

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



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) is the most prestigious of the Law Faculty's research degrees. It entails writing a thesis over a period of three, or at most four years if full-time, or six to eight years for part-time students.

All students will be admitted to Probationer Research Student (PRS) status in the first instance, and all students except those who have previously completed the faculty's MPhil in Law programme will undertake a course in legal research methods during the first year as a full-time student or in the first two years as a part-time student. This provides training in legal research methodology, but it will also expose you to the diversity of and intellectual challenges involved in legal scholarship and serves as a forum of peers in which you can discuss the methodological challenges involved in your own research. The course comprises seven compulsory two-hour seminars during Michaelmas term while in Hilary term, students must attend eight hours of seminars from a wider range of options, including seminars offered by other social sciences departments and the faculty's Centres for Criminology and Socio-Legal Studies. Students must also attend the course conference at the start of Trinity term.

The Faculty can provide supervision for a wide range of different topics and a list of completed doctorates gives a general sense of the breadth and depth of the research undertaken by its students.

A typical week for a student during your first two terms will involve attendance at a legal research training methodology class and perhaps participating in a discussion group (of which there are over 30) or auditing a BCL seminar that relates to your own research topic; apart from which you will be spending your time engaged in your own research. You will also meet with supervisors to discuss your work as explained in the supervision section below. After the third term (providing you transfer to full DPhil status) you may undertake fieldwork and research trips, depending on the nature of your research topics, and there may be opportunities to undertake paid research assistance or to teach undergraduate students.

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

If you are a part-time student, your time spent in Oxford will normally coincide with the full terms of the academic year, to be arranged with the agreement of your supervisor. You should expect to meet with your supervisor (either in person or, where available, online) up to nine times throughout the academic year, and in the first two terms, you will be required to undertake the legal research training methodology course (either in person or, where available, online).

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 Law Faculty is fortunate to have outstanding library facilities provided by the Bodleian Law Library. As part of the Bodleian, the Law Library shares in all the advantages of being part of the largest university library in the country, including the receipt, under legal deposit legislation, of legal material published in the UK and Ireland.

The Law Library offers the vast majority of its holdings - some 550,000 items - on open shelves across four floors. Selected low-use material is housed in a book storage facility and is retrievable within half a day. The library serves a large community of graduate readers and academics in their research requirements. The strength of the collection lies in the depth of its UK holdings, combined with extensive holdings for European and Commonwealth jurisdictions. In addition, the library holds materials relating to international law, Roman law, and jurisprudence. To complement the paper collection, the Law Library provides a wide range of online legal resources. The Bodleian's collection of Official Papers is also housed in the Law Library.

The library has reader workstations, which provide access to legal databases. There is a Graduate Reading Room, a large seminar room, IT rooms and small 'discussion rooms' for private study or group work. The law librarians offer a range of classes and one-to-one sessions to support the specific research needs of graduate students.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Law Faculty 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 Law Faculty.

On admission as a research student, you will be assigned a supervisor with whom you will have the opportunity to meet to discuss your work and provide feedback and advice. Students generally meet their supervisors nine times per year. For the DPhil, there is likely to be a greater concentration of meetings during the first two terms, while you are in the process of defining your research topic, and in the final stages leading up to submission of the completed thesis.

Assessment

All students will be initially admitted to the status of Probationer Research Student (PRS). Within a maximum of four terms as a full-time PRS student (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 by submitting a research outline and a substantial piece of written work. These are assessed by two members of the Law Faculty, who will also interview you about your work. This application is normally made in your third or fourth term for full-time students (sixth or eighth term for part-time students). A similar exercise then takes place between your sixth and ninth terms (twelfth and fifteenth terms for the part-time pathway) when you will apply for Confirmation of DPhil status.

After three or at most four years (no later than eight years for the part-time pathway), your thesis will be read by two examiners, who conduct an in-depth oral examination known as a *viva voce*. The thesis must make a significant and substantial contribution to its field. On the basis of the examiners' report, you will either be awarded the DPhil (which may be subject to major or minor corrections) or referred back to make revisions to the 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	£10,290
Overseas	£29,350

Part-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£5,145
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, 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.

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 further additional expenses, such as travel and research expenses. You will need to meet these additional costs, although you may be able to apply for grants from the Faculty or your 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>).