

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: DPhil in Molecular Cell Biology in Health and Disease



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	3 to 4 years

About the course

You will spend up to four years in one of the department's many research groups, working on a project supervised by the group's principal investigator. During this period you will have the opportunity to take part in the comprehensive training programme organised for graduate students.

After a very short induction period of one or two weeks, during which some basic training is provided, you will start a research project in your supervisor's laboratory.

There are a number of key stages in the research programme.

1. Within a month of starting, you will meet with your supervisor and graduate advisor to finalise your project and agree on an initial programme of research.
2. Within the first three months, you will complete an analysis of your training needs with your supervisor.
3. Within the first six months you are expected to complete a literature review on a topic relating to your area of research.
4. After one year you will apply to transfer to DPhil status. (See Assessment)
5. You will apply to confirm your DPhil status by the end of your third year. (See Assessment)
6. The final stage is submission of your DPhil thesis, which needs to be done within four years.

Most laboratories have weekly meetings where members present and discuss their research results with other members of the laboratory. You will also present your work in progress seminars, which are attended by other research groups working in related areas.

Whilst working on your research project you will participate in a comprehensive, flexible skills training programme which includes a range of workshops and seminars in transferable skills, generic research skills and specific research techniques.

There are a wide range of events organised for DPhil students. All students participate in an annual graduate students' symposium, which is attended by the entire department. Student contributions are carefully evaluated and prizes are awarded to the best posters or presentations in each year.

You will also have access to the extensive range of seminars and symposia in this and other departments at the University. During term-time there are departmental seminars which all graduate students are expected to attend. Your research group will be able to advise you as to which seminar series you should attend. All seminars are advertised on the web portal Oxford Talks. There are multiple opportunities for students to present their work, including the annual Departmental Graduate Student Symposium, and other Student Symposia within the University. All students have opportunities to present their work at national and international conferences.

Attendance

The course is full-time and requires attendance in Oxford. Full-time students are subject to the University's Residence requirements.

Provision exists for students on some courses to undertake their research in a 'well-founded laboratory' outside of the University. This may require travel to and attendance at a site that is not located in Oxford. Where known, existing collaborations will be outlined on this page. Please read the course information carefully, including the additional information about course fees and costs.

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.

You will be provided with plenty of bench space in your supervisor's laboratory and a suitable desk. The laboratories are all newly-refurbished, spacious and well equipped. There are central facilities for flow cytometry, microscopy, surface plasmon resonance, and genome engineering. Members of the department also have access to a wide range of shared facilities in the science area, including proteomics, imaging, structural biology, genomics, and drug-discovery. Training and support is available for use of all these resources. You will have your own computer and have access to the department's IT infrastructure and servers. You will also have use of University Libraries such as the Radcliffe Science Library and the Cairns Library. Library access includes full online access to all relevant scientific journals.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Sir William Dunn School of Pathology 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 Sir William Dunn School of Pathology.

You will be supervised by a team that includes your main supervisor, other supervisors, such as your graduate advisor, and the Director of Graduate Studies. Your graduate adviser will usually be another experienced principal investigator in the department. Your supervisor may appoint a senior member of the laboratory as your day-to-day supervisor. Further support is available from your college advisor.

Assessment

There are two formal assessments that need to be passed before you are able to submit your DPhil Thesis.

In Oxford all research students start out holding probationary research student (PRS) status.

You need to transfer to DPhil status within four terms (about 15 months). To do this you write a report describing your research to date and plans for the future. This will be assessed by two independent experts, who interview you as part of the process.

You need to confirm your DPhil status within three years. This involves writing a short progress report and thesis outline and giving a presentation. The application is assessed by two experts.

The final stage is submission of your DPhil thesis, which needs to be done within four years. This is assessed by two experts in the field, one of whom is external to Oxford. The assessment includes an interview or viva.

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

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£10,070
Overseas	£33,370

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

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.

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.

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>).