

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: DPhil in Astrophysics



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	3 to 4 years

About the course

The DPhil in Astrophysics is a research-based degree available to students interested in carrying out research in observational or theoretical astrophysics, or in astronomical instrumentation.

This research-based course normally takes three to four years of study and has a strong track record of preparing students for careers in academia and elsewhere. You will be a member of a lively research environment and the department places great emphasis on matching student and supervisor.

You will be expected to carry out your own research project, which will be offered from the Sub-department of Astrophysics' broad range of research areas. These include:

- cosmology;
- exoplanets and stellar physics;
- galaxies;
- instrumentation;
- theory; and
- transients, pulsars and high-energy astrophysics.

Your research work begins on day one and will be underpinned by a taught graduate course in the first year that runs in parallel. It will provide a comprehensive overview of both the state of modern astrophysics and the necessary skills required to make progress in 21st century research. You will also have the opportunity to follow courses taught at other departments across the Maths, Physics and Life Sciences division.

You will engage in a thorough skills training programme which includes a range of workshops and seminars in transferable skills, generic research skills and specific research techniques. There are also numerous seminars and lectures held in the department by local and visiting physicists, and you will be provided with many opportunities to meet experts in various fields. There will also be opportunity for you to present your work at both formal and informal conferences, seminars and colloquia.

Attendance

The course is full-time and requires attendance in Oxford. Full-time students are subject to the University's Residence requirements.

During your DPhil, you will be expected (and supported) to travel, both to meet and work with collaborators and to carry out fieldwork where appropriate, through trips to observatories and on-site experimental work.

Provision exists for students on some courses to undertake their research in a 'well-founded laboratory' outside of the University. This may require travel to and attendance at a site that is not located in Oxford. Where known, existing collaborations will be outlined on this page. Please read the course information carefully, including the additional information about course fees and costs.

Resources to support your study

As a graduate student, you will have access to the University's wide range of world-class resources including libraries, museums, galleries, digital resources and IT services.

The Bodleian Libraries is the largest library system in the UK. It includes the main Bodleian Library and libraries across Oxford, including major research libraries and faculty, department and institute libraries. Together, the Libraries hold more than 13 million printed items, provide access to e-journals, and contain outstanding special collections including rare books and manuscripts, classical papyri, maps, music, art and printed ephemera.

The University's IT Services is available to all students to support with core university IT systems and tools, as well as many other services and facilities. IT Services also offers a range of IT learning courses for students, to support with learning and research.

You will have access to appropriate computing equipment and support, which will be discussed with you before your arrival. This may include access to high performance computing and to the full range of space and ground-based facilities where

necessary. Additionally, if you are working on a computationally intensive project, you will have appropriate access to the departmental cluster computers and national facilities.

You will be provided with a desk in a shared office space in the Denys Wilkinson Building - or, if appropriate, with the theory sub-department - alongside astrophysics staff, with whom you will share a variety of meeting rooms and an on-site canteen which doubles as a social space for the group.

Supervision

For this course, the allocation of graduate supervision is the responsibility of the Department of Physics and it is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff.

Your DPhil offer is based on working with a named supervisor(s), who you will have the opportunity to meet individually with to discuss your project. Your supervisor(s) will be your main source of information and advice throughout the course of your research. Their responsibilities include giving you early advice about the nature of research and the standard expected, and about planning the framework of your research programme. It is likely that you will also be working closely with other members of that supervisor's group, and sometimes collaborators from other institutes (some of you may even be jointly supervised by an academic from another institute). There may be an option to add a co-supervisor if you find yourself working closely with another group member. Under exceptional circumstances, a supervisor may be found outside the Department of Physics.

Assessment

All students will be initially admitted to the status of Probationer Research Student (PRS). Within a maximum of six terms as a PRS student (and normally by the fourth term) you will be expected to apply for transfer of status from Probationer Research Student to DPhil status.

A successful transfer of status from PRS to DPhil status will require satisfactory attendance at the compulsory graduate lecture programme. You will also be required to write a report on your progress during the first year and you will be assessed by two members of staff (neither of whom will be your primary supervisor). Students who are successful at transfer will also be expected to apply for and gain confirmation of DPhil status within nine terms of admission, to show that your work continues to be on track.

Both milestones normally involve an interview with two assessors (other than your supervisor) and therefore provide important experience for the final oral examination.

You will be expected to submit a thesis of no more than 250 pages (roughly 125,000 words) within four years from the date of admission. To be successfully awarded a DPhil in Astrophysics you will need to defend your thesis orally (viva voce) in front of two appointed examiners.

Changes to this 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 you commence your course. These might include significant changes made necessary by any pandemic, epidemic or local health emergency. For further information, please see the University's Terms and Conditions (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/terms>) and our page on changes to courses (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges>).

Costs

Annual fees for entry in 2025-26

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£10,070
Overseas	£33,370

Information about course fees

Course fees are payable each year, for the duration of your fee liability (your fee liability is the length of time for which you are required to pay course fees). For courses lasting longer than one year, please be aware that fees will usually increase annually. Information about how much fees and other costs may increase is set out in the University's Terms and Conditions (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/terms>).

Course fees cover your teaching as well as other academic services and facilities provided to support your studies. Unless specified in the additional cost information (below), course fees do not cover your accommodation, residential costs or other living costs. They also don't cover any additional costs and charges that are outlined in the additional cost information.

Graduate students who have reached the end of their standard period of fee liability may be required to pay a termly University and/or a college continuation charge.

The University continuation charge, per term for entry in 2025-26 is £672, please be aware that this will increase annually. For part-time students, the termly charge will be half of the termly rate payable by full-time students.

If a college continuation charge applies (not applicable for non-matriculated courses) it is likely to be in the region of £100 to £600. Please contact your college for more details, including information about whether your college's continuation charge is applied at a different rate for part-time study.

Additional cost information

There are no compulsory elements of this course that entail additional costs beyond fees (or, after fee liability ends, continuation charges) and living costs. However, please note that, depending on your choice of research 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, although you may be able to apply for small grants from your department and/or college to help you cover some of these expenses.

Living costs

In addition to your course fees and any additional course-specific costs, you will need to ensure that you have adequate funds to support your living costs for the duration of your course.

The likely living costs for the 2025-26 academic year are published below. These costs are based on a single, full-time graduate student, with no dependants, living in Oxford. We provide the cost per month so you can multiply up by the number of months you expect to live in Oxford.

Likely living costs for one month

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£330	£515
Accommodation	£790	£955
Personal items	£200	£335
Social activities	£45	£100
Study costs	£40	£90
Other	£20	£40
Total	£1,425	£2,035

Likely living costs for nine months

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£2,970	£4,635
Accommodation	£7,110	£8,595
Personal items	£1,800	£3,015
Social activities	£405	£900
Study costs	£360	£810
Other	£180	£360
Total	£12,825	£18,315

Likely living costs for twelve months

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£3,960	£6,180
Accommodation	£9,480	£11,460
Personal items	£2,400	£4,020
Social activities	£540	£1,200
Study costs	£480	£1,080
Other	£240	£480
Total	£17,100	£24,420

When planning your finances for any future years of study at Oxford beyond the 2025-26 academic year, it is suggested that you allow for potential increases in living expenses of 4% each year – although this rate may vary depending on the national economic situation.

More information about how these figures have been calculated is available at www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/livingcosts.

Document accessibility

If you require a more accessible version of this document please contact Graduate Admissions and Recruitment by email (graduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk) or via the online form (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/ask/form>).