

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: DPhil in Condensed Matter Physics



Course facts

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

About the course

The DPhil in Condensed Matter Physics (CMP) is a research-based course of three to four years in duration. Research in the department ranges from fundamental physics questions to interdisciplinary research and technological applications.

The course is hosted by the Condensed Matter Physics sub-department, one of six sub-departments of the Department of Physics, with most facilities and offices located in the Clarendon laboratory.

To learn more about the research topics you'll have the opportunity to explore, please refer to the *Research areas* section on this page.

Your research work begins on day one and will be underpinned by a taught graduate course in the first year that runs in parallel. You will be required to attend lectures and courses to increase your basic and specialist physics knowledge and in preparation for the research you will carry out. This taught element is tailor-made for the individual student, and will be agreed between you and your supervisor, with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies. You will also have the opportunity to follow courses taught at other departments across the Maths, Physics and Life Sciences division.

In the following years, you will concentrate on your research work. Alongside this, you will be strongly encouraged to take part in further courses, including a rich palette of transferable skills courses offered by the University, and to attend seminars and colloquia in the Department of Physics and elsewhere.

Some research themes organise workshops and away days, specifically designed to give you the opportunity to present your research to a broader audience. Poster and oral presentations are also part of the ongoing student assessment.

Attendance

The course is full-time and requires attendance in Oxford. Full-time students are subject to the [University's Residence requirements](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/accommodation/residence-requirements). (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/accommodation/residence-requirements>)

There will usually be the opportunity to attend conferences or conduct experiments, both in the extensive research facilities of the Clarendon Laboratory and at other institutions inside or outside the UK.

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 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 well as [guidance on what technology to bring with you as a new student](https://www.it.ox.ac.uk/what-to-bring) (<https://www.it.ox.ac.uk/what-to-bring>) at Oxford.

Academic resources

The Clarendon Laboratory has extensive experimental facilities for research in Condensed Matter Physics and most students will have the opportunity to access the appropriate facilities for research in their field. These include the:

- nanofabrication facility

- crystal growth laboratory
- Centre for Applied Superconductivity laboratory
- magnetic characterisation suite
- MBE facility for epitaxial thin films and multilayers
- X-ray diffraction laboratory
- Nicholas Kurti High Magnetic Field Laboratory
- Atomic Force Microscopy Laboratory
- facilities for protein expression, cell culture and biophysical measurements.

DPhil students also have access to the [Radcliffe Science Library \(https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/libraries/rsi\)](https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/libraries/rsi), which also provides extensive on-line services, including access to most relevant journals in the field of Condensed Matter Physics.

Non-Academic Resources

There is a range of welfare and academic support available in the department. Your supervisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, and Graduate Administrator are all available to offer support. There are also several support networks in Physics, all of which are available to our graduate students. These include:

- Oxford Physics Gender Equity Network (OPGEN), which is run by a committee drawn from across the students, academics and staff in the Department of Physics and organises events and campaigns to promote gender equity in the department.
- The Graduate Liaison Committee (GLC). The GLC's purpose is to discuss issues that may concern graduate students in the department such as the quality of graduate courses, availability of skills training, accessibility to library and IT services, and general student welfare.
- The Graduate Peer Support Network, which is a subgroup of the informal mentoring network [Physics Thrive \(https://www2.physics.ox.ac.uk/equality-and-diversity/physics-thrive\)](https://www2.physics.ox.ac.uk/equality-and-diversity/physics-thrive).

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Department of Physics 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 Physics.

Many DPhil students are co-supervised by a University member of staff, usually from the Department of Physics or another Department within the University. Some schemes, such as the Joint Max Planck Training Programme in Quantum Materials or the Large-Scale facility studentships (eg the Diamond Doctoral Studentship Programme) require a co-supervisor from outside the University. In all these cases, your main University supervisor will at all times be responsible for your progress and for ensuring that the project is of suitable content and level to satisfy the normal expectations of a DPhil at the University.

The frequency of student-supervisor meetings varies depending on the nature of the project. Most supervisors run an extended research group, including several DPhil students and post-docs, who interact often. New students will also be welcome in the wider Oxford Physics community, currently hosting over 350 DPhil students, with multiple opportunities of mutual support and social interactions.

Assessment

At the end of the first year you are expected to submit a report on your research and to defend it in an interview with the Graduate Studies Panel and a specialist reader. The panel will determine whether you can transfer status from Probationer Research Student (PRS) to DPhil student.

Towards the end of the second year, you will present a poster in an open session, attended by the Graduate Studies Panel and many members of the Condensed Matter Physics sub-department. Discussion of your research project with panel members and others at the poster session will contribute to the decision whether to confirm your status as DPhil student the following year. This decision will be usually taken at the beginning of the third year, following an interview with the Graduate Studies Panel, focussing on your current results and your thesis plans.

At the end of the third year, you are expected to give a talk, attended the Graduate Studies Panel and many members of the Condensed Matter Physics sub-department, and to answer questions following your presentation.

You will be expected to submit a substantial original thesis after three or, at most, four years from the date of admission. To be successfully awarded a DPhil you will need to defend your thesis orally (*viva voce*) in front of two appointed examiners (one internal and one external). Most students would have published one or more original research paper by the time they are awarded a DPhil.

Research areas

You'll have the opportunity to undertake research within the specialised themes of this course, which include:

- biological physics

- quantum materials and semiconductor materials
- devices and nanostructures.

Changes to this course

The University will seek to deliver this course in accordance with the description set out in this course page. 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 registration. The safety of students, staff and visitors is paramount and major changes to delivery or services may have to be made if a pandemic, epidemic or local health emergency occurs. In addition, in certain circumstances, for example due to visa difficulties or because the health needs of students cannot be met, it may be necessary to make adjustments to course requirements for international study.

Where possible your academic supervisor will not change for the duration of your course. However, it may be necessary to assign a new academic supervisor during the course of study or before registration for reasons which might include illness, sabbatical leave, parental leave or change in employment.

For further information please see our page on [changes to courses](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses) (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses>) and the [provisions of the student contract](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-contract) (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-contract>) regarding changes to courses.

Costs

Annual course fees

The fees for this course are charged on an annual basis.

Fees for the 2026-27 academic year at the University of Oxford

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£10,470
Overseas	£34,700

What do course fees cover?

Course fees cover your teaching as well as other academic services and facilities provided to support your studies. Unless specified in the additional information section 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 costs information below.

How long do I need to pay 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 fees will usually increase annually, as explained in the University's [Terms and Conditions \(//www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract).

Graduate students who have reached the end of their standard period of fee liability will be required to pay a University continuation charge and/or a college continuation charge.

The University continuation charge, per term for entry in 2026-27 is £656, 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 will be between £150 and £500, as explained in our [information about continuation charges \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/continuation-charges\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/continuation-charges). 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.

Where can I find more information about fees?

Our [fees and other charges \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges) pages provide further information, including details about:

- [course fees and fee liability \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/courses-fees-and-liability\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/courses-fees-and-liability);
- [how your fee status is determined \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/fee-status\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/fee-status);
- [changes to fees and other charges \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/changes-to-fees-and-charges\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/changes-to-fees-and-charges);
- [continuation charges \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/continuation-charges\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/continuation-charges).

Information about how much fees and other costs will usually increase each academic year is set out in the University's [Terms and Conditions \(//www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract).

Additional costs

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 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.

Living costs for full-time study

For the 2026-27 academic year, the range of likely living costs for a single, full-time student is between £1,405 and £2,105 for each month spent in Oxford. We provide the cost per month so you can multiply up by the number of months you expect to live in Oxford. Depending on your circumstances, you may also need to budget for the [costs of a student visa and immigration health surcharge](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs) (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs>) and/or [living costs for family members or other dependants](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs#field_listing_content_content-item--2) (https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs#field_listing_content_content-item--2) that you plan to bring with you to Oxford (if [dependant visa eligibility criteria](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/family) (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/family>) are met).

Further information about living costs

The current economic climate and periods of high national inflation in recent years make it harder to estimate potential changes to the cost of living over the next few years. For study in Oxford beyond the 2026-27 academic year, it is suggested that you budget for potential increases in living expenses of around 4% each year – although this rate may vary depending on the national economic situation.

A breakdown of likely living costs for one month during the 2026-27 academic year are shown below. These costs are based on a single, full-time graduate student, with no dependants, living in Oxford.

Likely living costs for one month in Oxford during the 2026-27 academic year

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£315	£545
Accommodation	£825	£990
Personal items	£160	£310
Social activities	£50	£130
Study costs	£35	£90
Other	£20	£40
Total	£1,405	£2,105

For information about how these figures have been calculated as well as tables showing the likely living costs for nine and twelve months, please refer to the [living costs](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs) (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs>) page of our website.

Document accessibility

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