

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: DPhil in Surgical Sciences



Course facts

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

About the course

The DPhil in Surgical Sciences is a full-time doctoral course offering research training across a range of scientific areas for both clinical and non-clinical graduates within an academic surgery department.

Hosted by the Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences, the DPhil in Surgical Sciences is three to four years in length.

Research undertaken within the department covers many areas, including fields such as:

- Cancer
- Immunology
- Neurosciences
- Global surgery; and
- Specialities such as patient safety, transplantation, urology and vascular surgery

You will be admitted directly onto a research project working with one of the department's many principal investigators (PIs). Usually candidates agree upon a project with their supervisor.

Normally your supervisory team will consist of your main supervisor along with at least one additional co-supervisor (who may be based outside of the University), with support also available from the Graduate Studies team and college advisors.

You will be integrated into your supervisor's research group, and will have the opportunity to network with and present to the wider department through events such as our Surgical Grand Round series, Research Away Day and Student Symposium.

Typically, students should treat their studies as a full-time occupation of at least 40 hours per week, and should be available during core working hours.

You will have access to seminars organised by the department or other departments within the University, individual research groups, or groups with a common area of interest. Some research groups within the department run research seminars that offer the opportunity to present your work and receive feedback from senior members of the department.

The University of Oxford and the Medical Sciences Division provide a rich environment of transferable skills suitable for both researchers and graduate students through the Medical Sciences Division Skills Portal and other resources. The University has established a Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL), which supports the development of research students who wish to follow an academic career, including training in teaching skills.

The Medical Sciences Division's skills training programme offers opportunities for you to develop your research and professional skills over the duration of your DPhil. You will also be given one-to-one specialist training in research and laboratory techniques as required for your project. It is recommended that you spend at least ten days a year on your graduate skills training.

As a member of the department you are invited to and involved in various social events, which are either organised by the department or ad hoc by the students themselves.

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.

As a graduate research student at NDS you will have access to fully equipped and well-stocked laboratory facilities, office space, and seminar rooms. Workspace is related to individual circumstances: if you are undertaking experimental work you will be provided with bench space in a laboratory; if you are undertaking theoretical research you will have a shared office space.

Students have access to computers and IT support through the department, to all library facilities and available on-line resources of the University and other experimental facilities as appropriate. The provisions of other resources are specific to your project and should be agreed with your supervisor as part of the planning stages of the agreed project.

Supervision

You will work closely with an academic supervisor who oversees your studies. The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences 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 Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences.

You will typically work as part of a research team and supervision may include co-supervision from other collaborating groups or labs, both within the department or from other departments across the university or external to Oxford. In the case of students who require specific help to adjust to an academic programme or to a new range of skills, supervisors will work with them to ensure that they have additional support.

Students will have the opportunity to meet with their supervisors on a regular basis, typically several times per week early in their studies and at least weekly or monthly later on. Students are also encouraged to submit regular termly reports on their progress throughout the degree.

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 you will be expected to apply for transfer of status from Probationer Research Student to DPhil status.

Students who are successful at transfer will also be expected to apply for and gain confirmation of DPhil status within nine terms of admission, 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 a substantial and original thesis of up to 50,000 words after three or, at most, four years from the date of admission. To be successfully awarded a DPhil in Surgical Sciences 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

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>).