UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS AND OUTREACH
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Materials Science (MEng) (four-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

Materials Science is an interdisciplinary subject, spanning the physics and chemistry of matter, engineering applications and industrial manufacturing processes.

Modern society is heavily dependent on advanced materials, for example:

- lightweight composites for more efficient vehicles
- optical fibres for telecommunications
- and silicon microchips for the continuing revolution in digital technology.

Materials scientists study the relationships between the structure and properties of a material and how it is made. They also develop new materials and devise advanced processes for manufacturing them. Materials Science is vital for developments in nanotechnology, quantum computing, energy storage and nuclear energy, as well as medical technologies such as bone replacement materials and drug delivery.

This diverse programme spans the subject from its foundations in physics and chemistry to the mechanical, electrical, magnetic and optical properties of materials, and the design, manufacture and applications of metals, alloys, ceramics, polymers, composites, semiconductors, superconductors, nanomaterials and biomaterials. This work is supported by excellent laboratory and teaching facilities.

The programme also offers an opportunity to develop an introductory understanding of entrepreneurship (learning how to write a business plan, raise capital and start a company). There are also voluntary options to learn a foreign language with the University's Language Centre.

The Oxford Materials degree includes in its fourth year the special feature of an eight-month full-time research project. For this fourth-year research project you will join a research team either here at Oxford in one of the strongest Departments of Materials in the UK or, occasionally, at an overseas university or in an industrial laboratory (additional costs may be associated with a project outside Oxford). You will learn how to break down a complex problem, design an experiment or model, manage a project and communicate your results. These research skills are transferable to many career paths and are valued highly by employers.

Fieldwork/work placements/international opportunities

Students are encouraged to undertake a voluntary summer project in industry or a research laboratory. Recent locations for overseas summer projects have included Beijing, Zhejiang, Shanghai and Tokyo. A voluntary industrial tour to an overseas destination is organised in some Easter holidays. Recent destinations include Germany, Singapore, France, China and Sweden.

A typical week

During Years 1 and 2, your work will be divided between lectures (about ten a week), tutorials/classes (about two a week) and practicals (two or three afternoons a week). Typically, the work in preparation for each tutorial or class will be expected to take six to eight hours.

Year 3 starts with a two-week team design project, and about eight lectures and two classes/tutorials a week for the first two terms, while most of the third term is set aside for revision.

Year 4 consists of a supervised research project spanning three extended terms.

Lectures throughout Years 1-2 may be attended by the full year groups of around 40 undergraduate students. Normally Materials Year 3 Options Courses lectures will be attended by a smaller number of undergraduates plus a small number of research students.

Some Year 1 classes, which support the lectures, are attended by the full year group of around 40. Tutorials supporting the Year 1 and Year 2 Materials lecture courses are usually 2 to 4 students with a tutor. The Year 1 and 2 Mathematics lectures are supported by small group tutorial classes, typically up to 6 students per group. The Year 3 Options lectures are supported by small group tutorial classes, typically 8-12 students per group.

The majority of tutorials and lectures are delivered by staff who are Professors or Associate Professors, many of whom are world-leading experts with years of experience in teaching and research. Some teaching may also be delivered by post-doctoral researchers or postgraduate research students.

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 • Physical foundations of materials • Structure and mechanical properties of materials • Transforming materials • Mathematics for materials science	**ASSESSMENT** First University examinations: four written papers; continual assessment components equivalent to a fifth paper

YEAR 1

- Computing for materials science (MATLAB)
- Crystallography classes
- Practical course
- Foreign language (optional)

YEAR 2

COURSES

- Lifecycle, processing and engineering of materials
- Electronic properties of materials
- Mechanical properties of materials
- Structure and thermodynamics of materials
- Foreign language (optional)
- Supplementary subject (optional)
- Mathematics
- Practical course
- Entrepreneurship course
- Industrial visits and talks
- Communication skills

YEAR 3

COURSES

- Materials options courses 1
- Materials options courses 2
- Team design project
- Introduction to materials modelling module
- Characterisation of materials or Atomistic modelling module
- Industrial visits
- Examples of current options courses are available via the Materials Science website.
- At the start of Year 3 it is possible to transfer to a 3-year BA degree in Materials Science, graduating at the end of Year 3. Read essential further information about this on the Materials Science

ASSESSMENT

Final University examinations, Part I: six written papers; continual assessment components equivalent to a further two papers

YEAR 3	
website. The BA is not accredited. (Not all options may be available every year – these are subject to change, as explained in the Terms & Conditions and for reasons of staff availability and student demand. The department may add extra options.)	

YEAR 4	
COURSES • Research project (full-time). Additional elements include Project management, Ethics and sustainability, Presentation skills and an optional foreign language course. (Students are required to achieve 50% minimum in the Part I assessment in order to progress to Part II.) • Examples of project titles are available via the Materials Science website.	**ASSESSMENT** Final University examinations, Part II (equivalent to 4 papers): project dissertation submitted and assessed; oral examination of project dissertation

Visit the Materials Science website for important additional detail on course content, progression and assessment.

This programme outline is for illustrative purposes and details may change from time to time.

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	£62,820

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 Materials Science

The fourth year is entirely devoted to research - a special feature of the Oxford MEng in Materials Science programme - consisting of a full-time individual research project under the supervision of a member staff.
This final year has three extended terms of 12 to 13 weeks and is 37 weeks in total so you will need to budget for higher living costs in the final year, as you will be required to be in Oxford for longer than the standard terms.

View the likely range of living costs for an additional month in Oxford.

During the project you will learn how to:

- break down a complex problem
- design an experiment or model
- manage your time and project
- maintain systematic records
- present your work orally
- write a substantial report.

These research skills are transferable to other career paths and are valued highly by employers. On occasion significant scientific publications result from these projects.

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.