

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: Autonomous Intelligent Machines and Systems (EPSRC CDT)



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time	Part Time
Expected length	4 years	8 years

About the course

The Autonomous Intelligent Machines and Systems (AIMS) Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) provides graduates with the opportunity to develop in-depth knowledge, understanding and expertise in autonomous intelligent systems.

The programme provides a comprehensive, state-of-the-art view of autonomous intelligent systems, combining theoretical foundations, systems research, academic training and industry-initiated projects and thus mixing both practical and theoretical aspects of intelligent machines and systems.

Course outline

The first year (first two years if studying part-time) is oriented towards developing your knowledge base. You will need to take a number of courses during your first year (over two years if studying part-time). Your day will comprise of lectures each morning with laboratory sessions each afternoon. You will undertake two ten- to twelve-week mini-projects, precursors to your DPhil study, to hone your research skills and shape your main research area (if studying part-time, you will take one in your first year and the other in your second year). You will meet your supervisor regularly to assess progress and discuss academic issues.

Years two to four (three to eight if studying part-time) see an increasing emphasis on individual research. You will be encouraged to develop projects based on your own research ideas within the four key research themes of Machine Learning, as a unifying core; Robotics & Vision, Control and Verification, and Cyber-Physical Systems (eg sensor networks). Training will continue in academic reading, writing and presentation skills, business and commerce (to include innovation and IP curatorship and entrepreneurship), career development and planning, and ethics and law, where the societal implications of autonomous systems will be considered.

Research seminars are used to discuss papers, for rehearsing conference talks and for building links between groups. An annual workshop gives the opportunity to present research to students, industrial partners and invited researchers from other universities. Industrial collaborators are invited to share their latest problems and market trends and to discuss opportunities for future collaboration.

If studying full-time, you will spend one or two months over the second or third summer in an industrial lab to gain experience in industry-led projects and expanding your horizons by engaging in an AIMS topic that is not your main one. If studying part-time, it is recommended that you take on an internship between years four and six.

After the end of the internship, further interaction will be encouraged by inviting your industrial supervisors to join your group in Oxford for short periods.

You will also be encouraged to take demonstrations of your systems to companies, government departments, as well as schools. In the fourth year, the cohort help organise the annual workshop, inviting keynote speakers, participating in the program committee, reviewing papers submitted by second and third year students, and publicising the workshop to universities and industrial partners beyond those directly involved in the CDT.

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 course is usually studied over three to four years. The part-time courses is usually studied over six to eight years.

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.

The AIMS CDT is resourced by the UK's Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, and is jointly hosted by the Department of Computer Science and Department of Engineering Science.

There are strong links with researchers in other departments in the mathematical and physical sciences, and, ever increasingly, with researchers and practitioners in medical science departments and University hospitals.

The key research cluster for AIMS is information, control and vision engineering, which is well-supported by experienced technical, computing, and administrative staff. The department has well-equipped research areas and workshops, as well as offices, lecture theatres, library, common room, stores, reprographics and other facilities.

Supervision

For this course, the allocation of graduate supervision is the responsibility of the Department of Engineering Science and/or Department of Computer Science 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 Engineering Science and Department of Computer Science.

Students will have the opportunity to meet their supervisor on a regular basis to discuss their progress. For full-time students, these meetings are usually at least once every two weeks, averaged across the year, and once a month for part-time students.

Assessment

If you are studying full-time, you will be assessed continually throughout the first year during courses and projects and at its end the programme supervisors will assess whether sufficient progress has been made to continue to the research phase. At the end of the second year, you will be required to write a report and give a presentation on your research, and to present a detailed and coherent plan for the research-intensive phase in the third and fourth years of your doctoral studies. Progress towards completion is again formally assessed some way into the final year of study.

If studying part-time, you will be assessed over the first two years. Timings will differ for the presentation for part-time students.

For the DPhil you will be required to submit a substantial thesis which is read and examined by experts in the field, one from the department and one from elsewhere. Often the thesis will result in the publication of several journal and conference papers.

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	£10,070
Overseas	£33,370

Part-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£5,035
Overseas	£16,685

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, 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.

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, depending on your choice of research topic and the research required to complete it, you may incur further 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.

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>).