

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: DPhil in Socio-Legal Studies



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) degree entails the carrying out of a research project and writing a thesis of between 75,000 and 100,000 words.

The thesis must make a significant and substantial contribution to the field of socio-legal studies. You will be expected to develop a topic that contributes to an understanding of law in society, drawing on empirical data, to a greater or lesser degree, and adopting theoretical and analytic perspectives from any social science discipline, or a combination of disciplinary perspectives.

During the first year you will attend weekly seminars convened by members of staff at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies (CSLS) on 'Theory and Methods in Socio-Legal Research'. Part-time students will be able to tailor their study and methods training in liaison with their supervisor, and may attend the seminars over a two-year period. The seminars are intended to develop an appreciation of law as a social phenomenon, to introduce various theoretical perspectives and to consider the variety of practical empirical techniques by which research questions may be addressed.

Throughout the course, you will be able to take part in an extensive range of seminar programmes and discussion groups, affording plentiful opportunities for interaction both with your peers and with academics working in the same or similar research areas.

The CSLS research community is vibrant. Members convene research seminars, workshops, book colloquia and a prominent Annual Socio-Legal Lecture. In addition to participating in these academic events, our students have initiated and successfully run their own Socio-Legal Discussion Group and other specialist events. All these events bring staff and students together to exchange ideas, to meet visiting speakers and to engage in discussion of a variety of socio-legal issues. You will receive multiple opportunities to gain experience of presenting and discussing your work in progress.

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.

As a part-time student you will be required to attend 18 two-hour seminars in Theory and Methods, each followed by a 90 minute research seminar, in Oxford over the course of two years. There is some flexibility in the pattern of attendance, which will be determined by mutual agreement with your supervisor.

You should expect to attend supervision sessions in Oxford throughout the first two years of the DPhil and thereafter in person or online as agreed with your supervisor. You should also expect to spend, on average, the equivalent of 50% of a working week on your doctoral studies over the course of at least six years.

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 Centre for Socio-Legal Studies (CSLS) will provide you with an individual study space in the form of a desk and a PC that is supported by the University's IT services for your first year. You will have access to a wide range of electronic resources, including a large number of online journals.

In the socio-legal field you are engaged in interdisciplinary research and will have access to the Social Science Library (SSL), housed on the ground floor of the Manor Road Building, and the Law Library which is in the adjacent building, the St Cross building. You will also have access to all the other Bodleian libraries and in some cases also to one or more college libraries.

The CSLS benefits from having seminar rooms in the Manor Road Building available for academic events. The CSLS holds social events, including weekly coffee afternoons throughout the year, so that staff and students can interact and network.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the CSLS and it is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff. In exceptional circumstances a supervisor may be found outside the CSLS.

Throughout the period of your studies, you will work with a supervisor with whom you will have the opportunity to meet individually to discuss your project and who will provide feedback and advice. In the case of students who require specific help to adjust to an academic programme or to acquire a new range of skills, additional support may be made available after consultation with the supervisor.

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 student), you will be expected to apply for, and achieve, transfer of status from Probationer Research Student to DPhil status by taking a qualifying test (QT) which is assessed by two examiners. This requires you to submit a well-developed research outline plus a substantial piece of written work. This application is normally made by the third term for full-time students (sixth term for part-time students). A similar exercise then takes place in your sixth term, or later (twelfth term for the part-time pathway), when you report on your progress and submit a substantial part of the proposed thesis for a further assessment, which leads to a confirmation of DPhil status.

After three or at most four years (no later than eight years for the part-time pathway), you submit your final thesis to two examiners, respectively internal and external to the University. The examiners will read your thesis and then conduct an oral examination with you, known as a viva voce, before providing a written report to the Law Faculty. On that basis, your thesis may be judged to have passed, so that you can be awarded a DPhil, or to be in need of revision, in which case it is referred back to you for re-submission at a later date; in extreme cases, the thesis may not be passed.

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 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>).