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## Higher education masters

The MSc Education (Higher Education) at the University of Oxford is aimed at future academic, policy, and practitioner leaders in higher education (HE). It provides a critical introduction to research, theory, and policy in this complex field, taking into account a range of national, international and global lenses. During this full-time course, you will have the opportunity to consider a wide range of issues that higher education systems, and, more broadly, tertiary education systems, around the world are facing today. These include: the social and economic contributions of HE; graduate employment and employability; access and widening participation; equity and social and epistemic justice; and funding; student mobility; research on research; the relationship between HE and vocational and technical education and training; institutional governance; rankings; teaching sessions will combine tutor input, class discussion, and working in small groups in order to examine these key issues and the discourses that shape them. You will study three core papers in the first two terms, which consider a wide range of policy issues across higher education systems and the role higher education plays in the economy and society from theoretical, historical and empirical perspectives. Academic staff will also present their own recent research findings, ensuring that the course content reflects live debates at the cutting edge of the field of higher education studies. In addition to these three pathway-specific core papers, two core papers in research methods will develop your understanding of key concepts and principles of educational research design and methodology, using quantitative and qualitative methods and data. You will benefit from the expertise available through the Qualitative Methods Hub and the Quantitative Methods Hub at the Department of Education. The five core modules are: Higher Education: Systems, Structures and Institutions; Higher Education in the Economy and Society; Global Higher Education; Foundations of Educational Research 1: Concepts and Design; Foundations of Educational Research 2: Strategies and Methods; You will also choose one assessed option paper in the second term, from a selection offered by academic staff across the department. The following list provides an indication of modules usually available (please note, this is not a guarantee of availability for any particular elective in a given year): Core Principles of Child Assessment; Critical Digital Innovation; Education in Africa; Education, the Internet and Society; Intermediate Quantitative Research; Perspectives and Debates in Qualitative Research; The Implementation of the Rights of Children; Research in the department is organised around three major themes: Language, Cognition and Development; Policy, Economy and Society; Learning, Pedagogy, Learning and Knowledge. Within each of these themes there are several research groups and centres. All staff and doctoral students belong to one or more of these research groups, each of which has its own seminar programme to which graduate students often contribute. In addition, the department as a whole sponsors seminars and public lectures which attract distinguished national and international speakers. Attendance: Resources to support your study; The Bodleian Education Library, located at the centre of the Department of Education, specialises in material on education and related fields. As well as a print collection of books, journals and statistics, the library provides access to a wide range of electronic resources. The library also houses a collection of teaching resources, primarily in support of subjects covered by the department's secondary PGCE course. The Social Sciences Library provides valuable additional resource to students pursuing programmes in the Department of Education. Supervision: The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Department of Education. This will be done on the basis of the topic of research and the availability of individual supervisors. It is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff. However, the HE teaching team have experience of supervising an extensive range of topics in higher education studies. Under exceptional circumstances a supervisor may be found outside the Department of Education. You will work directly with a supervisor on your dissertation through one-to-one meetings throughout the academic year. You should expect 10 hours of supervision throughout the year. Assessment: You will complete six modules each assessed by coursework, and a dissertation on a topic selected by the student and approved by the supervisor. Graduate destinations: Past master's and doctoral students from the Department of Education have gone on to academic and research careers at a range of universities in the UK and across the world, or are employed across a wide range of other sectors. Some recent student destinations include working for governments as policy makers and analysts, NGOs, or international organisations such as OECD, for think tanks and in University administration and management at local and national levels. The department's 'Conversations with Alumni' feature includes interviews with alumni on their career paths around Oxford. The MSc Education (Higher Education) provides students with the knowledge and skills to take on a wide range of career pathways and many of our graduates continue on to complete doctorates and enter academia, enter management positions in the field of higher education, or work in higher education policy at government level or in different think tanks and NGOs. A first-class or strong upper second-class undergraduate degree with honours in a relevant subject, preferably in the social sciences. For applicants with a bachelor's degree from the USA, to fulfil the undergraduate degree requirement above, the minimum overall GPA sought is 3.6 out of 4.0. GRE General Test scores: No Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or GMAT scores are sought. Other qualifications, evidence of excellence and relevant experience: Publications are not expected. Interviews are normally held as part of the admissions process. Candidates will be shortlisted based on academic ability, potential to succeed and flourish, and alignment of interests with the course content. Interviews for shortlisted candidates are normally held two to six weeks after the closing date of the admissions round. They are normally conducted by two interviewers online using Teams video-conferencing. Interviews will focus on your academic background, the reasons you've applied to the course, and your potential research interests and how these might be developed during the dissertation element of the course, although students are not expected to already have a fully developed research plan as this will be developed in discussions with your supervisors once you have started the course. The department combines international standing as a research-intensive department with the highest quality teaching. It's masters' courses are delivered by academics and research experts, the majority of whom are permanent staff engaged in their fields of research. The DPhil in Education has excellent facilities for the large number of full-time research students who are well integrated into the research of the department. The department has an outstanding research profile. In the 2021 evaluation of research quality in UK universities, the Research Excellence Framework (REF), Oxford University's Department of Education had the highest overall percentage of research judged to be 4\* (ie world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour) in Education in the UK. The department has ESRC recognition for its graduate training, and its teacher training was rated 'outstanding' by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) in its most recent inspection in 2024. A wide range of funded research projects are based in the department and many of these projects have had a major impact on national policy. -> Video of Ahmed Ahmed | My Oxford Further information about funding opportunities for this course can be found on the department's website. Home: 17,900 Overseas: £38,410 There are no compulsory elements of this course that entail additional costs beyond fees and living costs. As part of your course requirements, you will need to choose a dissertation 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 yourself, although you may be able to apply for small grants from your college to help you cover some of these expenses. One of your references should be from your most recent academic tutor. If you are currently in employment, you would be expected to provide a reference from your employer alongside academic references which comment on your academic suitability for the course. Your references will support intellectual ability, academic achievement, motivation and ability to work in a group. Your statement should be written in English and explain your motivation for applying for the course at Oxford, your relevant experience and education, and the specific areas that interest you and/or you intend to specialise in. This will be assessed for: your reasons for applying to this particular course; the areas of study in the subject which interest you; your relevant academic, research and/or practical experience and how these relate to the course and your proposed MSc dissertation project; what you want to achieve from the course you are applying for; your future aspirations, ie where you will take what you have learnt from the course; the nature of the research project that you hope to undertake for your MSc dissertation (if you have ideas about this). Academic essays or other writing samples, written in English, are required. Extracts of the requisite length from longer work are also permissible, in which case it is important to clearly indicate that the submitted text is part of a longer piece of writing. You may submit written work previously completed for a prior course of study if the topic is relevant ie an assignment or chapter of a dissertation etc, provided it meets the requirements. Please clearly indicate for what purpose the piece was originally written. If you do not have any existing material that fits this requirement, we would suggest that you may like to critique an article or write a book review based on the course subject. The written work should be related to the course, and should be on two separate topics. The word count should include any bibliography or brief footnotes. This will be assessed for understanding of the subject area, an ability to construct and defend an argument, an understanding of relevant conventions of academic writing and referencing, and proficiency in academic English. Apply Continue application Norwegian version of this page Programme options The President-in-Residence program helps to anchor academic discussions with real-world experience by bringing a distinguished former college or university president to the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The President-in-Residence will attend classes alongside students, meet with students in one-on-one office hours, and advise students on important academic and career decisions. Christina Royal, president of Holyoke Community College, and David Wippman, president of Hamilton College, have been appointed President-in-Residence for the 2024-25 academic year. The HE Concentration will prepare you for a career in higher education, including college or university positions in such areas as: Academic affairs Admissions and financial aid Development Diversity, equity, and inclusion Institutional research Student affairs As an HE Concentration participant, you will join a dynamic and motivated group of students with interests ranging from improving access and equity to enhancing the college student experience to making higher education more affordable. Outside of class, you and your cohort members will attend speaker series, lectures, and small study groups to engage with scholars, practitioners, and one another in a supportive and vibrant environment. In the fall, the Presidents-in-Residence program allows students access to a distinguished former college or university president who will attend the HE course to offer on-the-ground perspective and will meet regularly with you and your fellow students to offer career guidance and support. You also will have many opportunities to connect with HGSE alumni to explore and develop your professional aspirations and network. Editorial Note: We earn a commission from partner links on Forbes Advisor. Commissions do not affect our editors' opinions or evaluations. Many challenges face higher education in the U.S. today, including declining enrollment, rising costs and changing cultural views on college (to name a few). To succeed in an increasingly competitive environment, postsecondary institutions look for employees with higher education expertise. A master's degree in higher education prepares graduates for the complex, ever-evolving world of higher ed. Programs in this field can qualify learners for roles related to student safety, budget management, equity and diversity initiatives, academic program development and student advising. Learn more about earning a master's in higher education below. What Is a Master's in Higher Education? A master's in higher education is an advanced degree focusing on college and university education environments. It prepares students for careers in leadership and administrative positions within higher ed, including roles like admissions officer, academic advisor, assistant registrar, career services director and alumni relations manager. Graduates can also take this degree outside of higher education to work for nonprofits, professional associations or private testing centers. Degree Specifications Higher education master's programs typically require 30 to 36 credits. Students can enroll full or part time, with many learners completing their degree in two years of full-time study. Programs may follow on-campus, online and hybrid formats. Some schools offer curricular concentrations like administration or adult learning; others let students create a flexible plan of study to meet their career goals. What Will You Learn? Classes cover topics like the history of education, research methods, college administration organization and student advising techniques. In addition to coursework, master's in higher ed programs often feature a supervised internship or practicum in a professional setting. Some programs require students to complete a capstone portfolio project to synthesize their knowledge and demonstrate their skills. Master's in Higher Education vs. Master's in Teaching A master's in higher education is different from a master's in teaching, which focuses specifically on teaching and classroom management, usually in primary and secondary education settings. Admission Requirements for a Higher Education Master's Degree Admission requirements vary by program. Common stipulations and application materials include: Minimum GPA and transcripts: Candidates must usually send official transcripts from every postsecondary institution they attended. Many programs require applicants to have an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher. Writing sample: Applicants may need to submit a writing sample that verifies their research and writing skills. Statement of purpose: Schools often ask prospective students to submit an essay explaining their interest in the program, what makes them a strong candidate for admission or how the degree can help them achieve their career goals. Letters of recommendation: Programs usually require two to three letters of recommendation from references, including professors and work supervisors. Selection committees look for letters attesting to candidates' ability to work with students or in professional settings. Schools often consider references from friends or relatives inappropriate. Admissions interview: Some programs require applicants to sit for a one-on-one interview with a program representative or university official. Common Courses in a Higher Education Master's Degree Program Research and data-based decision-making: This introductory educational research course focuses on qualitative and quantitative research methods. Students learn to implement research and apply it to their practice. The course prepares learners for further study of research methods. Counseling theory and techniques: This course explores the school counseling profession, including its social and cultural history. Coursework focuses on foundational counseling theories, skills and techniques. Other topics include research method applications and college program evaluation. Ethics and leadership in higher education: This course educates students about decision-making in higher education. Learners explore issues administrators must confront as they create ethical cultures within their organizations. Topics include issues like racial and gender inequity. Applied psychology of learning: This course combines research and theory to explore how students learn. Coursework examines subjects like cognitive development and learning environments. Enrollees learn about accommodating students' diverse needs. Advising and supervision: This course teaches best practices for a student advising and supervision. Learners may be able to pair this course with an internship for hands-on experience in a classroom. What Can You Do With a Master's in Higher Education? We sourced salary data for this section from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Payscale in October 2023. Postsecondary Education Administrator Median Annual Salary: \$99,940 Minimum Required Education: Master's in education leadership or a related field Job Overview: Postsecondary education administrators oversee academics, student services and faculty research at colleges and universities. They work as provosts and academic deans. They can find employment in offices that specialize in areas like multicultural affairs, housing and residential affairs. Career Counselor Median Annual Salary: \$60,140 Minimum Required Education: Master's degree Job Overview: Career counselors use aptitude and achievement assessments to help people evaluate their skills and abilities, understand job requirements and develop plans to achieve career goals. They teach people skills like interviewing and networking. They work as career coaches for currently employed workers and as college advisors to help students choose majors and determine career choices. Instructional Coordinator Median Annual Salary: \$66,490 Minimum Required Education: Master's degree Job Overview: Instructional coordinators supervise teaching standards and school curricula. They create educational materials and implement them with teachers and principals. These professionals may also analyze student test data and recommend targeted teaching practices. Instructional coordinators work in primary and secondary schools as well as institutions of higher learning. Director of Admissions Average Annual Salary: About \$64,000 Minimum Required Education: Bachelor's degree Job Overview: Admissions directors work with higher education institutions to evaluate prospective student applications. They manage student recruitment efforts, attend recruiting events, review candidate applications and communicate with students. Librarian Median Annual Salary: \$61,190 Minimum Required Education: Master's in library science or a related field Job Overview: Librarians help people find information and conduct research. Tasks they perform include creating databases, organizing library materials and teaching classes. These professionals can work in various roles: academic librarian, administrative services librarian, public librarian, corporate librarian, law librarian and medical librarian. School Principal Median Annual Salary: \$101,320 Minimum Required Education: Master's degree in educational administration or a related field Job Overview: Principals oversee operations of elementary, middle and high schools. They manage school activities and staff. These professionals may also help develop and maintain curriculum standards. In addition to counseling and disciplining students, principals observe and evaluate teachers. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About Master's Degrees in Higher Education Whether a master's in higher education is worth it depends on your career goals. Earning this degree can qualify you for an array of roles that offer higher-than-average salaries, including postsecondary education administrator and instructional coordinator. No, though the two degrees are similar. A master's in teaching focuses on classroom management and teaching in primary and secondary classroom contexts. A master's in education usually has a broader focus, exploring topics like administration, policy and curriculum development.