

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: DPhil in Theoretical Physics



Course facts

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

About the course

The DPhil in Theoretical Physics is a research-based course of three to four years in duration. As a student working towards your DPhil in Theoretical Physics, you will choose from topics ranging from astrophysics and plasma physics to condensed matter theory to particle theory.

The course is hosted by the Theoretical Physics sub-department, one of six sub-departments of the Department of Physics. The sub-department collaborates with experimentalists in other sub-departments and worldwide. There are also theoretical projects available in other sub-departments.

You will be assigned to a research group and your research project will be your main focus throughout your DPhil. Your research work begins on day one and will be underpinned by a taught graduate course in the first year that runs in parallel. To increase your basic and specialist physics knowledge you will be required to attend lectures and other courses in your first year. You will 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.

You will be assigned to a research group: work on your original research project will start immediately and continue for the duration of your DPhil. Your research project will be your main focus throughout your DPhil, but to increase your basic and specialist physics knowledge you will be required to attend lectures and courses in your first year. This includes courses from the MMathPhys programme, as well as the seminars and colloquia that are held in the department.

During your DPhil you are encouraged to attend conferences and summer schools inside or outside the UK and the department supports such attendance financially.

Attendance

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

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.

You will be expected to travel during your DPhil, both to meet and work with collaborators and to share your work, as well as attend conferences and summer schools inside or outside the UK. The department will normally be able to support such attendance financially.

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.

As a DPhil student of Theoretical Physics, you will have access to a 2,344 CPU core HPC computing cluster and appropriate computing support. You will be provided with a personal desktop computer in your office in the department, at the department's expense.

You will be provided with personal office space in the Rudolf Peierls Centre for Theoretical Physics alongside staff members, with whom you will share a variety of meeting rooms and an on-site canteen(s) which doubles as a social space for the group.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course 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. Under exceptional circumstances, a supervisor may be found outside the Department of Physics.

The frequency of student supervisor meetings varies depending on the nature of the project. You are welcome to contact potential supervisors for further information.

Assessment

At the end of the first year you are expected to submit a report on your research and to defend it in an interview with the Graduate Studies Panel and a specialist reader. The panel will determine whether you can transfer status from Probationer Research Student (PRS) status to DPhil student status.

You will be expected to submit a substantial original thesis after three or, at most, four years from the date of admission. To be successfully awarded a DPhil 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

You will be expected to travel during your DPhil, both to meet and work with collaborators and to share your work. The sub department of Theoretical Physics funds a minimum of one summer/winter school per student per year which includes accommodation and travel costs. These funds are available to all students.

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>).