

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2016-17

MSc in Comparative Social Policy

About the course

The MSc in Comparative Social Policy explores welfare systems and policy developments across a range of different countries. The comparative element is a key part of the course, and is one feature that makes the course at Oxford unique.

The central aim of the course is to provide high quality graduate level research training in social policy, taking a comparative perspective, concentrating primarily on industrialised/developed countries. More specific aims are to develop your capacity to:

analyse, interpret and review the major concepts, theoretical approaches and historical and contemporary issues in social policy and welfare state development in a range of countries or systems;

analyse and compare specific areas of social policy (eg health, education) in different countries or systems, drawing on both empirical data and broader theoretical literature; and

undertake both quantitative and qualitative research studies, and to understand the major issues involved in research design and technical analysis in social policy related research.

You will study a core paper in comparative social policy. This paper covers the theories, principles, history and institutions of social policy, and is taught via a closely-linked package of lectures, seminars, small working seminars or classes and individual tutorials. You will also engage in more detailed work on social policy analysis.

The research methods, covering both quantitative and qualitative methods, are taught in a mix of lectures, classes, workshops and 'hands-on' computer lab based weekly training sessions. In addition, there is a course on the principles of comparative research design. You will also take a specialist course from a list of options focusing on a particular social policy area or the application of evidence-based intervention. Recent options offered include demography, education policies, family policies, healthcare, labour market policies and poverty.

Your performance will be assessed through formative and summative assignments/papers. Knowledge of the substantive areas of social policy is assessed by two three hour papers at the end of the third term. One will cover comparative social policy/welfare states in general; the other will focus on your chosen area of specialism. The research method skills are assessed by means of formal course assignments and 'methods essays' on published research papers. In addition, you will be required to provide a 10,000-word dissertation.

Student insights

Video of Student Insights: Social Policy and Intervention

Changes to courses



The University will seek to deliver each course in accordance with the descriptions set out above. 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. For further information, please see the University's Terms and Conditions.

Expected length of course

12 months

Annual fees for entry in 2016-2017

Fee Status	Tuition fee	College fee	Total annual fees
Home/EU (including islands)	£11,940	£2,933	£14,873
Overseas	£18,770	£2,933	£21,703

The fees shown above are the annual tuition and college fees for this course for entry in the 2016-17 academic year; for courses lasting longer than one year, please be aware that fees will usually increase annually. For details, please see our guidance on likely increases to fees and charges.

Tuition and college 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 tuition and college fees).

Additional cost information

Students may need additional funds available to cover the cost of carrying out fieldwork.

Living costs

In addition to your fees, you will need to ensure that you have adequate funds to support your living costs for the duration of your course.

The likely living costs for 2016-17 are published below. These costs are based on a single, full-time graduate student, with no dependants, living in Oxford. We provide the cost per month so you can multiply up by the number of months you expect to live in Oxford.

	Likely living costs for 1 month		Likely living costs for 9 months		Likely living costs for 12 months	
	Lower range	Upper range	Lower range	Upper range	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£265	£298	£2,384	£2,673	£3,177	£3,565
Accommodation	£469	£667	£4,221	£6,002	£5,627	£8,006
Personal items	£119	£244	£1,073	£2,187	£1,429	£2,915
Social activities	£60	£107	£539	£960	£718	£1,280
Study costs	£36	£73	£314	£661	£418	£880
Other	£19	£44	£197	£410	£265	£547
Total	£970	£1,433	£8,727	£12,894	£11,636	£17,191

When planning your finances for any future years of study in Oxford beyond 2016-17, you should allow for an estimated increase in living expenses of 2% each year.

More information about how these figures have been calculated is available at www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs.

21 October 2015