

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



Course facts

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

About the course

The Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) in Philosophy is a three- to four-year full-time research programme whereby you undertake a doctoral level research project under the guidance of your supervisor(s).

The primary aim of the faculty's DPhil in Philosophy is to prepare you for an academic career in philosophy.

As a DPhil student, you will research, summarise, present and defend an argument with some of the best scholars in their subject, under the direction of one or more experienced researchers, and you will extend your skills and experiences.

During the DPhil you will learn new or hone existing intellectual, practical and transferable skills, as follows:

- analyse and clarify an abstract question, grasp and critically compare different approaches to answering it, and develop an approach of your own
- put complex arguments together for and against a position and take them apart
- interpret difficult historical texts produced within a historical context
- construct extensive pieces of writing that provide a clear overview of a subject and a sustained independent argument about it, presented in a lucid, objective and scholarly manner
- demonstrate excellent oral presentation
- have effective time organisation (since you must produce extensive pieces of written work at regular intervals and to tight deadlines)
- sustain intensive work to a deadline over an extended period
- make effective use of libraries, information technology and other sources of information

Each year, the Faculty of Philosophy welcomes students from a range of courses who have already completed substantial graduate work in philosophy. Typically, students who are successfully admitted to the DPhil course have already completed study that is equivalent or nearly equivalent to that required for Oxford's BPhil in Philosophy. The faculty's Graduate Studies Committee recommends progression from Oxford's BPhil in Philosophy to the DPhil course, considering the BPhil offers the opportunity to study a wide range of philosophical topics over two years as well as to focus on a narrower field of research interest (unlike most one-year masters in a specialised subject, as offered elsewhere).

Students may also progress from one of the following three specialised MSt courses at Oxford: the MSt in Philosophy of Physics, the MSt in Ancient Philosophy and the MSt in Practical Ethics.

As part of your doctoral research you will produce a substantial 75,000-word thesis. Students proceeding to the DPhil programme via the BPhil will normally write a DPhil thesis which is an expansion of their BPhil thesis and may be able to incorporate the full contents of their 30,000-word BPhil thesis into the 75,000-word DPhil thesis. However, this is not a formal requirement; sometimes the BPhil thesis topic is not suitable for expansion into a DPhil thesis, or you may wish to write your DPhil thesis on a different topic.

Each term, many graduate classes and research seminars are organised by faculty members in which graduate students are full and important participants.

Graduates are also encouraged to organise their own seminars and reading groups, and they also run two societies: one invites distinguished speakers from the UK and around the world, while the other gives graduates the opportunity to present papers to a graduate audience.

The **Masters of Letters (MLitt)** in Philosophy is awarded on the basis of a thesis of maximum 50,000 words. In practice, applicants are admitted for the MLitt only in exceptional cases, and few students submit a thesis for the MLitt. The MLitt is more often an exit award for DPhil students who fail or withdraw from the DPhil degree but meet the requirements for the MLitt.

The faculty runs a teaching scheme, lecturing scheme and a Graduate Teaching Register with the aim of providing teaching experience for those DPhil students who intend to pursue an academic career. In the case of the teaching scheme and Graduate Teaching Register, you will do a certain amount of teaching and marking under the guidance of a college fellow. If you are accepted into the lecturing scheme, you will be allowed to give an undergraduate lecture course of your own choice and design, consisting of four one-hour lectures.

Attendance

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

This course is not available in part-time mode of study and is not offered via distance learning.

Class attendance may be required in the first year of the DPhil, and all graduate students are encouraged to participate in lectures, classes, seminars and other educational opportunities which are of interest to you, undergraduate or graduate, in and outside of the Faculty of Philosophy, provided that those classes, seminars and lectures are open to you.

The course has no fieldwork, industrial placement or year abroad element, but you may decide to attend conferences, workshops or research training elsewhere. Each year there is an Oxford Graduate Philosophy Conference, in which most graduate philosophy students participate in some way.

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 Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities

The Faculty of Philosophy will be based in the Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities, a brand-new building at the University of Oxford, which will accommodate seven faculties, two institutes, a new library, a large number of well-equipped teaching and seminar rooms, and performance and arts venues. Each faculty will have its own centre and social hub within a building which will also facilitate interdisciplinary and collaborative work. At the heart of the building will be a large atrium – called the Great Hall – which will be a beautiful space, bringing light into the building, and serving as a space for informal work, relaxation, meeting with friends, taking breaks, having refreshments – and much more.

The library, part of the Bodleian Libraries, will be open to all students, and will house lending collections for Philosophy. There will be 340 general reader seats, and around 80 graduate study seats – with a further 320 formal and informal study seats throughout the building outside the library.

Open-shelf lending collections will be complemented by access to electronic resources, scan on demand, and material requested from the Bodleian's Collections Storage Facility. As well as the Library's extensive staffed hours, there will be a 24/7 study space, including smart lockers for self-collect of borrowable items out of hours. Subject support is provided by a team of subject librarians.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Faculty of Philosophy 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 Faculty of Philosophy.

Most students have the opportunity to receive regular one-to-one tuition sessions with their supervisor(s). These normally happen twice per term but in some terms, especially at the start of the degree and during the final stages of the thesis, the number of sessions may be increased.

You will normally be assigned one supervisor to start with but towards the end of your course, after you have been awarded confirmation of status, it is usual for you to receive a second, additional supervisor, to offer another view on your work as well as to provide another reference for you if required.

Assessment

You will initially be enrolled as a Probationary Research Student (PRS), unless you have previously completed the BPhil course at Oxford (see below). Normally in the third term after enrolment onto the DPhil as a PRS student, you are required to complete a transfer of status from PRS to full DPhil student status. Two appointed examiners will interview you on:

- your thesis outline, which explains the intended line of argument or contribution to the subject;
- a piece of written work in the area and philosophical style of the proposed thesis which is typically, though not necessarily, a draft chapter of the thesis.

Attendance at graduate classes and submission of a 5,000-word essay on a different area of philosophy from your doctoral research may also be required; dispensation from this requirement will be considered on a case by case basis by the Graduate Studies Committee, taking into consideration your prior experience and education.

If you progressed from the MSt in Philosophy of Physics course, you are required to write a 20,000-word thesis during your year as a PRS, as your MSt does not have a thesis element.

Normally at the end of the second year after you enrolled, you will be required to apply for confirmation of your DPhil student status. This application will involve an interview by one or two appointed examiners on:

- your thesis outline, comprising both a reasoned statement of the nature of, and some detail on, the proposed thesis together with a provisional table of contents; and
- a piece of written work intended as a part of the thesis, in final or near-final draft.

If you progress from the BPhil, you will normally enter the DPhil without being required to pass a year as a PRS and as a result you will normally apply for confirmation of DPhil status in the third term after enrolment onto the DPhil and, according to the Examination Regulations at time of publication, you will only have six terms (instead of the usual nine terms) of fee liability for your DPhil.

The doctoral work culminates in a 75,000-word thesis that is defended orally in front of two appointed examiners (*viva voce*).

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	£13,380
Overseas	£34,980

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

The Philosophy Graduate Studies Committee has a research and travel fund for graduate students to which students may apply for assistance with, for example, the costs of attending conferences or workshops. BPhil and MSt students may only apply for funding if they are presenting a paper. Probationary Research Students and DPhil students are entitled to apply for funding to attend a workshop, conference, etc, whether or not they are presenting a paper.

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>).