

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



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	21 months

About the course

The MPhil in Eastern Christian Studies is a taught course offering intensive study of Greek, Armenian with Greek, or Syriac with Greek texts, combining language training, doctrinal history, and a thesis.

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.

In the first year teaching takes the form of

- text-classes, for which students are expected to prepare;
- seminars: students are expected to prepare oral or written presentations on specified topics; *and*
- lectures on the general background of Eastern Christian history and literature including the development of doctrine and the history of the Church in the Christian East to AD 717.

You will also be required to write and present essays, either for supervisions or for seminars.

The Armenian and Syriac set texts are read in the first year in text classes, for which you will be expected to prepare, while the Greek set texts will normally be left to you to work through alone.

In addition to the set texts, you will also study for papers in one of three options, which you will have chosen before you arrive at Oxford.

The second year is normally left for work on the thesis, the subject of which must be approved by the Faculty Board. Your supervisor will provide general guidance on this.

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). ([/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.

Within the Faculties of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Classics, History, Theology, Philosophy and the School of Archaeology, there are unparalleled numbers of scholars and research students working on the region, and bringing with them knowledge of an extraordinary range of disciplines. These faculties and associated centres provide the outstanding seminar culture for which Oxford is famous.

The University has excellent library holdings of original manuscripts and secondary literature in all of the ancient and modern languages of the region, including those of the Asian and Middle Eastern Christian populations, as well as in all major related disciplines. The Bodleian Library is the main research collection which students for the MPhil in Eastern Christian Studies will use. The Asian and Middle Eastern and Theology faculties both have their own libraries, with lending facilities, and one of the world's most important collections of books and journals relating to archaeology and the ancient world is located in the

Bodleian Art, Archaeology and Ancient World Library, next door to the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. Further large Asian and Middle Eastern Christian manuscript collections are within easy reach in the British Library in London, and in the Mingana Collection in Birmingham.

You will have access to the University's centrally provided electronic resources, the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies' IT Officer, and other bibliographic, archive or material sources as appropriate to the topic. There is a computing room for the use of graduate students in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, as well as a common room where tea and coffee are available and staff and students can meet.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies 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 Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

Assessment

You will sit an examination towards the end of Trinity term in the second year which takes the form of four papers.

One paper will consist of essays on the development of doctrine and the history of the church in the Christian East. Two papers will be on the specified Armenian and Syriac historical and theological texts, in which besides passages for translation and comment, there may also be essay questions associated with the set texts. The paper on Greek ecclesiastical texts will include some passages from unspecified, as well as specified, texts.

The thesis of 30,000 words must be presented at the beginning of Trinity term. You will be examined by viva voce unless you have been individually excused by the examiners.

Further information on the course, and the examination process, can be found in the course handbook via the course webpage on the faculty's website.

Course components

Compulsory study

In the first year teaching takes the form of text-classes, for which students are expected to prepare; seminars: students are expected to prepare oral or written presentations on specified topics; and lectures on the general background of Eastern Christian history and literature including the development of doctrine and the history of the Church in the Christian East to AD 717.

Set texts

Armenian and Syriac set texts are read in the first year in text classes, while Greek set texts will normally be left to you to work through alone. Set texts are agreed with candidates at the beginning of the academic year.

Thesis

All students prepare a thesis, normally in the second year, the subject of which must be approved by the Faculty Board.

Options

Before arrival in Oxford you will be required to choose to study for papers in one of the three options. Teaching for each option may not be available in every year:

- Greek (Patristic and Byzantine)
- Armenian with Greek
- Syriac with Greek.

Note that in the 2026-27 academic year the Greek (Patristic and Byzantine) and Armenian with Greek options will not be offered.

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](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses) ([//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses)), and the [provisions of the student contract](http://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](http://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	£18,290
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 their faculty 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 \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs\)](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs) page of our website.

Document accessibility

If you require a more accessible version of this document please [contact Graduate Admissions and Recruitment by email \(graduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk\)](mailto:graduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk).