

Applying to the Oxford Interdisciplinary Life and Environmental Science Landscape Award (ILES LA)

This programme is jointly funded by BBSRC and NERC.

The programme involves three university partners and there are multiple entry routes to the programme. If you wish to apply to Oxford University and/or the Open University, in addition to applying to Oxford Brookes, you should complete a separate application form for each organisation. Please visit the [Oxford University course webpage](#) and the overall [Oxford University programme webpage](#) for further details.

To apply to Oxford Brookes University, please follow the instructions given in this document. Email hlsapplications@brookes.ac.uk to request the relevant forms.

You should submit your application documents in the format advised, to hlsapplications@brookes.ac.uk, by the stated deadline. The application deadline for September 2025 entry is Wednesday 29th January 2025 at 12:00 midday UK time.

You should refer to the information below when completing the application form, paying attention to the specific requirements for the supporting documents. If any document does not meet the specification, including the stipulated word count, your application may be considered incomplete and not assessed by the academic department.

Completing your application

You should include the application documents as described below.

1. Application form

Please complete the form as fully as possible.

Please identify the research theme as listed below, that most closely aligns with your research interests:

Climate and Earth

Biodiversity and Sustainability

Animal and Human Health

Rules of Life

Transformative Technologies

If your interests span multiple themes please number them in order of priority eg '1. Rules of Life, 2. Biodiversity and Sustainability'. If you are interested in undertaking a project with a partner in our Open Innovation Industrial Consortium, please also add 'Open Innovation Industrial Consortium'. We are expanding this consortium, so please include this text if you are interested in working with an industrial partner,

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even if you are not certain whether you wish to work with a partner that is currently listed on the website.

Please identify any supervisors that you are particularly interested in working with. We will send a list of Oxford Brookes supervisors to you so that you can explore their areas of work and contact them directly with any enquiries. You will find their profiles on our [website](#).

2. Referees:

Three overall, academic preferred.

Please provide details on the application form of three academic referees, along with the confirmation that we should contact them. We will write to them once we have received your application form. One professional reference can be accepted if you have relevant work experience, but academic references are preferred. Your references will support proven and potential academic excellence in terms of intellectual ability, academic achievement, motivation, ability to work in a group and independently, and relevant experience or skills.

3. Statement of purpose:

A maximum of 1,000 words

You should email us an appropriate statement of purpose with your application. This will be a standalone Word document in the format described below. Please include your name on the document.

Please see *content and assessment of your statement of purpose* for further details about what to include.

Applications for entry via Oxford University or The Open University:

If you are applying separately for entry via Oxford University or the Open University you should use the same statement of purpose for each application.

Content and assessment of your statement of purpose

Please provide your statement of purpose, in English, describing how your background and research interests relate to the course, following the exact template and headings outlined below using a font that is 11pt in size such as Arial, Calibri or Helvetica. The statement should focus primarily on academic, research or employment-related achievements and interests rather than personal achievements and interests.

It will be normal for your ideas and goals to change in some ways as you participate in the course and by submitting your statement of purpose you are not making a commitment to work in the specific subject area(s) described or with any supervisor(s) you highlight in your application. You should nevertheless make the best effort you can to demonstrate your current interests and aspirations.

If you are applying for part-time study, you should provide evidence of your ability to commit sufficient time to study and fulfil all elements outlined in the course description (eg completing coursework, assessments, and attending course and University events and modules).

If possible, please ensure that the word count is clearly displayed on the document. Your statement should include the following headings, with each section not exceeding the stated word limit:

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1. **Motivation for doctoral study** (200 words): Briefly explain your motivation for undertaking doctoral study, including at least one specific example of how you have prepared yourself for doctoral study that illustrates your commitment and motivation.
2. **Achievements and experience** (300 words): Summarise your previous achievements and experience, including information on any research you have conducted, relevant employment or work experience (if any), and any activities or experience that illustrate your communication skills, team skills or personal strengths.
3. **Research interests** (300 words): Please describe your current research interests and identify at least two supervisors or groups that you are particularly interested in working with, explaining which aspects of their work most interest you. If relevant, please state whether you have already established contact with one or more of the supervisors named and the nature of this contact. Please also identify any of the organisations within the partnership that you are particularly interested in working with. Please state specifically if you are interested in undertaking a project with partners in our Open Innovation Industrial Consortium or with other collaborative partners.
4. **Motivation for applying to the DPhil in Interdisciplinary Life and Environmental Science** (200 words): Explain your motivation for applying to this doctoral course.

Your statement of purpose will be assessed for:

- your reasons for applying
- evidence of motivation for and understanding of the proposed area of study
- the ability to present a reasoned case in English
- your commitment to the subject, beyond the requirements of the course
- preliminary knowledge of research techniques
- your capacity for sustained and intense work
- your ability to absorb new ideas, often presented abstractly, at a rapid pace
- understanding of problems in the area and ability to construct and defend an argument
- your ability to commit sufficient time to study and fulfil all elements outlined in the course description if you are applying for part-time study.

4. CV.

You must use the CV template that we send to you. Do not modify the document or submit your CV in a different format.

5. Official transcript(s)

Your transcripts should give detailed information of the individual grades received in your university-level qualifications to date. You should only upload official documents issued by your institution and any transcript not in English should be accompanied by a certified translation. [More information about the transcript requirement](#) is available in the Oxford University Application Guide. Contact hlsapplications@brookes.ac.uk as early as possible if you have any questions or to check that your documents meet the required format

6. English Language Certificate (if appropriate)

International applicants must have a valid IELTS Academic test certificate (or equivalent – please contact us to check equivalency) with an overall minimum score of 7.5 and no score below 7.0 issued in the last 2 years - before the start of the course - by an approved test centre. If English is your second language please check with us if you have any questions about an English Language Certificate or alternative. Certain [alternatives](#) may be acceptable.

7. Contextual Statement (Optional)

If you wish to provide a contextual statement with your application, you may also submit an additional statement to provide contextual information on your socio-economic background or personal circumstances in support of your application. It is not necessary to anonymise this document, as we recognise that it may be necessary for you to disclose certain information in your statement. This statement will not be used as part of the initial academic assessment of applications at shortlisting, but may be used in combination with socio-economic data to provide contextual information during decision-making processes. Please note, this statement is in addition to completing any other details. You can find more information about the contextual statement on the Oxford University page that provides details of the continuing pilot programme to improve the assessment procedure for graduate applications.

8. Socio-economic questionnaire (Optional)

We will send you a socio-economic questionnaire, which you have the option of returning to us with your application. Please visit the relevant [Oxford University webpage](#) for further details.

Please note:

Applications to all three universities are reviewed as a gathered field. This means that if you are shortlisted for interview, you will normally only be interviewed once for entry into the programme. You will benefit from the same programme structure and training programme irrespective of which organisation(s) you apply to.