

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: DPhil in Geography and the Environment



Course facts

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

About the course

The Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) in Geography and the Environment is the department's premier research degree, awarded to candidates who have successfully completed a major piece of original research. The course provides support and an intellectual environment to pursue your own independent research.

The DPhil is an advanced research degree which is awarded on the basis of a thesis and oral examination (assessment of other work is not taken into consideration). You are required to work independently, to take the initiative in exploring a line of research and to acquire new skills in order to carry out your research.

The department has seven research clusters in:

- Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Conservation
- Climate Systems
- Landscape Dynamics
- Economy, Society: Transformations and Justice
- Environmental Interactions
- Political Worlds: Place, Power, Politics
- Technological Life: Environments, Bodies, Mobilities.

You will be a member of one of the clusters and are encouraged to attend and participate in the organisation of the research seminars organised by each cluster.

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.

The full-time programme is studied over three to four years. The part-time programme has the same requirements, but is studied over six to eight years.

Part-time DPhil students receive an induction and are expected to attend the core DPhil seminars held in Michaelmas and Hilary Terms over their first two years of study to make sure that they receive this foundational material in the early stages of their programmes. There will be flexibility in the dates of attendance which will be determined by mutual agreement with your supervisor.

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.

The University of Oxford has an extensive library system and the Radcliffe Science Library is the main lending service within the University for the material required for the course. The Social Sciences Library also holds collections which are valuable for students pursuing postgraduate geography degrees.

Research students share a social space with academic and research staff and are encouraged to interact with academic staff from across the discipline. The department also offers dedicated working space for DPhil students.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the School of Geography and the Environment 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 School of Geography and the Environment.

You will be allocated a supervisor who will meet with you at specifically agreed times and will agree with you a research plan and programme of work and to establish clear academic expectations and milestones.

Assessment

If you are intending to read for the DPhil you are normally admitted to the status of Probationer Research Student (PRS) initially. 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.

This requires successful completion of a qualifying test. This involves the submission of a piece of written work which is examined by two assessors (neither of whom will be supervisors). This process is to ensure that your work is of potential DPhil quality and that the methodology of the research is appropriate and practicable.

Upon successful completion of the transfer of status, you will also be required to undertake the confirmation of DPhil status by the end of your third year (or the end of the sixth year for the part-time pathway). This will also involve the submission of a piece of written work which is assessed by two assessors (neither of whom are supervisors). The confirmation assessment is different to the transfer assessment as the assessors will be focusing on how the research is progressing, the quality of the draft chapters/papers, and on the plan for completion. The assessors will be looking to ensure that you are making the appropriate amount of progress in the development of your thesis, so that your submission will be achieved within the three/four year time limit (or within the sixth/eight year time limit for the part-time pathway).

The DPhil is awarded on the basis of a thesis and oral examination (assessment of other work is not taken into consideration). The thesis should represent a significant and substantial piece of research which is conveyed in a lucid and scholarly manner which shows that you have a good general knowledge of the field of your thesis.

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 | £23,050 |
| Overseas | £31,090 |

Part-time study

| Fee status | Annual Course fees |
|------------|--------------------|
| Home | £11,525 |
| Overseas | £15,545 |

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, 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, visa and medical fees (such as vaccinations), and field trips. The costs may vary considerably depending on the location and duration of the fieldwork. 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.

Part-time study

Please note that you are required to attend in Oxford for a minimum of 30 days each 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 additional expenses, such as travel expenses, research expenses, visa and medical fees (such as vaccinations), and field trips. The costs may vary considerably depending on the location and duration of the fieldwork. 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>).