

MSc in Education (Higher Education)

Programme Guide &
Student Voices

Department of Education
University of Oxford



Welcome

Have you ever wondered why higher education works the way it does, and how it can better contribute to societies?

Perhaps you would like to look beyond your own experiences of studying or working in higher education, ask new questions, examine familiar issues from different perspectives, and help shape the future of higher education.

Welcome to the MSc in Education (Higher Education) at the University of Oxford.

Our programme brings together people from diverse disciplinary, professional, and international backgrounds who share a curiosity about higher education and its future.

In this guide, you will find an introduction to the programme, the learning experience, the community you could become part of, and how to apply. You will also hear directly from our students and graduates about their experiences of the programme.



Dr Xin Xu

Senior Departmental Lecturer in Higher and Tertiary Education
Pathway Lead, MSc in Education (Higher Education)





About the programme

- The MSc in Education (Higher Education) is a one-year, full-time programme offering a critical introduction to the research, theory, policy and practice of higher education in national, international and global contexts.
- It brings together students from a wide range of disciplinary, educational, and professional backgrounds to explore contemporary issues shaping higher education.
- Drawing on the research strengths of the Oxford Department of Education, including those of the Centre for Global Higher Education (CGHE) and Centre on Skills, Knowledge, and Organisational Performance (SKOPE), the programme enables students to examine higher education critically and comparatively, understand its changing role within wider social, economic, and global contexts, and develop as future academic, policy, and practitioner leaders in the field.

Studying the programme

- Teaching combines lectures, seminars, class discussion, and collaborative work.
- Alongside their taught courses, students develop an independent dissertation on a higher education topic of their choice. Their dissertation research develops throughout the year and is supported through one-to-one supervision.
- Students are also offered academic and professional development workshops and support throughout the programme.
- Students become part of an intellectually stimulating and supportive international research community, with opportunities to engage with the Department's research centres and participate in relevant seminars and activities across the University of Oxford.





Where can it lead?

Graduates of this programme follow diverse pathways, including doctoral study and academic or research careers; higher education policy, management and administration; government, international organisations, think tanks, businesses, and NGOs; and entrepreneurial pathways.

Who can apply?

We welcome students and professionals from a wide range of backgrounds who share a strong interest in understanding and shaping higher education. A previous degree in education is not required. It is particularly relevant to:

- graduates, researchers, and those interested in research in higher education;
- academics, lecturers, administrators, and professionals involved in higher education teaching, research, management or administration;
- policymakers and decision makers, and people working with higher education institutions, systems and related organisations.

How to apply?

- Applications are made through the University of Oxford Graduate Admissions website.
- Applications normally open in September or October, with a deadline in early January and, in some years, an additional deadline in March.
- For current information on entry requirements, application deadlines, fees and funding, and how to apply, please visit the [official University website](#).





Contact

- For enquiries about the programme, please contact the Pathway Lead, Dr Xin Xu (xin.xu@education.ox.ac.uk)
- For enquiries about applications, please contact the MSc office (msc.education@ox.ac.uk)

Find out more



University Graduate
Admissions



Department
Programme Page

Student Voices

Hear from our students and graduates about their experiences of the MSc in Education (Higher Education) programme.



Names, anonymity and photographs reflect each contributor's preferences and consent.

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The HE pathway is incredibly enriching due to its multidisciplinary lenses it applies to dynamics and developments in higher education, to understand how they shape and interact with economies, policies and societies. Particularly due to students coming from a large variety of academic and personal backgrounds, the seminar-style lectures accelerate students' learning through engaging discussions, critical and thought-provoking essays, and incredibly qualified, talented, and supportive academic staff along the intense master's.



Franca Philine Trenczek

MSc in Education (Higher Education)
2024-25

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Studying on HE programme has been a journey of exploring the world with care, curiosity, and knowledge. Through the programme, I have not only developed a deeper understanding of the field of higher education, but also come to understand the world around me in new and unexpected ways. Together, we created and sustained a cohort that was inclusive, diverse, equal, creative, and inspiring. Every discussion brought new perspectives and ideas, and I often left the classroom feeling excited, challenged, and inspired. I particularly valued how the programme encouraged us to think critically, question assumptions, and engage thoughtfully with perspectives different from our own. What made the experience especially meaningful was the sense of care within the community. It was a space where we could learn from one another, be curious, experiment with ideas, and grow together. I am leaving the programme not only with greater knowledge of higher education, but also with a deeper curiosity about the world and a stronger belief in the possibilities of education.

Zhiruo He

MSc in Education (Higher Education) 2024-25

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My time in the MSc Education (Higher Education) programme at Oxford was more than a period of study- it was a formative, life-shaping experience. Our small, close-knit cohort, drawn from across the globe, turned discussion-based tutorials into something richer than knowledge transfer: they built genuine wisdom and a broadened worldview. Our professor was far more than an instructor- a true mentor, endlessly receptive to our initiatives, from organising guest lectures to co-creating a new Professional's Perspective course module. The administrative team, from communications to academic support, matched that same generosity and encouragement at every step. Beyond academics, this year gave me a global network of friends who share my commitment to accessible, effective education- friendships I know will last a lifetime.

Tejas Sanjay Dongare

MSc in Education (Higher Education) 2025-26

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The HE pathway is a wonderful programme with a supportive and engaging community. I have really enjoyed discussing education issues with my classmates, both in and outside the classroom, and learning from faculty members who have been incredibly supportive of my research and career development. The pathway also offers many meaningful opportunities to explore higher education issues in different settings, including webinars, seminars, reading groups, research hubs, and even informal conversations. These different forms of engagement have made the HE pathway a particularly enriching part of my Oxford experience.



Huiming Zeng

MSc in Education (Higher Education)
2024-25

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The MSc in Education (Higher Education) was a transformative experience for me personally, professionally, and academically. The members of my cohort spanned three continents and six countries; we challenged each other to grow and also shared in one another's diverse cultures. I am forever grateful for the incredible people that this program brought into my life, as they are not only colleagues but lifelong friends. Since completing the program, I have started my career in higher education as an admission professional in the United States. I approach each day with the valuable skills and insight gained from the MSc in Education, such as the unique perspective of an academic who has conducted real-world research. It was this remarkable program that has inspired me to begin a PhD of my own and continue to ask critical questions of institutions within higher education in the pursuit of knowledge.



Zach Resatar

MSc in Education (Higher Education)
2023-24





The MSc in Education (Higher Education) at Oxford transformed how I understand the purposes, possibilities, and responsibilities of higher education. Through the programme's teaching and the perspectives of colleagues from around the world, I learned to question familiar assumptions and examine higher education across systems, cultures, and contexts. This expanded worldview strengthened my understanding of global higher education systems and the diversity of the field, while deepening my commitment to thoughtful, evidence-informed practice. The programme equipped me with the knowledge and curiosity to contribute meaningfully in my current and future roles, while continuing to explore the complexity that makes higher education such a compelling field. I was especially grateful for the guidance of the Department's staff and researchers, whose scholarship and thoughtful support enriched my learning throughout the programme. Their engagement made this an intellectually rigorous and supportive programme, one that I would highly recommend to those interested in understanding and contributing to higher education.



Nawreen Hena

MSc in Education (Higher Education)
2023-24

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This course enabled me to develop knowledge around my preferred sub topic of research on research with readings and professors' expertise intellectually stimulating me. The support on the dissertation was fantastic, my supervisor guided me in such a constructive way helping to develop my criticality and analysis. I have really enjoyed the talks organised by the Centre for Global Higher Education where I have learned around many fields in higher education which I was not familiar in.

**MSc in Education (Higher Education)
2025-26 Cohort Graduate**

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Studying for my Master's in higher education at the Department of Education was an incredibly rewarding and transformative experience. The programme challenged me to think critically, engage with diverse perspectives, and explore education from both theoretical and practical angles. I was fortunate to be surrounded by a group of like-minded people who constantly challenged and deepened my thinking, helping me reflect on and develop a better understanding of the higher education system we live in today. I will never forget the seminars we organised, the conferences we contributed to, and, of course, the countless informal conversations we had over coffee in the café.



Yixuan Alice Wang

MSc in Education (Higher Education)
2024-25

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When reflecting on my experiences at the program, the following impressions come to mind. It provided a well-developed program of study, which was informative, engaging, up-to-date, and forward-looking. It involved activities that facilitated the development and application of valuable and necessary skills, such as critical thinking, research, and teamwork. It consisted of a student cohort that was engaged, inspiring and welcoming. And it is made up of faculty and staff that are knowledgeable, attentive, and supportive. All in all, it was an unparalleled experience for personal development, networking, and getting inspired.

Amir Pichhadze

MSc in Education (Higher Education)
2020-21

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My experience on this programme was life-changing - I began it having very limited knowledge about the field of HE and a lot of apprehension about the future, but emerged with renewed passion for my career, confidence in myself and my abilities, and a network of talented and kind individuals. It has unlocked possibilities I never thought would be possible for someone like me.

Edith Richardson

MSc in Education
(Higher Education) 2021-22

