

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: MSc in Social Science of the Internet



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time	Part Time
Expected length	10 months	22 months

About the course

The MSc in Social Science of the Internet is a taught course exploring how the internet and digital technologies shape society. It covers social theory, internet governance, digital methods, and policy, with training in qualitative and quantitative research.

The course will provide you with the knowledge and skills needed to question and understand the multi-faceted ways in which the internet and emerging digital technologies are influencing and affecting our lives, societies, businesses, and governments.

Learning from the Oxford Internet Institute's world-leading multi-disciplinary faculty, students of the MSc course will leave with new knowledge on important social science concepts and theories, research methods, technological fundamentals, and how to conduct and communicate high-quality research.

The diverse backgrounds of OII MSc students create a multidisciplinary peer network for students to engage in ideas, discussion and debate. The OII's busy calendar of seminars and events showcases many of the most noteworthy people in internet research, innovation and policy, allowing you to engage with the cutting edge of scholarship and debates around digital culture, internet technologies and AI.

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.

You will take the following core courses: Internet and Society, Internet Technologies and Regulation, Digital Social Research: Methods Core, Digital Social Research: Statistics Core.

You will take three option modules during the second term of the year; one substantive option course, one methods option course, and one further option course from either category. If you are studying part-time, you will generally take two options in the second term of your first year and one further option in the second term of your second year.

You will also write a thesis.

Attendance

The course can be studied full-time or part-time with both modes requiring attendance in Oxford. Full-time students are subject to the [University's Residence requirements. \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/accommodation/residence-requirements\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/accommodation/residence-requirements). Part-time students are required to attend course-related activities in Oxford for a minimum of 30 days each year.

The full-time course is studied over 10 months. The part-time course has the same requirements, but is studied over 22 months.

The degree and expectations for both modes of study are equally rigorous: if you study part-time, you will take your classes with your fellow full-time students, but spread over two years to accommodate work and personal circumstances.

If studying full-time, you will be expected to spend around 40 hours studying each week during term and you will also be expected to complete assignments and undertake further study during vacations. During the first (Michaelmas) and second (Hilary) terms, you will be advised to allocate between 10 and 15 hours each week for each course you undertake.

This includes:

- At least six hours per week on reading, preparation and formative assignments for each core/option course
- 10 to 12 hours per week in classes (typically one and a half to two hours of lectures per course, plus a one-hour seminar or workshop on certain core and methods-based courses)

If studying part-time, you will be expected to commit to a proportional workload. The course content for the part-time degree is identical to that taken by full-time students but will be completed in two years rather than one year. You will be expected to

attend lectures, seminars and workshops in the department for one to two days a week during term-time, and to participate fully in the life of this friendly and dynamic department.

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 OII is based in the Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities, a brand-new building at the University of Oxford which opened in 2025. In addition to the OII, the building is home to seven humanities faculties and the Institute for Ethics in AI, a new library, an on-site cafe, a large number of well-equipped teaching and seminar rooms, and several performance and arts venues which are open to the public. The Oxford Internet Institute has its own centre and social hub within the building which facilitates interdisciplinary and collaborative work. At the heart of the building is the Great Hall, a large atrium which serves as a space for informal work, relaxation, meeting with friends, taking breaks and having refreshments.

The library, part of the Bodleian Libraries, houses the Oxford Internet Institute's lending collection. 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. As well as the Library's extensive staffed hours, there will be a 24/7 study space, including smart lockers for self-collect of borrowable items out of hours.

Our MSc students are provided with hot-desk working space in the department. You will have access to OII's dedicated computing facilities and IT support, which includes collaborative software, server space, and computing resources, as well as access to ARC, Oxford's high-performance computing cluster.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Oxford Internet Institute 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 Oxford Internet Institute.

MSc students can expect to meet with their supervisor 8-10 times over the course of the degree. Students are assigned a general supervisor in their first term who will be the point of contact for keeping an eye on their academic progress. In the second term (Hilary term), students are reassigned to a thesis supervisor in order to ensure that student needs and skills are properly matched. Thesis supervisors are responsible for giving written feedback on at least one complete draft of the student's thesis prior to submission as well as additional advice on research design, data access, and analysis methods.

Assessment

Assessments will consist of written examinations and/or individual coursework submissions. Some options may also include oral presentations as part of the assessment. Please note that the format of assessment for a particular course may change from year to year. The two main assessment periods are the winter vacation (December and January) and the spring vacation (March and April).

During each course you take you will receive regular feedback on formative exercises, assignments, and essays. This feedback does not count towards your final mark but prepares you for the graded summative work due after the completion of each course.

In addition to the core courses and options you take, you will write a thesis. The thesis is the capstone to the MSc experience. It provides students with the opportunity to apply the methods and approaches they have covered in the other parts of the course and carry out a substantive piece of academic research, including designing a study, carrying out data collection and analysis, and developing a theoretical framework.

Part-time students will write their dissertations in the third term of their second year, but will be encouraged to start planning their dissertation from their first year.

Course components

Compulsory study

You will take the following core courses:

Internet and Society

An overview of the major findings to date regarding the social implications of the Internet, drawing material from several social science disciplines, including communication studies, sociology, and political science. Part-time students take this course in their first year of study.

Internet Technologies and Regulation

Exploring the interplay between social and technological shaping of the Internet, and associated policy implications. It outlines the Internet's origins and technical architecture and its embeddedness in a long history of communication technologies. Part-time students take this course in their second year of study.

Digital Social Research: Methods Core

This course provides students with the opportunity to engage with the methodological, ethical and philosophical underpinnings of quantitative and qualitative social science research practices. Part-time students take this course in their first year of study.

Digital Social Research: Statistics Core

This course introduces students to statistics for the social sciences, with an emphasis on application to research on the Internet and society. Part-time students take this course in their second year of study.

Thesis

During the third term, you will attend weekly seminars where you will present and develop your thesis research and receive feedback from fellow students and academic staff. Part-time students present their research in their second year of study.

Options

You will take three option modules during the second term of the year.

Your three options will include one substantive option course, one methods option course, and one further option course from either category.

Recent option modules have included:

Substantive Options

- AI for Policymaking
- Cultural Analytics
- Decoding Development in Digital South Asia
- Digital Ethics
- Education, the Internet and Society (run in the Department of Education)
- Fair Digital Economies
- Internet Economics
- Law and the Internet
- Subversive Technologies.

Methods Options

- Advanced Statistics for Internet Research
- Computational Methods for the Social Sciences
- Digital Ethnography
- Qualitative Interviewing and Data Analysis.

Please note that not all Substantive or Methods options run every year.

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](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses) ([//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses)), and the [provisions of the student contract](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-contract) ([//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-contract](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-contract)) regarding changes to courses.

Costs

Annual course fees for the 2026-27 academic year at the University of Oxford

The fees for this course are charged on an annual basis.

Full-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£28,170
Overseas	£38,430

Part-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£14,085
Overseas	£19,215

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

Full-time study

As part of your course requirements, you will need to choose a thesis topic. This element of the course is mandatory and forms part of the assessment for the course. Depending on your choice of research topic and the research required to complete it, you may incur additional expenses, such as travel expenses, research expenses, and materials. You are not formally required to undertake field research for your thesis, but if applicable to your choice of research topic, may also have to meet the costs of any fieldwork. You will need to meet these additional costs yourself, although you will have access to some departmental funding towards research expenses and may be able to apply for additional grants. Further information will be provided in the course handbook. There are no other compulsory elements of this course that entail additional costs beyond fees and living costs.

Part-time study

Please note that this course requires that you attend in Oxford for teaching for a minimum of one day a week each term in Years 1 and 2, and you may incur additional travel and accommodation expenses for this. Accommodation costs in Oxford can start at around £40 per night in a college or around £80 in a hotel (single rate). Students should also factor in costs for meals during their stay. In addition, as part of your course requirements, you will need to choose a thesis topic. This element of the course is mandatory and forms part of the assessment for the course. Depending on your choice of research topic and

the research required to complete it, you may incur additional expenses, such as travel expenses, research expenses, and materials. You are not formally required to undertake field research for your thesis, but if applicable to your choice of research topic, may also have to meet the costs of any fieldwork. You will need to meet these additional costs yourself, although you will have access to some departmental funding towards research expenses and may be able to apply for additional grants. Further information will be provided in the course handbook. There are no other compulsory elements of this course that entail additional costs beyond fees and living costs.

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](https://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](https://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](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/family) (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/family>) are met).

Living costs for part-time study

Your living costs may vary depending on your personal circumstances but you will still need to cover your cost of living on a full-time basis for the duration of your course, even if you will not be based in Oxford throughout your studies. While the range of likely living costs for a single, full-time student living in Oxford in the 2026-27 academic year is between £1,405 and £2,105 per month, living costs outside Oxford may be different.

Part-time students who are not based in Oxford will need to calculate travel and accommodation costs carefully. Depending on your circumstances and study plans, this may include the [costs of a student visa and immigration health surcharge](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs#international) (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs#international>) (if [student visa eligibility criteria](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/studentvisa) (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/studentvisa>) 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](https://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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