

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: MSt in Medieval Studies



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	9 months

About the course

The MSt in Medieval Studies is a taught, interdisciplinary course combining language training, palaeography, codicology, and research methods. It includes option papers, seminars, and a dissertation based on independent research.

The Faculty of History, English Faculty, Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages, Faculty of Music, Faculty of Theology and Religion and the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies all support the course, and it is administered by the Humanities Division.

This degree equips you to draw on a variety of disciplinary approaches to the study of the Middle Ages. It places emphasis on language training as well as on the development of skills in palaeography and codicology. It also offers the opportunity to undertake the acquisition of a medieval language not previously studied. You will follow a core course in research methods and choose from a range of taught option papers. You can also expect to spend at least a third of your time doing independent research with supervisors from at least two disciplines. You will also participate in a variety of workshops and exchanges.

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 comprises:

- compulsory language classes
- palaeography/codicology classes in one of the participating departments;
- two option papers, one option in Michaelmas term and one option in Hilary term;
- seminars, including interdisciplinary seminars which underline the different but complementary approaches to medieval sources offered by different disciplines. In Trinity term, you will present work in progress on your dissertation at the interdisciplinary Medieval Church and Culture seminar;
- a research methods workshop designed to address issues encountered by researchers in medieval studies and intended to be responsive to and shaped by your concerns; and
- a dissertation of no more than 12,000 words on your own research topic.

In connection with the interdisciplinary seminar, a special week of additional research activities takes place each year. A particular expert in interdisciplinary medieval studies is invited to give a plenary lecture and seminar and to conduct a workshop for graduate students. This is an exciting opportunity for current students to discuss their work with a distinguished visiting scholar. Recent guest lecturers have included Caroline Walker-Bynum, Barbara Newman, Christopher Page, Jeffrey Hamburger, David D'Avray, Rita Copeland, William Miller, Miri Rubin, William Chester Jordan and Ardis Butterfield.

If you wish to apply for the DPhil you will be encouraged to develop your master's dissertation and doctoral proposals in tandem during the first few months, so that you will be well placed to make a doctoral application.

Participating faculties' research is organised around historical periods, research centres, or in collaborative and individual research projects, and graduates are key participants in the wide range of seminars, workshops and conferences.

Further opportunities for exchange are provided by the interdisciplinary communities fostered within individual colleges, which also offer dedicated support for graduates by means of personal advisors. The Oxford Centre for Research in the Humanities (TORCH) (<http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/>), offers a stimulating range of interdisciplinary activities, in particular the Oxford Medieval Studies Programme (<http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/medievalstudies>).

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>)

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 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.

Supervision

You will normally have two supervisors from different subject areas. The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Steering Committee for the MSt in Medieval Studies, in consultation with faculties in the Humanities Division and other participating faculties, 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.

An Oxford academic's pre-application indication of willingness to supervise an enquiring applicant is not a guarantee that the applicant will be offered a place, or that the supervisor in question has capacity in that particular year.

Assessment

You will be assessed on essays based on the work for the option papers and developed in consultation with the convenor(s) of the option. You will be required to submit two essays, one for each option. Essays must be submitted according to the practices and deadlines of the host programmes, but it is usual to expect that one essay will be submitted towards the end of Michaelmas term and one towards the end of Hilary term.

You will be assessed on your Palaeography course, according to the practices of the faculty within which this is taken.

You will also submit a dissertation at the end of Trinity Term. The dissertation will be written on a subject of interdisciplinary nature.

Course components

Compulsory study

You will:

- take palaeography/codicology classes in one of the participating departments, ie English, history (Medieval Latin), medieval and modern languages;

- take part in a research methods workshop designed to address issues encountered by researchers in medieval studies and intended to be responsive to and shaped by your concerns;
- take part in seminars, including interdisciplinary seminars which underline the different but complementary approaches to medieval sources offered by different disciplines. In Trinity term, you will present work in progress on your dissertation at the interdisciplinary Medieval Church and Culture seminar; and
- work on a dissertation of no more than 12,000 words on your own research topic.

Options

You will take compulsory language classes, chosen from a variety of possibilities which normally include:

- (medieval) Latin
- Old English
- Old Norse
- Old French
- Old Occitan
- Old High German
- Middle High German
- Greek.

Depending on availability, it may also be possible to arrange tuition in Medieval Welsh, Medieval Irish, Hebrew or Arabic. The language selected should normally be closely related to your work.

You will work on two option papers, which are courses on short periods or specific themes. You will be required to take one option in Michaelmas term and one option in Hilary term. The option courses available change from year to year, but the following list is indicative of the types of topics which may be offered by faculties:

- Saints and Sanctity in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages
- The Global Middle Ages
- The Twelfth Century Renaissance
- Women's Writing in Medieval Germany
- Problems in Dante Interpretation
- Myth, History, and the Construction of Identity in Medieval Iberia
- Old Norse Literature
- Old English Poetry
- After the Conquest: Reinventing fiction and history
- The Medieval Body and Adornment.

Please note that not every optional subject or language listed may be on offer every year, depending in part on levels of student demand.

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	£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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