

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: MSc in Sociology



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time	Part Time
Expected length	12 months	2 years

About the course

The MSc in Sociology is a taught course offering advanced training in sociological theory and research methods, with options like gender, political sociology, and social stratification, culminating in a dissertation based on original research.

The course is a one-year master's degree if studying full-time, or two years for part-time students. You will receive high-quality research training in sociology, which includes knowledge of relevant theoretical approaches, an understanding of their application to substantive problems and skills in the use of major research techniques.

There is also a significant element of self-directed study, including further reading and research, that will complement the hours of teaching. The time spent on further research will be determined partly by your academic background so far, and partly by your own interest in and curiosity for the subject.

You will have the opportunity to attend lunchtime sociology seminars with many interesting speakers participating. Most of the classes and lectures will take place at the Department of Sociology.

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 Sociology consists of two core elements (Sociological analysis and Research methods), two optional elements and a dissertation.

Attendance

The course can be studied full-time or part-time with both modes requiring 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>). Part-time students are required to attend course-related activities in Oxford for a minimum of 30 days each year.

The degree and expectations for both modes of study are equally rigorous: part-time students take their classes with the full-time students, but spread their study over two years to accommodate work and personal circumstances. Regardless of whether you choose to apply for the part-time or full-time course, you will be part of a close-knit cohort of students from diverse backgrounds.

As a part-time MSc Sociology student, you will be required to attend all seminars and lectures and meetings with your supervisor in Oxford. Teaching is typically scheduled for 3 days per week in the first and second terms of each year of study, and 1 day per week in the third term of each year. There is no flexibility in the pattern of attendance for scheduled teaching events. Supervisor meetings typically take place at least twice per term on dates determined by mutual agreement with your supervisor. Attendance at supervisor meetings may be required outside of term-time, particularly over the long vacation during which you will be expected to write your thesis.

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 Social Science Library is the largest freestanding social science library in the UK and is located in the Manor Road Building.

Hot-desking areas with access to printing are available in the department.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Department of Sociology 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 Department of Sociology. You can typically expect to meet with your supervisor at least twice a term, and at least three times over the summer vacation when you are writing your thesis.

Assessment

Assessment will be conducted either by timed examination or submission. At the end of the year you will submit a dissertation of up to 10,000 words, which will consist of a sociological analysis.

Course components

Compulsory study

Sociological analysis

In Michaelmas term, the course consists of eight lectures, followed by seminars where the class is split into groups. If you are studying part-time you will take this course in the first term of your second year of study.

It examines the nature of different sociological explanations, their potentials and methodological implications and their relationship with concepts from other disciplines. It also examines the interrelationships between description and explanation, theory and empirical data.

Research methods

This course comprises three sections: research design, qualitative methods and statistics. The statistics section consists of eight statistics lectures and eight computer-based sessions (Michaelmas term). The qualitative methods section (Michaelmas term) consists of eight lectures. The research design section (Hilary term) consists of eight lectures and classes. If you are studying part-time you will take the three sections of the research methods course in the listed term of the first year of study.

Dissertation

You will write an MSc dissertation which you will carry out under the guidance of your supervisor.

Part-time students will write their dissertations in the third term of their second year and submit by 1 September of that second year, but will be encouraged to start planning their thesis from their first year.

Options

In Hilary term, you will prepare for two option papers. You should note that the options available may vary from year to year; a typical offering is listed below:

- Advanced Quantitative Methods
- Sociology of Mafias
- Social Movements
- Political Sociology
- Causality
- Social Stratification
- Sociology of Gender
- Sociology of Latin America
- Sociology of China
- Sociology of the Family
- Sociology of Cybersecurity
- Critical Social Theory and its Impact.

There are normally eight weekly classes for each paper. If studying part-time, you will take one option paper in the second term of each year of study.

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 for the 2026-27 academic year at the University of Oxford

The fees for this course are charged on an annual basis.

Full-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£26,820
Overseas	£40,710

Part-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£13,410
Overseas	£20,355

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

Full-time study

You will normally be required to carry out a small fieldwork training exercise as part of the qualitative methods course. This may require a short trip out of Oxford, but usually not an overnight stay. You will need to cover any costs (eg travel) related to this training exercise, which the department estimates to range from between £20 to £100. You are not formally required to undertake field research for your thesis; however, depending on your choice of topic and the research required to complete it, you may have to meet the costs of fieldwork. These costs would likely include travel and related expenses such as visas, accommodation, subsistence, translation and research assistant services if required. These costs will vary widely according to the location and length of the fieldwork. Further information will be provided in the course handbook.

Part-time study

Please note that this course requires that you attend in Oxford for teaching, and you may incur additional travel and accommodation expenses for this. You will normally be required to carry out a small fieldwork training exercise as part of the qualitative methods course. This may require a short trip out of Oxford, but usually not an overnight stay. You will need to cover any costs (eg travel) related to this training exercise, which the department estimates to range from between £20 to £100. You are not formally required to undertake field research for your thesis; however, depending on your choice of topic and the research required to complete it, you may have to meet the costs of fieldwork. These costs would likely include travel

and related expenses such as visas, accommodation, subsistence, translation and research assistant services if required. These costs will vary widely according to the location and length of the fieldwork. Further information will be provided in the course handbook.

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).

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