability
- Analyse and apply a range of frameworks to improve strategic approaches to sustainability in a variety of contexts
- Formulate and critique arguments about the potential for business to contribute positively to addressing sustainability challenges.

### **Natural Capital, Markets and Society**

- Identify the causes and consequences of institutional and market failures to value and manage natural capital
- Understand and compare different models of governing natural capital and identify strengths and weaknesses of different types across a range of contexts
- Learn and apply methods for designing and evaluating natural capital markets and institutions, whilst leveraging and integrating relevant natural science and technical knowledge
- Examine and debate case studies of valuing and managing natural capital across climate, energy, water, food and biodiversity

### **Water, Inequalities and Social Enterprise**

- Introduce social theory and methods related to social inequalities and water risks
- Examine and evaluate methods, concepts and frameworks in the context of water-related enterprise
- Explore processes shaping international and national discourse and debates related to sustainable development goals
- Apply methods, concepts and frameworks to case study material on how water inequalities interact with natural science perspectives and water management practices

### **Dissertation**

An independent and original dissertation (15,000 words) is an integral component of the course and enables students to translate their foundational and applied knowledge to a context/challenge related to enterprise and NZSD. Training in qualitative and quantitative methods, data and research design and research skills will help you to develop transferable skills, carry out independent and original research and master methods used widely in academic and professional research.

### **Options**

You will take two electives. Electives will be selected from a list of options available across the School of Geography and the Environment. The available electives vary from year to year. In recent years, the choice has included:

- Decolonising Conservation
- A Global South Perspective on Climate Change and Climate Justice
- Economics of Innovation and New Technologies
- Extractive compromises in the Ecuadorian Amazon
- Animal Geographies
- Climate Change, Communication and the Media

- Energy and the Environment
- Human-Wildlife Conflict and Coexistence: Theory and Practice

## 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) (<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) (<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	£31,280
Overseas	£48,820

### 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 will need to complete a dissertation as a compulsory 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 to a field location and research expenses for equipment. These costs will vary according to the type of research. Some dissertations will use online data sources and there may be no additional costs beyond fees and living costs. If you choose to undertake research in the field, you may incur expenses in the range of £300-£1,500 or more. 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

	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

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