

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2021-22: MPhil in Comparative Social Policy



About the course

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

For the purposes of comparison the course focuses especially on the most highly-developed countries, broadly those in the OECD area.

The central aim of the MPhil in Comparative Social Policy at the Department of Social Policy and Intervention 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 OECD 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 and social policy analysis. 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 and individual tutorials. You will also engage in detailed work on social policy analysis through lectures, seminars and presentations.

The research methods skills, 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.

The MPhil course is an extended version of the MSc in Comparative Social Policy. In the first year you will study together with the MSc group and in the second year you will primarily focus on your research project, under individually-tailored supervision. The MPhil particularly suits students who want to conduct research in a world-class environment, with strong potential to pursue a doctorate afterwards.

In your first year, you will have the opportunity to take at least one specialist course from a list of options focusing on a particular social policy area. You are examined on one of these option courses. You then are examined in a second option during your second year. Recent options offered include education policies, family policies, healthcare, labour market policies and poverty.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for the course is the responsibility of the Department of Social Policy and Intervention 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 Department of Social Policy and Intervention. Efforts will be made to match the research interests of supervisees and supervisors.

In the case of students who require specific help to adjust to an academic programme or to a new range of skills, the supervisor will work with them to ensure that they have additional support.

Assessment

Your performance will be assessed through formative and summative assignments/papers. Knowledge of the substantive areas of social policy is assessed by one three-hour paper at the end of the third term of your first year, a summative assignment based on your first option paper taken in the second term of your first year, and another summative assignment based on your second option paper taken in the second term of your second year. The paper covers comparative social policy and social policy analysis in general; the others focus on the student's chosen area(s) of specialism. The research methods skills are assessed by means of formal course assignments. In addition, you will be required to provide a 30,000-word dissertation.

Changes to courses

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. These may include significant changes made necessary by a pandemic (including Covid-19), epidemic or local health emergency. For further information, please see the University's Terms and Conditions (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/terms>) and our page on changes to courses (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges>).

Expected length of course

	Full Time Only
Expected length	21 months

Costs

Annual fees for entry in 2021-22

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home (UK, Republic of Ireland, Channel Islands & Isle of Man)	£17,760
Overseas (including EU)	£27,580

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, please be aware that fees will usually increase annually. Information about how much fees and other costs may increase is set out in the University's Terms and Conditions.

Course fees cover your teaching as well as other academic services and facilities provided to support your studies. Unless specified in the additional cost information (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 cost information.

Additional cost information

There are no compulsory elements of this course that entail additional costs beyond fees and living costs. However, as part of your course requirements, you may need to choose a dissertation, a project or a thesis topic. Please note that, depending on your choice of topic and the research required to complete it, you may incur additional expenses, such as travel expenses, research expenses, and field trips. You will need to meet these additional costs, although you may be able to apply for small grants from your department and/or college to help you cover some of these expenses.

Living costs

In addition to your course 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 2021-22 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 2021-22

	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	£280	£400	£2,520	£3,600	£3,360	£4,800
Accommodation	£655	£790	£5,895	£7,110	£7,860	£9,480
Personal items	£130	£250	£1,170	£2,250	£1,560	£3,000
Social activities	£45	£115	£405	£1,035	£540	£1,380
Study costs	£45	£100	£405	£900	£540	£1,200
Other	£20	£55	£180	£495	£240	£660
Total	£1,175	£1,710	£10,575	£15,390	£14,100	£20,520

When planning your finances for any future years of study at Oxford beyond 2021-22, you should allow for an estimated increase in living expenses of 3% each year.

More information about how these figures have been calculated is available at www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/livingcosts.

Document accessibility

If you require an accessible version of the document please contact Graduate Admissions and Recruitment by email (graduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk) or via the online form (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/ask>).