

A virtual open day was recorded in 2011 which addresses the structure of the course and answers a range of frequently asked questions. To view this open day go to [www.conted.ox.ac.uk/cwopenday](http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/cwopenday).

## FAQ

### **How much influence do colleges have on the success of an application?**

None. Applications are only considered by a college once a student has been offered a place.

### **For the application, can I submit the first chapter of my first novel (on which I am working now)?**

Your submitted work should aim to demonstrate the strengths of your writing and your current writing interests.

Please note that if you submit substantially more than 2000 words, only the first section would be read by the interview panel. For full course details, including enrollment requirements, please see [www.conted.ox.ac.uk/mstcw](http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/mstcw).

### **How long should my statement of purpose be?**

The statement of purpose needs to be full enough to give an appropriate picture of the matters you address. There is no fixed length but around a page is suggested.

### **When would I find out whether I have been accepted or not into the course?**

That depends, among other things, on how many applications we receive, the strength of the field, and the number of candidates we call for interview. We will do our best not to keep you waiting unduly, but some applicants are placed on a waiting list and final places may in some cases be confirmed as late as July or August.

### **On average, how many people apply and how many are accepted?**

We have usually received around 150 applications for a 15-person cohort.

### **Must I supply three references and must they be strictly academic?**

We're looking for referees who could give insight into a candidate's writerly and academic capabilities. These referees would usually be academics who have taught the candidate, or appropriately qualified/experienced people who can comment on a candidate's commitment to creative writing and suitability to pursue a course of this nature at graduate level.

Full details are in the Application Guide:

[http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/postgraduate\\_courses/apply/application\\_guide.html#references](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/postgraduate_courses/apply/application_guide.html#references)

### **Do I need to send a proof of my knowledge of English, if I have my degree from an English speaking university, but I am national from a non-English-speaking country?**

Successful applicants whose first language is not English would need to provide proof of their language ability at the higher standard. Please see

[http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/postgraduate\\_courses/apply/internat\\_students.html](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/postgraduate_courses/apply/internat_students.html) for more information.

### **I noticed there are two course application deadlines, January and March. Is there any benefit to early submission?**

There are two application deadlines, in January and March, and both application deadlines relate to the same start date of September of the same year. The likelihood of being accepted for the MSt is not reduced by applying by the second deadline. However students wishing to be considered for some scholarships (e.g. the Clarendon scholarship) need to apply by the first deadline.

**It would be terribly costly for me to fly in for each residency, so I have a strong desire to relocate to the UK. What type of visa would I be eligible to apply for?**

For visa enquiries, please contact [Student.Immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Student.Immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk) in the first instance. Because the MSt is a part-time course, we do not issue a CAS and international students will not be able to get a Tier Four visa to enable them to come and live in the UK.

**Will the University or my college provide accommodation?**

The University doesn't offer accommodation for part-time postgrads - see <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/accommodation/graduate/eligible.shtml>. However, depending on the specific college students apply for, there may be some accommodation through college for students. Accommodation for the residences and retreats is included in the course fee (see below).

**Do I have to live in Oxford to attend the course?**

No. Students need to be resident in Oxford for the duration of the Residences and Retreats only (accommodation for these events is pre-arranged and included in the fees quoted).

**Is there a minimum cut-off for what your university average needs to be in order to be accepted?**

Students often come to the course with a high 2:1 or a first, but people with lower results or with no degree have been accepted if they can prove their suitability in other ways.

**Can I send you a sample of my work to assess my level and suitability for the course and/or for your comments and critique?**

Unfortunately we are unable to read or discuss applicants' work outside the formal application process, nor can we offer feedback on an individual's work either before application or after an unsuccessful application.

**I took my first degree/other formal qualification a long time ago and transcripts may not be available. What can I do?**

A transcript is an official record from your current or former institution outlining the marks or grades you have achieved during study. A degree certificate is not a transcript, and we will not be able to accept one in lieu of a transcript. If an institution cannot supply a transcript, we'd need confirmation in writing (e-mail is quickest) from the undergraduate institution that they cannot do so, and confirming any details they still have on record for the student (i.e. qualification achieved, date achieved etc.). If transcripts or confirmation aren't supplied, the application will be marked as "incomplete" by Graduate Admissions and we unfortunately can't consider it.

**What funding is available?**

For financial aid information, in the first instance, you should speak to our Student Advisor, Rosie Martin - [Rosie.Martin@conted.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Rosie.Martin@conted.ox.ac.uk) - who will be able to help you with any scholarship queries. You may be eligible to apply for a Clarendon Scholarship: <http://www.clarendon.ox.ac.uk/about/>. The following website may also have some useful information: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/feesandfunding/search>.

**In a typical cohort, how many students are accepted for the course and what is usual the percentage numbers of poets, novelists, and dramatists?**

We are currently accepting 30 students per year (two cohorts of 15). The percentage of poets to novelists and dramatists varies every year.

**I mostly write for a younger audience (children & YA). Would there be resources for me in Oxford's program? Would I be out of place?**

We don't specifically offer a children's or young adult writing option at the moment, but it is possible to explore specific interests within the structure of the course.

**I'm wondering how important previous qualifications are to the selection process, and whether it is possible to gain access to the course based on the quality of one's writing alone?**

We are pleased to receive applications from a very diverse range of candidates - the ages and backgrounds of our students vary very widely, and participants on the course have included writers with a rich variety of different academic and professional levels of experience. We're looking for candidates who can demonstrate evidence of sustained commitment to creative reading and writing - applicants do not need to be previously published, but the MSt is unlikely to be suitable for those who are just starting out on their writerly and critical development.

**What does "clustered learning format" mean – am I right in thinking there aren't day-to-day classes but instead residences only during the two year program? If live in another country then we would not live at Oxford for two years, but instead just fly in for these residences during the two years. Is that correct?**

Attendance is compulsory at all of the residences and retreats, and the dates are not flexible. The high number of contact hours in the MSt are concentrated into the residences and retreats. You would also be expected to come to Oxford for a day in order to matriculate (there are several possible dates for this) and there is a one to two week research placement, which usually takes place at some point between September - February of Year Two. The course is not a 'distance-learning' course, and tutors, while being happy to help with questions or problems, do not offer regular weekly 'office hours'.

**Why is the programme organised in the "clustered learning format"?**

We have put together a very carefully planned programme which mimics the way a writer works in 'real life' - that is, enjoying periods of intense stimulation and then facing the challenges of that central writerly requirement - the need to wrestle with the ways and means of producing a piece of writing.

**Can you give more particulars about the books we will be reading and examining during the course?**

We provide detailed course content to registered students, and unfortunately we aren't able to publish reading lists to non-members of the course.

**During the residencies, what is the format of learning? Lecture style, or do you have writing workshops, where everyone offers critique on a classmate's work?**

The tuition of the MSt is highly interactive, whether in writing workshops or critical seminars. Visiting readers and speakers also address the group.

**What are the nationalities of students attending this course?**

We have a wide range of nationalities and cultures on the course. In recent years, we have had students from (among other countries) the UK, USA, Poland, the Philippines, Denmark, Greece, Canada, Israel, Ireland, Italy, Australia, Kenya, Nepal, Canada, Afghanistan, Peru, and France.

**Can I take the course as a one year full time option?**

This is not currently possible.

**Would I be able to engage in other post-graduate studies during the same time as the program?**

We would strongly advise against this. The MSt, although offered part-time, is a very intensive course.

**Do students on the course have full time jobs?**

Many of our students hold down full time jobs, but - although part-time - the course is intensive and time consuming, with deadlines to be met and regular assignments and projects to be completed, so careful time-management is needed

**What would you say is the typical student-professor ratio? How much access do students have to professors outside of structured times of instruction/tutoring?**

We have designed the intensive format to capitalize on Tutor input and guidance, but to leave the student plenty of scope for individual exploration and development. This means that there are substantial elements of time where the student is expected to be getting on with her or his own creative and critical work, according to pre-agreed directions and criteria.

Group work with a tutor is usually to a maximum of 15, however, there is considerable 1:1 tuition (all assessed work is subject to 1:1 discussion).

During year 2 each student is assigned a supervisor to guide the year-long development of the substantial creative project and its accompanying critical essay.

**I haven't been published. Is that a handicap?**

No.

**Career destinations - where do graduates tend to work after the graduation?**

Our graduates are achieving high levels of success in their writing, in all genres (see <http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/mstew> for more information). Graduates also go on to doctoral study, to jobs in publishing, and to positions in academe or the creative arts industries.

**I would like to hear more about the placements - the range of placements, the length of placements and the way in which placements are found and allocated to students.**

The Research Placement offers between one and two weeks' hands-on experience of writing in the real world. Students may undertake their placement in a literary agency, a publishing house, the offices of a literary periodical, a theatre company, a screen production company, or other relevant organization. Students receive guidance on how to set up their placement, which need not be in the UK. The course team offers help and support in indentifying and taking up suitable opportunities.

**What support does the course include for getting published?**

In Year 2 of the course we engage top agents and publishers to meet our students and share their views of contemporary issues in writing and publishing. Among those who have joined us to date are Simon Trewin (United Agents), Victoria Hobbs (AM Heath), Clara Farmer (Editorial Director, Chatto), Stuart Williams (Editorial Director, Harvill Secker), Alex Bowler (Senior Editor, Jonathan Cape), Euan Thorneycroft (AM Heath) and Caroline Wood (Felicity Bryan Agency). Graduating students read new work at a "showcase" led by a well-known writer and attended by agents and publishers, as well as members of the public.

**I'm not a recent graduate – in fact, I'm quite well on into middle life – will my age count against me? Conversely, would being young count against me? What is the age range of your students?**

The course is open to writers of all ages and from a wide variety of backgrounds. We're looking for writers who can demonstrate a sustained commitment to creative writing and reading, and who are at a stage where they will benefit from immersion in the stimulation and challenges of the course.

**I'm really a committed poet/ fiction writer/dramatist. Will I really have to work seriously in more than one genre?**

Yes. Cross genre exploration is a central principle of the course. In Year 1 particularly, students are encouraged to experiment as widely as possible beyond the limits of what they have hitherto felt their writing might be aiming to do, while in Year 2 they work on material and genre-specialisation of their own choosing.

**I'm writing a lot, and I used to read widely, but that has gone by the board over recent years. If I were asked in interview to name some contemporary poets and fiction writers I've read recently, or contemporary dramatists whose work I'm familiar with, I'd be hard pressed. Is the course for me?**

Critical reading of texts is a fundamental part of the critical analytical development of students at Master's level. We are looking for writers who are also keen and consistent readers, and who have a strong potential for thinking and writing critically as well as creatively.

**I am a journalist, and have written many creative articles and features. I'm keen to widen my writing now, in the kinds of directions the Oxford MSt would take it. Will a portfolio of my journalism be an appropriate submission with my application?**

You should submit a portfolio which demonstrates your work in prose (fiction or narrative non-fiction), poetry or drama (see detail of application guidelines). A portfolio which consisted only, or largely, of journalism would not be appropriate.

**The photos show an old building - are there physical access facilities for disabled students?**

We are committed to offering advice and support to any student who has a disability or learning difficulty. For more information please see <http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/students/accessibility.php>.

**I have more questions – who should I ask?**

Please contact Rebecca Rue, the course administrator ([rebecca.rue@conted.ox.ac.uk](mailto:rebecca.rue@conted.ox.ac.uk)). If you have any specifically academic (rather than administrative or logistical) questions she will be happy to forward them on to Dr Morgan.