

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



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time	Part Time
Expected length	3-4 years	7-8 years

About the course

This degree, with specialisation in musicology or composition, is awarded upon successful completion of a substantial original contribution to these fields.

The DPhil in Music is intended to provide you with a wide range of research skills as well as in-depth knowledge, understanding and expertise in your chosen field of research.

You are normally expected to have a master's degree in music or equivalent before embarking on the DPhil, or you may first undertake one of the MSt programmes in music at Oxford.

Areas of research represented in the faculty include:

- historical musicological topics from the Middle Ages to the present
- music theory and analysis
- composition
- ethnomusicology
- psychology of music
- performance studies
- aesthetics of music
- popular music
- critical and empirical musicology.

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 students are fully integrated into the research culture of the University and are expected to attend the University on a regular basis for supervision, study, skills training and participation in some of the many research seminars. If you are in employment, you must provide a letter from your employer stating you may take time off if necessary to attend the University as required for the duration of the course.

The faculty appreciates that part-time research students will have non-standard attendance and work patterns. Your supervisor and the Director of Graduate Studies will be available to advise you on access to research and training provision for part-time students.

There will be some flexibility in the dates and pattern of attendance. Attendance will normally be required each week during term-time, on dates to be determined by mutual agreement with your supervisor. You will have the opportunity to tailor your part-time study and skills training requirements in liaison with your supervisor and agree your pattern of attendance.

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 Faculty of Music is planning to move to the Stephen A. Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities in Autumn 2025. New facilities will include:

- practice rooms, and a larger ensemble room
- three music studios
- access to the Recital Hall
- The Black Box, a technology-enabled space to use for experimental electronic music compositions, multimedia works, experimental performances, and practice-based research. It will be possible to rig the space in various ways, including with a 56-speaker array to create an immersive sound experience.

Libraries

The University's Bodleian Library, receives every important British musicological study, in addition to acquiring most major books and editions published elsewhere; it has particularly important collections of printed sources for early music theory and nineteenth-century sheet music. Its manuscript collection contains many important sources for early English and European music, as do several college libraries.

Other significant research collections are held at the Taylorian Library (modern languages), the Bodleian Art, Archaeology and Ancient World Library and the Maison Française.

Oxford's three important collections of musical instruments are the faculty's Bate Collection, the Ashmolean Museum's Hill Collection of old stringed and keyboard instruments, and the Pitt Rivers Museum's extensive collection of ethnographic materials.

The Music Faculty Library is the University's main repository for sound recordings and holds DVD recordings of opera, film and classical music.

The library's multimedia resource centre has 11 stand-alone Mac-based composition and research workstations with Sibelius 7 notation software, Pro Tools 10 audio production platform and Max/MSP audio and video modular programming language installed as standard, as well as specialist software for video editing, noise-removal, sound design, graphics editing, audio digitisation and transcription.

Schwartzman Studio facilities

The new Schwartzman studios will be available to use by Music Faculty students for their portfolio work.

Music Studio 1

Will be a professional acoustically designed music composition, production and mixing room, able to accommodate both stereo and the immersive broadcast and recording standard - Dolby Atmos 9.1.4. It will digitally connect to almost all the performance spaces in the Schwartzman building and will be able to simultaneously record up to sixty musicians directly in the new Concert Hall.

Music Studio 2

Will be a professionally designed experimental music and acoustics research space, able to accommodate many different listening formats, from stereo to Ambisonics, Dolby Atmos, D&B Soundscape and others. It will have a permanent but adjustable '3D' 22.2 loudspeaker array. The studio will contain a range of experimental electronic music instruments and will be inherently flexible by design, with connections to all performance spaces, but a design bias to working symbiotically with the Black Box.

Music Studio 3

Will be a 'trad' recording studio directly connected and adjacent to the 'Ensemble Room' and practice rooms on the ground floor. It will house a 32 channel all analogue vintage aesthetic Harrison recording console, with an array of choice microphones for recording small to medium sized ensemble performance: from soloist to quartet, Jazz, Rock and Pop.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Faculty of Music 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 Faculty of Music. This supervisor would share their supervisory role with a co-supervisor would from the Faculty of Music.

You will be supported by a supervisor or supervisors who will help you to develop a programme of research and writing. You will also benefit from the advice and support of other members of the faculty who will be involved in your progression through the stages of the degree, and you can draw on the expertise of scholars and colleagues throughout the faculty and University.

In the case of students who require specific help to adjust to acquire new skills, the supervisor will work with them to ensure that they have additional support.

Assessment

All students will be initially admitted to the status of Probationer Research Student (PRS). Within a maximum of four terms as a PRS student (and normally by the third) you will be expected to apply for transfer of status from Probationer Research Student to DPhil status. Part-time students are required to apply for transfer no later than their eighth term.

A successful transfer of status from PRS to DPhil status will require either (A) or (B):

A. Candidates, who offer compositions as part of the final submission, will submit:

either

1. a portfolio of between three and six musical compositions, totalling between 50 and 80 minutes' duration, with at least one composition being of large scale (defined as for large-scale forces, such as orchestra, and/or of more than 30 minutes' duration). The portfolio will be prefaced by a critical writing submission situating the candidate's portfolio submissions with respect to the field of contemporary music, and where appropriate to musicological studies or other academic fields/domains of the candidate's choosing;
2. a separate dissertation.

or

1. a portfolio of between three and six musical compositions, totalling between 60 and 100 minutes' duration, with at least one composition being of large scale (defined as for large-scale forces, such as orchestra, and/or of more than 30 minutes' duration);
2. a dissertation situating the candidate's portfolio submissions with respect to the field of contemporary music, and where appropriate to musicological studies or other academic fields/domains of the candidate's choosing.

B. For all other candidates:

1. a literature review essay that provides a discursive review of the historical and/or theoretical literature relevant to the thesis topic and its field;
2. an essay on a focused topic relevant to the proposed thesis, and intended to constitute a part of it;
3. a stand-alone overview of the topic of the thesis; and
4. a provisional timetable for completion of the thesis.

Students who are successful at transfer will also be expected to apply for and gain confirmation of DPhil status within eight terms of admission (sixteen if studying part-time), to show that your work continues to be on track.

Both milestones normally involve an interview with two assessors (other than your supervisor) and therefore provide important experience for the final oral examination.

You will be expected to submit an original thesis of up to 100,000 words after three or, at most, four years from the date of admission (after six, or at most, eight years if studying part-time). For those specialising in composition, your final submission will be a Portfolio of Compositions and Critical Writing within the same time frame. To be successfully awarded a DPhil in Music 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

Full-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£13,380
Overseas	£34,980

Part-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£6,690
Overseas	£17,490

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>).