

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



Course facts

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

About the course

The DPhil in Pharmacology offers a wide range of cutting-edge research topics within a multi-disciplinary and world-renowned department.

Projects are offered across a broad range of sub-disciplines, including:

- molecular and cellular pharmacology
- calcium signalling
- medicinal chemistry
- drug discovery
- cardio-vascular pharmacology
- neuropharmacology
- lysosomal disorders.

A typical day or week in the first two to three years of the course will mostly focus on lab work and data collection and analysis. It will also involve reading of the literature, attendance of departmental seminars, lab meetings and skills training. Once sufficient progress has been made, laboratory research will taper off and efforts will focus on data analysis and interpretation and writing of the thesis.

DPhil students in the department are also offered the opportunity to be formally trained in, and to participate in, some elements of teaching to undergraduate students (eg as teaching assistants during practical classes in pharmacology for undergraduate students).

Prospective applicants are required to identify a potential departmental supervisor(s) to outline a research project to be submitted as part of the online application.

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.

Through their host labs, all postgraduate research students have access to office/desk space and specialised equipment for projects (eg in vivo and ex vivo electrophysiology and imaging methods and facilities for proteomics, molecular biology and medicinal chemistry).

The department offers up to date lecture and seminar room facilities. Meeting rooms are also available for social and networking events organised by the department and its students. A subject-specific librarian offers support to students on library services and resources.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision is the responsibility of the Department of Pharmacology 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 Department of Pharmacology.

DPhil candidates will be assigned to at least two supervisors forming the supervisory team. In most cases, one supervisor is responsible for the day-to-day research supervision while the second supervisor serves as an advisor and mentor. Additional supervisors will be included in interdisciplinary projects involving multiple departmental labs or labs from other departments within the University.

Supervisors will ensure that students will receive the appropriate support and training for their projects. Most students have the opportunity to meet with their supervisor at least once a week.

Assessment

The length of the course ranges from three to four years and follows the assessment format established by the Graduate School of the Medical Sciences Division. Initially students enrol as probationary research students (PRS). Towards the end of the first year, they are required to submit a report and apply to transition to DPhil (PhD) status. This process entails an independent evaluation of the report by two assessors, followed by an oral examination.

A further formal assessment of progress, termed 'Confirmation of Status', occurs towards the end of the second year/ start of the third year of the course. During this assessment, students present an outline of their thesis structure and a timeline for the completion of the project, which is evaluated by two independent assessors.

The programme ends with the submission of a thesis on the project, which undergoes assessment by both an internal and an external examiner. This process includes a formal viva voce examination.

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>).