

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: DPhil in Public Policy



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time	Part Time
Expected length	3 years	6-8 years

About the course

The DPhil in Public Policy provides academically outstanding students who are committed to public service an unrivalled opportunity to study for a rigorous research degree that prepares them to have substantial impact on future policymaking processes.

The DPhil specialises in discipline-based, policy-driven research, applying rigorous social science to analysing policy issues with the explicit goal of prescribing solutions for policymakers. You will concentrate on research that answers policy questions with rigorous conceptual design, theoretical insight, and empirical methods. As well as honing your research skills and developing your interdisciplinary understanding of policy challenges, you will also enhance your ability to communicate your research findings to the policy community in a way that ensures real-world impact. You will join a school which conducts groundbreaking academic research where international leaders will engage with you and your scholarly community on the most pressing issues of our time.

The DPhil in Public Policy is one of Oxford's most selective degree courses and recruits those who are highly academically and professionally capable. Your peer group will include economists, lawyers, political scientists, behavioural scientists, and philosophers with professional backgrounds at international organisations such as the World Bank and the World Economic Forum and senior levels of government.

You will be expected to focus your research on practical challenges facing a range of different governments and publicly-oriented agencies. As well as developing your academic expertise, you will learn how to communicate your findings and analysis effectively so as to have real impact on government and public policy development throughout the world.

You will be given ample opportunities to present your work in the department, and develop your research ideas and proposals with the advice and support of your peers.

Research Development Seminars (RDS) will give you the opportunity to meet and discuss your research with other students, and the Blavatnik School hosts regular seminars and events with leading public policy practitioners, affording further networking and socialising opportunities. There is an array of research seminars that run across the University and you will be encouraged to attend and, if appropriate, to present at events relevant to your areas of interest. Part-time as well as full-time students will normally be required to attend all twelve of the RDS during their first year. This is to help you to establish a clear line of thinking and maximise the opportunity to integrate with all first-year students.

Through the research training offered by the Social Sciences Division you can also take part in a range of skills development training sessions available across departments. Part-time students will be expected to identify, in consultation with their supervisors, their anticipated advanced research skills needs in their first year, and focus on acquiring these additional skills in their second, third and fourth years from the Social Science Division's research methods and training programme and, as the DPhil in Public Policy is multi- and interdisciplinary in character, from relevant training opportunities in the wider University and nationally.

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.

If studying part-time, you will be required to commit approximately 20 hours per week to your studies. You will also be expected to be in Oxford for at least the first few weeks of the first term so that you can fully participate in the induction activities which are held at the beginning of Michaelmas term (October).

Part-time students are expected to be active members of the Blavatnik School of Government Research Community even when not in Oxford.

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 Blavatnik School does not have its own library because most reading material is made available electronically.

However, you will have access to the Social Science Library in addition to other University libraries and centrally-provided electronic resources.

You will have the opportunity to attend a variety of student social events at the Blavatnik School including the annual induction programme. You will also have access to a student common room and kitchen facilities close to your workspace.

The Blavatnik School benefits from its own ICT team, which provides support and advice to students. Students are expected to bring their own laptop.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Blavatnik School of Government and it is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming students to work with a particular member of staff.

Your supervisors are carefully selected and will include a member of core member of faculty, together with other academics from the school or the University. You will usually have two supervisors during your DPhil research.

Your primary supervisor will establish a timetable of regular meetings for detailed discussion of your work and progress, normally a minimum of nine one-hour meetings (or equivalent) each year, although the frequency of meetings will vary depending on your stage of research.

Assessment

In your first year, you will be admitted to Probationer Research Student (PRS) status in the first instance. As a PRS, you will focus on the development and early work of your thesis.

Within a maximum of four terms as a full-time PRS student or eight 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. This application is normally made by the third term for full-time students and by the sixth term for part-time students by submitting a research outline and a substantial piece of written work. These are assessed by two academics (at least one of whom will usually be a Blavatnik School faculty member), who will also interview you about your work. A similar exercise then takes place in your ninth term (fourteenth term if you are part-time) when you will apply for confirmation of DPhil status.

After three or at most four years (no later than eight years if you are part-time) you are expected to submit your final thesis. Your thesis will be read by two examiners who conduct an in-depth oral examination with the student, known as a viva voce. On the basis of their 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	£27,600
Overseas	£27,600

Part-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£13,800
Overseas	£13,800

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, should you and your supervisor(s) agree on placements or research trips, you may incur additional expenses, such as travel expenses, research expenses, and field trips. You will need to meet these additional costs. The Blavatnik School of Government has limited funding for doctoral students, to which you can apply for help to attend conferences or to defray fieldwork expenses, and you may be able to apply for small grants from your 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, please note that, should you and your supervisor(s) agree on placements or research trips, you may incur additional expenses, such as travel expenses, research expenses, and field trips. You will need to meet these additional costs. The Blavatnik School of Government has limited funding for doctoral students, to which you can apply for help to attend conferences or to defray fieldwork expenses, and you may be able to apply for small grants from 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>).