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Music (BA) (three-year course) Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026

Entry requirements

Visit [Admission requirements for 2026 entry](#) to view a summary table of each undergraduate course's entry requirements.

If English is not your first language you may also need to meet our [English language requirements](#).

About the course

Music is everywhere in the world around us; it is part of all of our lives, whether we play it, actively listen to it, or hear it in passing.

At Oxford, we study music by reading, listening, performing and composing. We create music in all its aspects – acoustic, electronic, individually and communally, working with world-class professionals and with local communities. We analyse the relationships within a piece of music, and between that piece and its genre and context.

Throughout the course, you will be exposed to music of all kinds and in all contexts:

- Western classical
- popular music
- global, world and traditional musics
- community music
- seeing these musics in terms of their social and cultural contexts (and how those contexts have been shaped over time).

Music has been part of the life of Oxford for more than 800 years. There are around 30 academic staff, of whom 15 give lectures regularly – scholars with distinguished reputations as musicologists, performers and composers. Oxford welcomes visits from numerous speakers and professional performing ensembles.

The Faculty of Music has recently moved to the [Stephen A. Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities](#). This new state-of-the-art building includes a concert hall, lecture spaces, film screening theatre, black box experimental performance space, practice rooms and a multimedia digital TV broadcasting and sound studio. The world-famous [Bate Collection of Musical Instruments](#), which lends historical instruments to students has also moved to the new centre, along with the Faculty's gamelan orchestra.

The course is broadly based but allows increasing specialisation and choice as you proceed. Whether you're a performer, a composer, a budding scholar of music history, sociology, psychology or education, the Music course offers something for you.

Students graduate as mature and well-rounded musicians with an informed and lively sense of the contemporary study and practice of the subject, and the ways in which music contributes to society more broadly.

A typical week

- Four to six lectures
- Three to six tutorials in college
- Practice, workshops and rehearsals
- More time for independent study in the summer terms

Tutorials are usually 2-4 students and a tutor. Lecture sizes may vary depending on the options you choose. Compulsory lectures are the largest and will include the full year group of around 70 students, while the smallest lectures, for specialist options, might include fewer than 10 students. Seminars will also usually involve 10-12 students.

Most lectures are delivered by Associate Professors and Professors within the University. Most of these professors are also college subject tutors (although not all college tutors are University lecturers). Each college's subject tutor is responsible for giving and coordinating tutorials.

To find out more about how our teaching year is structured, visit our [Academic Year](#) page.

Significant self-study is expected of all students – for further details see [workload and independent study information](#). Undergraduate courses at Oxford are full-time during term time. Students typically spend approximately 40 hours per week on academic work.

Course structure

Year 1

COURSES

Six modules are taken (two chosen from a list of options)

- Compulsory:
 - Foundations in the Study of Music
 - Stylistic Composition
 - Topics I, for example: Machaut's Songs; Women and Music in the 19th Century; Music, Mind, Behaviour; Global Hip Hop
 - Musical Analysis and Critical Listening
- Options:
 - Extended Essay
 - Composition
 - Performance
 - Critical Studies in Ethnomusicology
 - Historically Informed Performance
 - Musical Skills (Conducting, Keyboard Skills, Arranging)

ASSESSMENT

Three written papers and two 'take-away' papers for compulsory subjects. The assessment for the two options will take the form of a written paper, practical examination, recital, portfolio of compositions, essay or take-away paper depending on the option chosen.

Years 2 and 3

COURSES

Seven modules are taken: two compulsory in your second year, and five from a list of options (with some restrictions on combinations), including one double-weighted project, in your third year.

- You will be required to take two compulsory Topic papers, from a range of historical and critical fields, e.g.:
 - Vernacular Song in the Long 13th Century
 - The Renaissance Madrigal, 18th Century Opera
 - The String Quartet Between Classicism and Modernism
 - World Jazz
 - Women in Popular Music
 - Music Technology, and Worldmaking in the 19th Century
 - History and Philosophy of Music Education
- You will also be required to take other papers from a list of options, which may include:
 - Dissertation
 - Composition
 - Solo Performance
 - Music Ethnography
 - Musical Analysis and Criticism
 - Musical Thought and Scholarship
 - Techniques of Composition
 - Orchestration
 - Edition with Commentary
 - Analysis Portfolio
 - Chamber Music
 - Choral Performance
 - Choral Conducting
 - Instrumental Musical Skills
 - Community Music and Music Education
 - Recording and Producing Music

ASSESSMENT

Final University examinations

Second year: one written examination and one course submission.

Third year: A combination of take-away papers, coursework, portfolio submissions, recitals and practical tests, depending on the options chosen.

Years 2 and 3

Please note that the courses listed in this section are illustrative and may change, as explained in the [Terms & Conditions](#) and for reasons of staff availability and student demand. The department may add extra options.

Most Oxford courses are assessed by examinations. These are typically at the end of the first and last years but you may have assessments at other times and some courses have exams in the second year also. First year examinations are often called Prelims or Moderations, and you need to pass these exams to progress to the second year. You must pass your final year exams, or 'finals', to pass your degree. For more information on assessment for your course, please see the Course Structure.

Finals also determine the classification of your degree. For some courses you may also be assessed on your practical work, or you may be required to submit a dissertation. Please check the assessment details for your course.

The University will seek to deliver this course in accordance with the description 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](#) and information about [potential course changes](#).

You are also referred to the Student Handbook (which is updated every September).

Fees

These annual fees in 2026/27 are for full-time students who begin this undergraduate course here in 2026. Information about how much fees and other costs usually increase each year is set out in the [University's Terms and Conditions](#).

For details of annual increases, please see our [guidance on likely increases to fees and charges](#).

| Fee status | Annual Course fees in 2026/27 |
|------------|-------------------------------|
| Home | £9,790 |
| Overseas | £49,400 |

In the 2027-28 academic year course fees for Home fee status students will rise to £10,050 (in line with the government fee cap.)

[Further details about fee status eligibility](#) can be found on the fee status webpage.

Living costs

Living costs for the academic year starting in 2026 are estimated to be between £1,405 and £2,105 for each month you are in Oxford. Students at Oxford can benefit from our [world class resources](#) and

[college provision](#), which may help to keep costs down. Entitlement to certain types of support may depend on your personal financial circumstances.

Our academic year is made up of three eight-week terms, so you would not usually need to be in Oxford for much more than six months of the year but may wish to budget over a nine-month period to ensure you also have sufficient funds during the holidays to meet essential costs. For further details please visit our [living costs webpage](#).

Living costs breakdown

| | Per month | | Total for 9 months | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------|
| | Lower range | Upper range | Lower range | Upper range |
| Food | £315 | £545 | £2,835 | £4,905 |
| Accommodation (including utilities) | £825 | £990 | £7,425 | £8,910 |
| Personal items | £160 | £310 | £1,440 | £2,790 |
| Social activities | £50 | £130 | £450 | £1,170 |
| Study costs | £35 | £90 | £315 | £810 |
| Other | £20 | £40 | £180 | £360 |
| Total | £1,405 | £2,105 | £12,645 | £18,945 |

In order to provide these estimated likely living costs (which are rounded to the nearest £5), the University in collaboration with the Oxford SU conducted a living costs survey in May 2025 to complement existing student expenditure data from a variety of sources, including the UK government's Student Income and Expenditure Survey and the National Union of Students (NUS).

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. When planning your finances for any future years of study in Oxford beyond 2026-27, it is suggested that you allow for potential increases in living expenses of around 4% each year – although this rate may vary depending on the national economic situation.

Additional Fees and Charges Information for Music

Students may choose to have instrumental or voice tuition as part of their course, though please note that performance is not compulsory. With advice from your tutors, you can choose your own instrumental tutors. You will need to pay for these lessons yourself, but the money will be refunded by the Music Faculty at the end of term, up to £275. This usually covers the full cost of tuition.

Students can also apply to take part in a Faculty-funded scheme with the Royal Academy of Music (RAM), which provides 8 hourly lessons and participation in master-classes and performance classes at the RAM.

Regulation - The University of Oxford is regulated by the [Office for Students](#) and subscribes to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#) student complaints scheme.