

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: MSt in Modern Languages

Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	9 months



About the course

The MSt in Modern Languages is designed to allow those who have a high level of attainment in a foreign language, and have studied literature to a degree level, to undertake more advanced work.

The MSt in Modern Languages allows you to undertake advanced work in one or more linguistic and literary contexts, and as part of the faculty's dedicated comparative pathway. The Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages is one of the largest centres of its kind in the world and is consistently ranked highly in the QS rankings of Modern Languages departments. You will join a research community spanning medieval studies, early modern literature and culture, through to modern and contemporary literature, film, and cultural history.

The faculty has many links with universities in Europe, Africa, and the Americas. There is an active research culture and a commitment to integrating graduate students into research seminars. Workshops and conferences with Oxford-based and visiting academics are hosted by the faculty, which bring together students and faculty members in – and between – individual languages and disciplines.

Areas of particular interest that span the faculty's different languages and period specialisms include:

- Cognitive Literary Studies
- Comparative Literature and Translation Studies
- Gender and Diversity
- Ecology and Environmental Humanities
- Medical Humanities and Life Writing
- Performance and Voice
- Postcolonial and Decolonial Studies

If you wish to proceed to a research degree, the MSt will allow you to work towards the identification of a precise thesis subject and to gather research materials. This degree is also suitable if you do not wish to proceed to a research degree, as it enables you to build upon your undergraduate studies and to reflect on the methods of literary and cultural analysis.

On completion of the course, it is expected that students will have:

- acquired a thorough understanding of theories and methodologies of literature and cultural studies;
- developed an understanding of the opportunities and challenges in working transnationally and comparatively within Modern Languages
- acquired specialist knowledge and understanding of at least two topics within the fields of Modern Languages, including a range of different cultural forms
- developed greater intellectual flexibility in drawing constructively on approaches and material from different languages and from different historical periods
- acquired intellectual sophistication in handling theoretical and methodological issues in literature and cultural studies;
- developed skills in research in one or more specific fields within Modern Languages;
- developed advanced skills in appraising and constructing arguments and in assessing and presenting evidence.

The course aims to equip students with many transferable skills, such as the ability to:

- find information, organise and deploy it, including through the use of libraries and information technology;
- use such information critically and analytically;
- work with sensitivity and acuity in contexts of linguistic and cultural difference;
- consider and solve complex problems;
- work well independently and in co-operation with others;
- effectively structure and communicate their ideas in a variety of written and oral formats.

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 emphasis in the MSt course is on self-directed learning. You may choose to pursue the study of one or two literatures, including English, comparatively. You may also specialise in areas such as European enlightenment, cultural studies, or medieval literatures. The course provides a general framework within which you will be encouraged, in conversation with the faculty, to develop your own programme of study, culminating in the dissertation project to be submitted in the final term of the year. The degree comprises three components: two special subject options, a theoretical or methodological component, and a dissertation.

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

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

The Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages is based in the Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities, a brand-new building at the University of Oxford, which accommodates seven faculties, two institutes, a new library, a large number of well-equipped teaching and seminar rooms, and performance and arts venues.

Each faculty has its own centre and social hub within the building which facilitates interdisciplinary and collaborative work. At the heart of the building is a large atrium – called the Great Hall – which is 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 library, part of the Bodleian Libraries, is open to all students. There are 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 are 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 is 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.

The Taylor Institution Library

In the Taylor Institution Library you will have an internationally renowned research collection at your disposal, which comprises well over 650,000 volumes, including 1,000 current periodical titles and approximately 58,000 pre-1801 titles, including 56 incunabula.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages 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 Medieval and Modern Languages. The frequency of your meetings with your supervisor will vary across the year, but students typically meet their supervisor on average at least once a fortnight.

Assessment

For your special subject options, you will complete an essay or portfolio of essays on a topic or topics related to each of the special subjects.

The essay or portfolio will be jointly marked by an examiner and your special subject tutor. Should there be any substantial disagreement between the two markers, an external examiner will adjudicate. The assessor(s) will take account of the fact that the essays were written in the first two terms of your course.

You will choose one of the Methods of Criticism or Scholarship seminars, and submit an essay at the end of the second term.

You will also submit a dissertation in the final term of study, with work on this project lasting over the duration of the whole academic year.

Course components

Compulsory study

Dissertation

You will complete a dissertation project to be submitted in the final term of the year.

Options

Theoretical or methodological component

The theoretical or methodological course runs across during Michaelmas and Hilary terms, and involves a series of hour-long lectures and, depending on student numbers, either seminars or tutorials, lasting up to two hours, in which you will give presentations to your tutor/s and peers. At the end of Hilary term, you will be required to submit an essay for assessment. You can choose one of the following courses:

- History of Ideas in Germany from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Centuries
- Key Questions in Critical Thought
- Palaeography, History of the Book and Digital Humanities

Special subject options

You will also take two special subject options.

Courses are offered across different language strands and specialisms, subject to the availability of the relevant supervisors in any particular year. Each special subject runs across one of either Michaelmas or Hilary terms, and normally involves four meetings, which, depending on student numbers, may take the form of classes or tutorials. These meetings are normally fortnightly.

Popular language-specific options include:

- Conscience and Consciousness in French and Francophone Literature.
- Contemporary Brazilian Fiction
- Francophone Literature
- Late Soviet and Post-Soviet Russian Literature
- Latin American Cinema
- Literature and Culture of the Berlin Republic
- Lusophone Women Writers
- Modern Greek Literature in Comparative Frames
- Problems in Dante Interpretation
- Realism and Its Alternatives in Spanish American Narrative
- Women's Writing in Medieval Germany

You may also study cross-linguistic comparative options including European Enlightenment, Cultural Studies, and Rethinking Subjectivity: Technology, Ecology, Critique, and Fictions.

Full listings and further details of courses (<https://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/courses/mst-modern-languages>), can be found on the faculty's website.

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	£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

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 \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs) page of our website.

Document accessibility

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