

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2024-25: DPhil in Musculoskeletal Sciences



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time	Part Time
Expected length	3-4 years	6-8 years

About the course

As a DPhil in Musculoskeletal Sciences student, you will spend up to four years (eight years for part-time students) in one of the Botnar Research Centre's many research groups, working on a research project supervised by one of the principal investigators and your supervisory team. You will take part in the extensive training programme specifically organised for graduate students within the department.

This DPhil programme focuses on various musculoskeletal and/or musculoskeletal-associated disorders. Key research foci include immune mediated inflammatory disease (including rheumatoid arthritis and inflammatory bowel disease), mechano-inflammatory disease (including osteoarthritis and tendinopathy), various bone cancers, infections, epigenetics, metabolism, aging, microbiome, computational and systems biology, as well as tissue engineering, employing a range of approaches from experimental biology and clinical trials to epidemiology and data sciences.

You will develop your research skills during your first year, including compulsory attendance at the Department's fundamentals in biomedical research lectures. During the first term you will develop, in consultation with your supervisor, a training needs plan. Your training will be tailored to your specific project and personal requirements drawing from the vast range of courses available at Oxford and covering specialist scientific methods and transferable skills. Please note that there is no formal taught component of the DPhil in Musculoskeletal Sciences; however, you will develop your research skills through a range of research training in your first year and by attending Departmental/institute journal clubs and seminar series. During the first term there is compulsory attendance at core lectures on a variety of research techniques and foci in the Department including immunology, inflammation, tissue engineering, clinical trial design, epidemiology, rheumatology, orthopaedics, and musculoskeletal diseases. During your first year, you will be expected to attend a minimum of three topic-related modules. Attendance on a two-day Data Analysis: Statistics Designing Clinical Research and Biostatistics course is compulsory to assist you with appropriate research design. As a component of your training, you will be expected to work with your supervisory team to write a research-specific literature review within the first year of your studies.

You will be required to attend and present at annual institute student symposia, not only to develop your presentation skills but also to benefit from feedback and interactions from your peers and senior academics, additionally you will have an opportunity to present at internal institute seminar series and/or journal clubs.

As a member of Medical Sciences Graduate School, you will be entitled to attend various workshops run by the Medical Sciences Skills Training programme which are run during term time.

Further academic and pastoral support will be provided for by the Departmental Graduate Studies Team and your college advisor. Applicants are strongly advised to visit the Botnar Institute website (also see *Further Information and Enquiries*) to help identify the most suitable research topic and related supervisors. Projects are available across a wide range of basic sciences, pre/clinical studies, data sciences and epidemiology in various musculoskeletal disorders.

Part-time attendance

As a part-time student you will be required to attend induction week, core & specialised lectures, departmental seminars, & workshops as well as individual/group research meetings with your supervisors. You will have the opportunity to tailor your part-time study in liaison with your supervisor and agree your pattern of attendance. Attendance is required for a minimum of thirty days per annum to be arranged with the agreement of your supervisor, for the period that you remain on the Register of Graduate Students.

Attendance in person will be required during term-time as determined by mutual agreement with your supervisor. This will solely depend on the nature of your studies (clinical or basic science) and the percentage of FTE that you will be conducting your research (no less than 0.5 FTE).

Attendance outside of term-time will be similar to that during the academic terms. Research protocol and experimentation should be planned and completed based on the available timeline for submission of various milestones set by the Division.

You will also be required to attend termly meeting with your Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) to discuss your academic progress.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of Medical Sciences and the Nuffield Department of Orthopaedics, Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal Sciences (NDORMS) 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 Medical Sciences and NDORMS.

All students must have a core supervisory team of at least two supervisors. At the beginning of your programme, you will meet with your supervisors regularly to finalise your project and agree on an initial programme of research. Within the first three months, you will complete an analysis of your training needs for the duration of your research (TNA) with your supervisor and submit it as part of your compulsory termly reporting.

Regularity of student/supervisor meetings will be agreed between the student and supervisors directly. Every student should meet their supervisors at least once per month.

Within the first six to twelve months (twelve to twenty-four months for part-time students) you are expected to complete a literature review on a topic relating to your area of research.

In the case of students who require specific help to adjust to an academic programme or to a new range of skills, the supervisor will work with them to ensure that they have additional support.

Members of the co-supervisory team may come from other departments in the University.

The Thesis Committee is an important second strand of supervisory support and is compulsory at the Botnar Research Centre; further information can be provided by the Graduate Studies Team.

Assessment

Your attainment will be evaluated via:

1. Completion of termly reports by you and your supervisor(s) through Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR)
2. Transfer of Status, to be completed before the end of the fourth term (eighth term for part-time students). The process includes preparation and submission of a transfer report and assessment in a viva.
3. Confirmation of your status, by viva and presentation, before the end of the ninth term (18th term for part-time students).
4. Submission and defence of the final thesis by viva, no later than twelfth term (twenty fourth term for part-time students - depending on funding duration).

Stages 2, 3 and 4 will be assessed by two independent senior academics to ensure you are on track with your research and that you are receiving adequate guidance.

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 2024-25

Full-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£9,500
Overseas	£31,480

Part-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£4,750
Overseas	£15,740

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 2024-25 is £628, 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, 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 2024-25 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	£315	£495
Accommodation	£745	£925
Personal items	£190	£320
Social activities	£40	£95
Study costs	£35	£85
Other	£20	£35
Total	£1,345	£1,955

Likely living costs for nine months

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£2,835	£4,445
Accommodation	£6,705	£8,325
Personal items	£1,710	£2,880
Social activities	£360	£855
Study costs	£315	£765
Other	£180	£315
Total	£12,105	£17,595

Likely living costs for twelve months

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£3,780	£5,940
Accommodation	£8,940	£11,100
Personal items	£2,280	£3,840
Social activities	£480	£1,140
Study costs	£420	£1,020
Other	£240	£420
Total	£16,140	£23,460

When planning your finances for any future years of study at Oxford beyond 2024-25, it is suggested that you allow for potential increases in living expenses of 5% or more 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 an 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>).