

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: MSt in Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics (Research Preparation)



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	9 months

About the course

The MSt in Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics (Research Preparation) is a taught course focused on research training. It covers general linguistics, phonetics, historical and comparative linguistics, and language-specific studies.

This course is designed for applicants who have studied linguistics as undergraduates to a more advanced level and who thus already have a solid background in all core areas of general linguistics; they will typically have a degree in which linguistics forms at least 50% of the teaching and assessment, or who can otherwise demonstrate that they have studied linguistics to an equivalent level.

To be admitted on this course, applicants will have already identified, by means of a detailed research proposal, a topic in which they have received relevant prior training and on which they will want to write a master's thesis.

Course structure

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

Students will be working on their master's thesis from their first term. They will attend the Faculty's training in research methods and in addition, they may attend some more advanced classes that are of relevance to their thesis work.

Students will study for two option papers that are of particular interest to them. Options are chosen from those listed in Option B, Option C, or in Option D on the *Course Components* tab. Those intending to study options chosen from C or D should normally have, and may be required to demonstrate, some knowledge of the chosen (group of) language(s), and those intending to offer options chosen from C will normally be expected to be able to read secondary literature in French and German.

If students would like to specialise fully in Indo-European comparative philology via Option C, they are strongly encouraged to apply for the [MPhil in Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/mphil-linguistics-philology-phonetics) (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/mphil-linguistics-philology-phonetics>), instead. There is also scope for some work in historical and comparative linguistics in the MSt via the module in Historical and Comparative Linguistics under Option B, and via options in the history and structure of specific languages.

Some modules require background knowledge that is difficult to acquire in nine months, and MSt students are advised to choose these modules only if they already have substantial previous training in relevant background subjects, such as experimental phonetics and computational linguistics.

In order to take options in the history and structure of a particular language (under Option B or D), students will need to have a good grasp of the relevant language itself, even if they are new to linguistic study of the language. Option C (Indo-European Historical and Comparative Philology and Linguistics) is normally not feasible in the MSt.

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

The Faculty of Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics will be based in the Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities, a brand-new building at the University of Oxford, 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 is 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.

Phonetics Laboratory

The experimental area consists of a recording studio, an acoustics and speech processing laboratory, a physiological laboratory and a speech perception laboratory. Hardware for physiological study, available to students and staff, includes labial electromyography, oral/nasal aerometry (measurement of air pressures and flow) and ultrasound tongue imaging.

The studios, for recording and for running experiments, are equipped with high-quality microphones and digital recording equipment, and computer systems for the presentation of visual and/or auditory stimuli.

Language and Brain Laboratory

The language and Brain Laboratory offers research staff and students bespoke facilities and specialist equipment to conduct a wide variety of behavioural, eye-tracking and neurolinguistics experiments. There is a common room for tutorials and meetings.

The laboratory has separate spaces for Neurolinguistics, Eye-Tracking, Production, and Behavioural studies. We have two electronically shielded sound-proofed climate-controlled EEG booths for recording brain waves. EEG recordings are made using high-impedance (300 Mohms) active electrode systems: we are currently conducting experiments on two systems: BioSemi and Brain Vision. An additional soundproof room is used for high quality audio recordings and eye-tracking studies. Our state-of-the-art SR Research Eyelink1000 eye tracker can be used on its own, or in combination with our EEG equipment.

One of the largest spaces is the Behavioural Lab, where there is bespoke equipment and software to run experiments such as lexical decision tasks or timed forced choice experiments. Eight participants can currently run simultaneously at individually screened desks, or up to 16 participants with a projector setup. All of the testing rooms have an associated control room to monitor the experiments and analyse the results.

Library provision

Oxford's library provision in linguistics is one of the largest in the country. Oxford's libraries are superbly provided with material on theoretical linguistics, the structure and history of European languages, ancient Indo-European languages, and non-Indo-European as well as Indo-European languages of Asia.

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.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Faculty of Linguistics, Philology & Phonetics 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 Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics.

Most students have the opportunity to meet with their course supervisor at the beginning and end of each term to receive advice about useful lectures and seminars and to review the progress made. It is the student's responsibility to set up supervision sessions as and when they require them.

Assessment

You will produce a thesis which needs to be submitted in the final term of your course. In addition, assessment of your two option papers, involving exams and/or submissions depending on which options you chose, will take place in the final term of your course.

Course components

Options

Option B

You will select two options from the following range:

- Phonetics and Phonology
- Syntax
- Semantics and Pragmatics
- Historical and Comparative Linguistics
- Psycholinguistics and Neurolinguistics
- History and Structure of a Language.

You may also ask for one option in another subject in general linguistics; approval will be subject to the availability of proper instruction and provision for examination. There are two other Option B papers, which are not normally available to MSt students unless they have substantial training in that subject sufficient to begin work on these options from their first term on the course:

- Experimental Phonetics
- Computational Linguistics.

Option C

You will select two options from the following three subjects:

- The comparative grammar of two Indo-European languages or language groups
- The historical grammar of the two languages or language groups selected
- Translation from, and linguistic comment upon, texts in the languages selected.

Option D

You may select either ancient (eg Latin, Sanskrit) or modern languages (eg French, Italian, German, Slavic languages), for two of the following:

- The history of one language, or of two or more historically related languages
- The structure of the language or languages selected
- One of the following:
 - translation from, and/or linguistic comment upon, texts in the language or languages selected
 - any paper from B (above) except History and Structure of a Language
 - a project on an aspect of the structure or history of the language, or family of related languages, studied.

Please note that not all options may be offered every year, depending on the availability of teaching.

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 \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-contract\)](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	£17,910
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

Depending on the student's choice of options, and especially the choice of thesis project, some fieldwork or experimental work may be required. All graduate students in Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics are able to claim two £500 grants, one for travel and one for miscellaneous research costs (experiment participants' payments, conference attendance, summer schools etc). The Faculty makes available some funding for language training, where relevant.

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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