

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: DPhil in International Development



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time	Part Time
Expected length	3-4 years	6-8 years

About the course

The DPhil in International Development provides an opportunity for outstanding students to pursue in-depth multi- and interdisciplinary research, guided by leading scholars in the field, into processes of social, political and economic development and change in the global South.

Academics at the Oxford Department of International Development (ODID) can offer supervision in a wide range of subjects, including migration, refugees and humanitarianism; urban, agrarian and environmental development; political and social change and conflict; state-making and disciplinary regimes; public health and social policies; global governance, diplomatic studies, and security; economic growth and structural transformation; macroeconomics and public finance; firms and households; poverty and inequality; and technology. The department also has close connections with other departments and research centres across the University.

As a DPhil student you will undertake your own original research project under the guidance of your supervisor. The supervisor will help develop and guide your project and, at later stages, provide feedback on chapter drafts. However, you will work to a significant extent on your own, and you will need a high level of motivation and self-discipline.

During an initial probationary period as a Probationer Research Student (PRS), you will develop and begin work on your thesis topic. You will be offered training in relevant research methods, language, computing and other skills, and you will have the opportunity to attend lectures, seminars and classes in your general topic area.

As a PRS, you will also take one taught course, either in research methods or from an Oxford master's degree relevant to your research, which will be examined. Full-time students usually transfer to full DPhil status by the end of their first year and part-time students usually transfer by the end of their second year.

Following satisfactory progress and transfer to full DPhil status, you may leave Oxford for up to three terms (six terms for part-time students) in order to conduct fieldwork, if the project requires. You will then continue the course by carrying out your own research under the guidance of your supervisor, with whom you will have the opportunity to meet or correspond with. Full-time students should return to Oxford after fieldwork for at least three terms.

As a doctoral student you will become part of a vibrant research community. The department hosts around 70 outstanding academics researching in four broad themes: economics of development; political and international dimensions of development; human development, poverty and youth; and migration and refugees in a global context. We host a diverse set of research groups that are at the forefront of their specialist fields: the International Growth Centre, the Centre for the Study of African Economics, the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, the Refugee Studies Centre, the Technology and Management Centre for Development, Young Lives, and Choosing Islamic Conservatism. These all contribute to the doctoral programme by providing case studies, fieldwork support and specialist supervision, alongside scholars working independently.

You will have access to a wide range of seminars organised by the department as well as an enormous variety of events across the wider University. The department has its own lively and well-attended weekly DPhil work-in-progress seminar, at which you can present your ideas and receive feedback from your peers, as well as dedicated workshops for the DPhil.

You will also have access to training opportunities provided by the Social Sciences Divisional Office, which offers advanced research and career development training.

Attendance

The course can be studied full-time or part-time with both modes requiring attendance in Oxford. Full-time students are subject to the University's Residence requirements. Part-time students are required to attend course-related activities in Oxford for a minimum of 30 days each year.

Time to completion depends on the complexity of your individual research programme and on the amount of fieldwork that may be required. The University considers that the normal time for completion of the DPhil should be three to four years (four to eight years for part-time), or for students who transfer to the DPhil after the MPhil in Development Studies two to three years (four to six years for part-time), although the exact time will vary depending on the complexity and ambition of the

project. In exceptional circumstances there are procedures in place which allow students to apply for extensions of time or to suspend their status for fixed periods of time.

Full-time students are expected to be resident in Oxford for the PRS period.

If you study part-time, you will be required to attend classes, seminars, supervision meetings and other obligations in Oxford for a certain number of days each year. In your first year as a probationer student, it is expected that you will need to be resident in Oxford for a minimum of 48 working days in the year in order to participate in induction activities at the start of the academic year and then classes and seminars for your Qualifying Examination. The exact days will depend on the choice of course for the Qualifying Examination and whether the classes take place in Michaelmas or Hilary term.

After the probationary period, you will be required to be resident for a minimum of 30 days of university-based work each year, normally coinciding with the full terms of the academic year. These days will be arranged with the agreement of your supervisor and will be for the period that your name remains on the Register of Graduate Students unless individually dispensed by the Departmental Graduate Studies Committee. There will be limited flexibility in the dates and pattern of attendance, which will be determined by mutual agreement with your supervisor.

Applicants wishing to study part-time while in employment will be asked to provide a letter from their employer confirming that they are supportive of the study and are willing to release them from the workplace for study in Oxford, independent study and any fieldwork necessary for data collection. In addition, where appropriate, students will be required to obtain the written agreement from their employer for the use of their employer's data in their research.

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.

Libraries

In addition to the world-class resources of the Bodleian Libraries, the Social Sciences Library, the largest freestanding social science library in the UK with considerable print and digital strengths in development studies and a specialist librarian, is nearby. As alumni of the University, students can sign up for lifetime access to key online journals.

IT support

Doctoral students share a dedicated work area of the building, with full IT facilities, including computers, printers, scanners and Wi-Fi access. Course materials are available online via Canvas, the University's Virtual Learning Environment.

Department facilities

In addition to the dedicated doctoral work area there is a common room area where students from all the department's courses can gather. Light lunches are available during term in the department's cafeteria.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Oxford Department of International Development and it is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff.

In the case of students who require specific help to adjust to an academic programme or to a new range of skills, the supervisor will work with them to ensure that they have additional support.

The availability of supervision varies year on year and candidates are advised to review the list of eligible supervisors from the department's webpage for the DPhil course to ensure their areas of interest are compatible. While the department is home to a large number of researching academics, not all are able to supervise DPhils.

Each student/supervisor relationship is different and the number of meetings varies, but generally, students are likely to meet with their supervisor two or three times per term.

Assessment

You will be admitted initially as a Probationer Research Student (PRS). At the end of your first year, you will be examined on one taught course (either in research methods or from an Oxford master's degree relevant to your research). You must pass this course in order to transfer from PRS status to full DPhil status. You also need departmental approval of a fully developed research plan, which you will present in your transfer paper to two assessors approved by the department's Graduate Studies Committee. Within a maximum of four terms as a full-time PRS student or eight terms as a part-time PRS student, you will be expected to apply for and achieve transfer of status from Probationer Research Student to DPhil status. The department's preference is for Transfer to be completed by the end of the third term (full-time) or sixth term (part-time) in order for students to commence fieldwork during the Trinity Term summer vacation.

Assessment of progress will be made during sessions with your supervisor and also in more formal viva voce assessments – for the Transfer of Status and for Confirmation of Status (usually at the end of the third year for full-time students and end of the sixth year for part-time students). More information on these two assessments can be found in the course handbook on the ODID website's course page.

DPhil students submit their thesis for examination three to four years (or six to eight years for part-time) from the date of admission and defend their thesis in a viva voce examination which takes place between the student and their 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

Full-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£16,330
Overseas	£29,350

Part-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£8,165
Overseas	£14,675

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

Full-time study

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, 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. Most students will choose a topic which will require them to do fieldwork for their thesis. This will usually be done after transferring status from Probationer Research Student to DPhil status. Students should note that they will have to meet all costs of fieldwork themselves and these costs are likely to include travel and related costs such as visas, accommodation, subsistence, translation and research assistant services if required. These costs will vary widely according to the location and length of the fieldwork and the department estimates that these costs may range from £2,000 to £20,000 or more. Each DPhil student is able to apply for a fieldwork grant of £800. This is awarded once only. Students who have fieldwork grants from ESRC are not able to apply for this grant. Further information will be provided in the course handbook. You may also be able to apply for small grants from your college to help you cover some of these expenses.

Part-time study

Please note that you are required to attend in Oxford for a minimum of 30 days each year (more in your first year), and you may incur additional travel and accommodation expenses for this. Also, depending on your choice of research topic and the research required to complete it, you may incur further 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.

If you are studying part-time your living costs may vary depending on your personal circumstances but you must still ensure that you will have sufficient funding to meet these 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>).