

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: DPhil in Ancient History



Course facts

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

About the course

The DPhil in Ancient History is a research degree intended to make it possible for the successful candidate to aspire to a career in research and teaching at university level anywhere in the world where the Classical subjects are studied.

The DPhil takes the form of the composition of a substantial dissertation of up to 100,000 words, based on new research on a subject of your choice.

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

The best dissertations are published, many in the Oxford University Press series of Classical Monographs which exists for this purpose.

The vision of the DPhil as a necessary stage of an academic career, following on from master's-level education and preparing for postdoctoral work and beyond, is reflected in five other ways:

1. Doctoral students are required to set the topics of their individual specialisation in a larger understanding of developments in the field across the world.
2. They are encouraged to pursue a diversity of scholarly interests on the side of working on their doctoral dissertation, so as to start building a larger portfolio of specialities. They may produce articles or review books in areas somewhat different from that of their dissertation, and towards the end of their doctoral work may begin to contemplate a postdoctoral project.
3. The Classics Faculty assists doctoral students in continuing to develop necessary research skills, and acquiring or improving knowledge of relevant ancient and modern languages. Competence in Latin and/or Ancient Greek is an admission requirement.
4. Doctoral students can be trained and given experience (with mentoring) in undergraduate teaching of several different kinds, eg class, lecture, tutorial.
5. There are other structures, within the Classics Faculty, the Humanities Division and the wider University, to help with career-development and with academic placement.

It is fully recognised that some students will choose not to pursue a professional career in Classics, and the structures mentioned in the points above are tailored to their needs too. The experience of the Classics DPhil programmes is intended to be personally fulfilling and intellectually enriching in itself, and the cognitive skills required are highly transferable to other walks of life.

You will have the opportunity to attend seminar talks by visiting speakers as well as attend the many other academic activities that take place in the Ioannou Centre for Classical and Byzantine Studies.

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. \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/accommodation/residence-requirements\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/accommodation/residence-requirements). Part-time students are required to attend course-related activities in Oxford for a minimum of 30 days each year.

Part-time students are fully integrated into the research culture of the Classics Faculty and afforded all the same opportunities and support as full-time students.

As a part-time student you will be required to attend supervision meetings, seminars and other obligations in Oxford for a minimum of one day per week during Weeks 0 to 9 of each term, for a total of 30 days each year. Attendance outside of term time will be determined by mutual agreement with your supervisor. There will be limited flexibility in the dates and pattern of attendance.

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.

Oxford has academic resources which are among the most extensive in the world for classical languages and literature. The Ioannou Centre for Classical and Byzantine Studies offers various facilities for graduate students including a common room and a graduate study area. It is also the base for the many [research projects](http://www.classics.ox.ac.uk/research.html) (<http://www.classics.ox.ac.uk/research.html>), based in the faculty.

The faculty is fortunate in having two world-class research libraries close at hand, the Bodleian and the Bodleian Art, Archaeology and Ancient World Library. The Bodleian Art, Archaeology and Ancient World Library is an open-shelf lending library indispensable to anyone studying ancient history, archaeology and art; it is also extremely useful for those studying literature or philology.

Supervision

For this course, the allocation of graduate supervision is the responsibility of the Faculty of Classics 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 Classics.

You will be appointed a supervisor or supervisors with relevant expertise, who will support you throughout your doctoral work, beginning with the formulation of the topic and ending with the final examination. Most students have the opportunity to meet their supervisor twice a term, although more frequent meetings can be arranged as needed.

Assessment

All students will be initially admitted as a Probationary Research Student (PRS). Within a maximum of six terms as a full-time PRS student or twelve terms as a part-time PRS student, you will be expected to apply for transfer of status from Probationary Research Student to DPhil status. Transfer of status is assessed by two examiners on the basis of a sample of written work, a statement of your proposed research and a viva.

Students who are successful at transfer will also be expected to apply for and gain confirmation of DPhil status to show that your work continues to be on track. This will need to be done within nine terms of admission for full-time students and eighteen terms of admissions for admission of part-time students.

The degree is awarded on the basis of a thesis of up to 100,000 words based on original research after three or, at most, four years from the date of admission. If you are studying part-time, you will be required to submit your thesis after six or, at most, eight years from the date of admission. To be successfully awarded a DPhil in Ancient History you are required to defend your thesis orally (*viva voce*) with two examiners, normally one internal, one external.

Research areas

The following examples of topics researched by past students illustrate the themes that may be explored in this course:

- Challenging Mithraism: a revisionist account (Supervisor: Professor J Elsner);
- Timor et Luctus: The Mechanics of the Roman Republican Army in Battle (Supervisor: Professor J Prag);
- The historical development of the Greek city in the Roman period in regards to ideology and identity formation (Supervisor: Dr C Kuhn);
- Representing the Dynasty in Flavian Rome: The Case of Josephus' Jewish War (Supervisor: Professor M Goodman);
- Greek Religious Life In Roman Asia Minor (Supervisor: Professor P Thonemann);
- Language, Nomos, and Narrative in Greek Historiography (Supervisor: Professor R Thomas);
- Athenian Power in the Fifth Century BC (Supervisor: Professor P Thonemann);
- Music, Spectacle And Society In Ancient Rome, 167 BC - c. 138 AD (Supervisor: Professor N Purcell);
- Structures, Conceptualisation, And Response: Differentiating The Interactions Of Non-Italian Peoples Of The West With Rome, ca. 265-130 BC (Supervisor: Professor J Prag);
- Beauty and the Gods in Archaic Greece (Supervisors: Professor J Elsner/Dr C Metcalf);
- Athenians abroad in the sixth and fifth centuries BC (Supervisor: Professor R Thomas);
- Breaking Boundaries: A Study of Socio-cultural Identities in Archaic and Classical Western Sicily (Supervisors: Professor J Prag/Professor J Quinn);

- Hope, Fear, and Conceptions of the Future in the Early Principate (Supervisors: Professor K Clarke/Dr A Clark);
- The relationship between territory, governance & agency in the Roman world: a cognitive study of 'res publica' & its reception in political thought (Supervisor: Dr A Clark);
- Aiolian Ethnogenesis (Supervisor: Professor R Thomas);
- Religious Life of Classical and Hellenistic Rhodes (Supervisor: Professor R Parker);
- The Socio-Ecosystem of South-Western Asia Minor in the Roman Period (Supervisor: Professor P Thonemann).

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](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses) (<http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses>) and the [provisions of the student contract](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-contract) (<http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-contract>) regarding changes to courses.

Costs

Annual course fees for the 2026-27 academic year at the University of Oxford

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

Full-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£14,180
Overseas	£37,080

Part-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£7,090
Overseas	£18,540

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); and
- [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

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 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 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) ([//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) ([//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) ([//www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/family](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/family)), are met).

Living costs for part-time study

Your living costs may vary depending on your personal circumstances but you will still need to cover your cost of living on a full-time basis for the duration of your course, even if you will not be based in Oxford throughout your studies. While the range of likely living costs for a single, full-time student living in Oxford in the 2026-27 academic year is between £1,405 and £2,105 per month, living costs outside Oxford may be different.

Part-time students who are not based in Oxford will need to calculate travel and accommodation costs carefully. Depending on your circumstances and study plans, this may include the [cost of a visitor visa to attend for short blocks of time](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs) ([//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs)) (if [visitor visa eligibility criteria](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/visitors) ([//www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/visitors](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/visitors)), 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) ([//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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