Mature Students
pathways to learning
**Oxford University** is looking for the best and brightest students, whatever their background or their age. We offer a wide range of opportunities for mature students, from day schools, summer schools and evening classes to online courses, part-time undergraduate awards, and full and part-time degrees.

We value the skills and experience that mature students contribute to our educational community, and hope that many more mature students will come to join us.

**What is a “mature student”?**
Anyone who will be over 21 at the start of their course.

**Who is our oldest mature student?**
Our oldest student on record took courses until she was 105. We typically have several students in their 90s and 100s taking online courses.

**Who is our youngest mature student?**
Many of our mature students are just 21. In fact, around 50% of the mature student undergraduates at Harris Manchester College are under 25. About 70% are under 30.
Your options

**GENERAL INTEREST**
The only entrance requirement for these courses is your interest in the subject. Whether you want to study for a single day, an evening each week, or for longer, there are courses suitable for everyone:

- Day and weekend events
- Weekly classes
- Summer schools
- Online courses

**DEGREE LEVEL**
Some awards are for those with little experience of Higher Education, whereas degree courses usually require at least A-levels, or other equivalent qualifications. These courses require a greater time commitment, and lead to valuable qualifications.

- Undergraduate awards
- Foundation courses
- Undergraduate degrees
- Graduate degrees, including Master’s degrees and Doctorates

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
Flexible courses to give you – and your employer – the competitive edge.

- Short courses
- Personal development programmes
- Accredited programmes
- Conferences
Day schools and weekend events are one and two day classes in a single topic. They are designed to bring you the most up-to-date thinking on a wide range of subjects, from archaeology to technology.

Courses are taught by lecturers and speakers who are noted authorities in their field of research. Many courses are offered in conjunction with national organisations such as the National Trust, the Society for Medieval Architecture, the British Society for the History of Mathematics or the Oxford Internet Institute.

[www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/dayweekend](http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/dayweekend)
Weekly classes are part-time classes open to all. Topics are studied in depth over a period of 10 or 20 weeks. They are accredited at FHEQ level 4 and course work is an integral part of each syllabus.

Most classes are offered at two locations in Oxford – Rewley House, in central Oxford, and Ewert House in Summertown. Classes are also offered in locations outside Oxford, such as Reading, Maidenhead and other towns.

www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/weekly

“The variety of life experiences many mature students have acquired ensures they bring a wealth of insight and understanding to their studies. But they often combine this with a desire to learn that is driven by the urge to continue growing intellectually, which means they tend to approach their studies with a holistic, enthusiastic and passionate energy”

History of Art tutor
Teaching mature students is a rewarding challenge. Coming back to study as they do with a wealth of diverse work and personal experiences, the learning process ideally becomes collaborative and dynamic, with students able to enrich their learning process with a breadth of perspectives.

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Tutor in Local History

Summer schools comprise both accredited and non-accredited courses of between one and four weeks’ duration on a range of subjects, including creative writing, English literature, local history, international human rights law, history and politics and much more. Most are designed for the general public; others are designed to allow professionals to update skills. Summer schools are offered in Oxford, both at Rewley House and at many of Oxford’s historic colleges.

www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/summerschools
Our online courses extend the rigorous and engaging study for which the University is famous to students anywhere in the world.

Courses are structured as weekly online meetings; interaction with the course tutor and other students takes place in a virtual learning environment. The courses are designed to fit around your schedule; you access the course whenever it is convenient for you.

Choose from over 70 courses across a range of disciplines. Most are short courses of 5–10 weeks. A few longer courses result in Oxford qualifications at the undergraduate advanced diploma and postgraduate levels. Some courses are designed to help you acquire and update essential skills for your professional development.

www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/online
There was a great mix of people in our class - younger and older; working and not working; male and female; and from a range of different backgrounds and countries. This provided an excellent chance for interesting and varied discussions on historical topics.

Former student on the Foundation Certificate in History, now studying for a PhD

The University offers foundation certificates in English Literature and in History. These are part-time courses, over two years, and are equivalent to the first year of a full-time undergraduate degree.

On completion of the foundation certificate, many students go on to complete degrees, some in Oxford, others elsewhere, applying for entry in year two of a degree course. Applicants should note that successful completion of the course does not confer automatic right of entry to any institution: acceptance by an Oxford college is at the discretion of the college Admissions Tutor.

www.conted.ox.ac.uk/fcel
www.conted.ox.ac.uk/fch
The University offers certificates, diplomas and advanced diplomas at undergraduate level in a range of subjects. These awards are specifically designed for adult students who have little or no previous experience of the subject. Most of these programmes are two years long, part-time, and are equivalent to the first, second and third year of undergraduate study at university level.

On completion of these awards, students may opt to transfer credit points to the Open University, modular universities such as Oxford Brookes University, or other institutions of Higher Education.

- Undergraduate Certificates are designed for adult students who have little or no previous experience of the subject. They involve weekly and sometimes weekend teaching sessions.

- Undergraduate Diplomas are modular courses, lasting two years. The syllabus and teaching are aimed at second year undergraduate level. Diploma courses offer an opportunity to learn from tutors specially chosen for their expertise in particular subjects.

- Undergraduate Advanced Diplomas can be either part-time or full-time, last for one or two years and are taught at the level of the third year at a university in the UK.

www.conted.ox.ac.uk/qualifications
We understand that not everyone had the opportunity or desire to enter Higher Education when they were 18, and that many students decide to apply to university later on. We welcome mature students on to our undergraduate degrees.

**Undergraduate courses**

Most of our undergraduate courses lead to a BA (Honours) degree after three years, though most language courses take four years, with one of those years abroad. Many of our maths and science courses include a fourth year which leads to a Master’s degree.

The most important thing is to choose the degree course that really interests you. We strongly recommend that you read the course details carefully, and come along to an open day to find out more if you can.

[www.ox.ac.uk/courses](http://www.ox.ac.uk/courses) and [www.ox.ac.uk/opendays](http://www.ox.ac.uk/opendays)

**Colleges**

Undergraduates at Oxford University each belong to a college. As a mature student, you can apply to any college which offers your course: all colleges accept applications from mature students.

There is also one college (Harris Manchester), and three Permanent Private Halls (Blackfriars, St Stephen’s House and Wycliffe Hall) which only take mature students. An environment that caters specifically for mature students can provide excellent peer support in which to enjoy the varied and fast-paced life of Oxford.

[www.ox.ac.uk/ugcolls](http://www.ox.ac.uk/ugcolls)

**Entrance requirements**

We usually expect all applicants – including mature students – to have three A-levels, or equivalent qualifications. To make the most competitive application, we recommend that you have undertaken formal academic qualifications within the three years before you apply. This is so that we can be sure you will be able to cope with the demands of academic study at Oxford and that you have the essential study skills for your course.

Professional qualifications and work experience will also be taken in to account when assessing your application.

Particular A-level subjects are required for some undergraduate degree courses. You would need to be able to demonstrate that you have the required level of knowledge in that subject.

[www.ox.ac.uk/enreqs](http://www.ox.ac.uk/enreqs)

**Will it count against me if my school leaving results were not strong first time round?**

We understand that many students do not perform to the best of their ability when they are at school. Tutors here are interested in your academic ability now, not when you were 18.

**How to apply**

The application procedure for mature students is the same as for all other students. You need to submit a UCAS application at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) by 15 October for courses starting the following October. You may also need to take a written test or submit written work as part of your application.

[www.ox.ac.uk/apply](http://www.ox.ac.uk/apply)

**Second undergraduate degrees**

Studying for a second undergraduate degree is a common route for students who decide to change direction in their education or to pursue a new area of study.

The application procedure and entrance requirements are exactly the same as for candidates for their first degree, except that graduate applicants will be expected to have a good academic record from their first degree (usually at least a 2:1 classification). Candidates may apply for ‘Senior Status’, which gives direct entry to the second year of the course.

[www.ox.ac.uk/sud](http://www.ox.ac.uk/sud)

**Further details**

For full information on all the courses available and how to apply, please see [www.ox.ac.uk/study](http://www.ox.ac.uk/study).

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“I chose an undergraduate degree for the breadth and depth three years of rigorous study would give me, and for the huge number of options I could choose from. Discussing the different subject areas within the degree that I am reading has been rewarding, especially with other students both in my college and outside, particularly as many have vastly different educational backgrounds to myself.”

Undergraduate student
Many students proceed to graduate study straight after their undergraduate degree, though each year we welcome a number of students who decide to return to studying some years later. There is no such thing as a typical graduate student at Oxford. Our graduate students are adults of all ages, representing many different countries and cultures, and from a range of academic and professional backgrounds.

Graduate courses
The University offers a wide range of full and part-time graduate courses across a broad array of subjects, from archaeology to zoology. We offer approximately 200 Master’s-level courses which normally result in either a Master of Studies (MSt), a Master of Science by coursework (MSc) or a Master of Philosophy (MPhil). The MSt and MSc usually take between nine and twelve months depending on the specific course, and the MPhil degree takes two years to complete. Postgraduate certificates and diplomas are also available in some subject areas, and take 1-2 years to complete on a part-time basis.

We also offer research degrees, typically 3-4 years long, which result in a Doctor of Philosophy (known as a DPhil here in Oxford but commonly known as a PhD elsewhere).

Colleges
As an Oxford graduate student, you will belong to a department that will provide your teaching and supervision. As a Master’s or DPhil student, you will also be a member of one of the University’s colleges: a key benefit of studying at Oxford. Colleges offer you access to a community of fellow students where you can relax and socialise with people from all over the world and from a variety of subjects.

Seven of Oxford’s colleges are dedicated to graduate students only, providing uniquely tailored college support. These are: Green Templeton, Kellogg, Linacre, Nuffield, St Antony’s, St Cross and Wolfson.

Entrance requirements
You will need to have a record of academic excellence. As a minimum, you will usually need to have a bachelor’s degree with first or strong upper second class honours. However, there are some courses that will take relevant experience or alternative backgrounds into consideration. Some doctoral courses also require a Master’s degree in a relevant subject.

How to apply
The application procedure for mature students is the same as for all other students. You will need to submit a complete application by the relevant deadline for your course. Please check online for the deadlines for your course and information on what you need to submit to complete your application. At the very least this will include your CV, a research proposal or statement of purpose, an academic transcript and academic references. Please note that a non-refundable application fee is also required for each application.

Further details
For full information on all the courses available and how to apply, please see www.graduate.ox.ac.uk.

“Now enrolled as a full-time DPhil student, I am excited to be studying social gerontology with the Oxford Institute of Ageing in the Department of Sociology. I chose my subject based on personal passion and interest. The University of Oxford offers an exceptional opportunity to engage with experts in all fields, for example in one week I attended events presented by Archbishop Tutu, Ronald Dworkin and Amartya Sen.”

DPhil student
Oxford’s Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Centre is a recognised leader throughout the UK and worldwide, offering over 200 qualification programmes, short courses and conferences in a surprising range of subjects. Programmes are flexible and part-time, specially designed for busy professionals, offering opportunities to enhance career paths and improve employability with access to Oxford’s excellence in research and teaching.

We work closely with departments across Oxford University and other institutions, research councils, government agencies and industry. As well as providing Master’s, doctoral and short training programmes, we can meet specific training needs through tailored in-house and bespoke courses.

www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/professional

Saïd Business School combines academic rigour with practitioner insight to ensure senior managers can deliver high impact strategies and visionary leadership. Executive programmes are intensive, transformational experiences ranging from one week to 21 months.

Our priority is the personal development of leaders who must navigate through changing environments which impact upon the performance of their organisation. We draw upon expert research from the school and colleagues across the University of Oxford including energy, politics, economics and neuroscience to map global trends impacting upon the performance of business and governments across the world. Attracting a global peer group to every programme, each participant gains a global perspective and enriched strategic thinking.

www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/execed
Student support

Student well-being and integration are important priorities for the University. We can offer both the exceptional resources of a large international University, and the small community environments of colleges and departments. Our students are extremely well supported, and Oxford has one of the lowest drop-out rates of any UK university.

Accommodation
All degree courses at Oxford involve intense study and high levels of commitment. Many students are therefore required to be resident in the city during term time to ensure they have full and consistent access to the world-class academic resources and thriving college communities which underpin studying and researching at Oxford. Undergraduates must live in college accommodation, in other accommodation within 6 miles of the city centre, or within 25 miles if it is your family home. Full-time graduate students are also required to live within 25 miles of city centre.

The Department for Continuing Education has accommodation for students on its part-time courses.

Childcare
The University aims to assist wherever possible in the provision of childcare.
www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/child

Finances
Oxford offers a wide range of financial support to help meet the course fees and other costs of studying. This includes various scholarships. Funding comes from a variety of sources including University-wide schemes, departmental scholarships, college scholarships and other external funds kindly donated by charities, philanthropists and other organisations.
www.ox.ac.uk/feesandfunding

Oxford University Student Union (OUSU)
OUSU runs a Mature Students’ Campaign. This offers a social space for people with unique skills and life experiences to come together and connect with others in similar situations, while also providing opportunities to feed in any ideas or concerns you may have. If you have any questions about life at Oxford as a mature student, please email maturestudents@ousu.org.
Finding out more

For details of all our courses, the entrance requirements and how to apply, please see www.ox.ac.uk/admissions.

For interviews with many Oxford students, including mature students, please see our wall of 100 faces at www.ox.ac.uk/videowall.

You can also find further information and a wealth of other resources at:

- www.facebook.com/the.university.of.oxford
- www.twitter.com/UniofOxford
- http://itunes.ox.ac.uk
- www.youtube.com/oxford

Famous alumni who studied at Oxford as mature students include:

- **Roger Bannister**, the first man to run a 4 minute mile
- **Ingrid Betancourt**, Colombian politician and activist
- Business leader **Yves Bonavero**
- Olympic gold medallist **Stephanie Cook**
- Television and radio broadcaster **Paul Heiney**
- **Gareth Morgan**, South African politician
- Judge **Oliver Popplewell**
- Australian rugby union footballer **Joe Roff**
- **Ruby Wax**, comedian