

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: MPhil in Celtic Studies



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	21 months

About the course

The MPhil in Celtic Studies is a taught course exploring the history, languages, and cultures of Celtic-speaking peoples. It includes core and special options, language study, and a dissertation developed from chosen topics.

This two-year course is normally restricted to those who have taken a first degree in a relevant subject area; however, it is also suitable for students with no previous background in Celtic, but with sufficient linguistic ability to acquire grounding in Welsh and/or Irish quickly.

Options in language, literature and linguistics form the core of the degree, while a range of optional subjects in these areas and beyond is also available. The MPhil in Celtic Studies is suitable if you wish to proceed to a research degree or if you would like to spend only two years at Oxford on a free-standing degree.

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 take a core course which introduces the medieval Celtic languages through the close study of texts in class, while other areas are taught through tutorials which may be supplemented by lecture series. A weekly Celtic research seminar brings all students together with talks by invited, mainly external speakers, run jointly in collaboration with the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, Aberystwyth. You will take one or two core options from a choice.

You will write a dissertation that typically arises out of one of the options studied; and will also be required to develop a reading knowledge of a modern Celtic language which you have not previously studied at degree level.

Generally, student numbers in the MPhil are relatively small and this allows the teaching to be tailored to the particular choice you may make. Teaching is provided through a mixture of classes and tutorials.

Teaching for the course is shared among three faculties; English, History and Linguistics. Faculty members who have previously taught on the course and have particular expertise in Celtic topics include Prof David Willis (course director; Celtic linguistics, Welsh language and culture); Prof Mark Williams (medieval Irish and Welsh literature; modern reception of Celtic literature); Jenyht Evans (medieval Irish literature); Prof Gillian Ramchand (Scottish Gaelic syntax); Dr Nora Baker (Irish language instructor); and Dr Hanna Hopwood Griffiths (Welsh language instructor).

Opportunities for interdisciplinary exchange are provided by the communities fostered within individual colleges, which also offer you dedicated support 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.

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.

The Bodleian Library is home to a world-class collection of medieval Celtic manuscripts including the Red Book of Hergest, the Middle Irish Rawlinson, the Book of the Anchorite of Llanddewi Brefi, and the Cornish Ordinalia.

The Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities

You will be based in the Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities, a brand-new building at the University of Oxford expected to open in 2025, which will accommodate seven faculties, two institutes, a new library, a large number of well-equipped teaching and seminar rooms, and performance and arts venues. Each faculty will have its own centre and social hub within a building which will also facilitate interdisciplinary and collaborative work. At the heart of the building will be a large atrium – called the Great Hall – which will be a beautiful space, bringing light into the building, and serving as a space for informal work, relaxation, meeting with friends, taking breaks, having refreshments – and much more.

The building will enable the recently-established Cultural Programme to flourish, with a 500-seat world class concert hall, a theatre, experimental performance venue, 100-seat cinema, and exhibition hall. Many of these venues will support academic and student-led activities, as well as performances and creative works by professional artists. The cultural programme will enrich the lives of students, and will also provide opportunities to get involved.

The library, part of the Bodleian Libraries, will be open to all students, and will house lending collections for English, Film Studies, History of Medicine, Internet Studies, Music, Philosophy and Theology. There will be 340 general reader seats, and around 80 graduate study seats – with a further 320 formal and informal study seats throughout the building outside the library.

Open-shelf lending collections will be complemented by access to electronic resources, scan on demand, and material requested from the Bodleian's Collections Storage Facility. As well as the Library's extensive staffed hours, there will be a 24/7 study space, including smart lockers for self-collect of borrowable items out of hours. Subject support is provided by a team of subject librarians.

You are also able to draw on the specialist resources offered by the libraries of participating faculties, which provide dedicated support and training courses for all graduates. For Celtic Studies, the main libraries are the Taylorian Library, which has a substantial collection of Celtic books and other resources, and the Celtic Library, located in Jesus College, which is open for reading and borrowing to all Celtic Studies students. Students also have access to the many college libraries and to college archives which can house significant collections of personal papers and institutional records dating back to the Middle Ages, as well as manuscripts and early printed books.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Humanities Division 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 Humanities Division.

Assessment

The course assessment consists of the following elements:

- three essay submissions for each of the core and option papers
- a dissertation on an approved topic.

The option papers allow you to focus on both Irish and Welsh or on only one of the two. If you wish, you may also select aspects of the history of the Celtic-speaking peoples, as well as linguistic and literary options. Although the regulations are flexible enough to allow for individual preferences, there is a compulsory language element requiring the close study of texts in the original language(s).

Course components

Compulsory study

You will take a core course which introduces the medieval Celtic languages, write a dissertation that typically arises out of one of the options studied and will also be required to develop a reading knowledge of a modern Celtic language which you have not previously studied at degree level.

Options

You will take one or two core options from a choice of:

- Celtic linguistics;
- Welsh literature; or
- medieval Irish literature.

You will also take one or two special options, which may develop one of these areas in more depth or may be another ancient or modern Celtic language and its associated culture; or may be on a historical or other relevant topic.

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	£19,900
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

There are no compulsory elements of this course that entail additional costs beyond fees and living costs. However, as part of the course requirements, students may need to choose a dissertation, a project or a thesis topic. Please note that, depending on the choice of topic and the research required to complete it, there may be additional expenses, such as travel expenses, research expenses, and field trips. Students will need to meet these additional costs, although they may be able to apply for small grants from the Humanities Division to help cover some of these expenses.

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
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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