

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: DPhil in Biochemistry



Course facts

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

About the course

The DPhil in Biochemistry is a research-based course focused on lab projects in areas such as molecular and cellular biology, molecular biophysics, and structural biology, with no taught components and direct entry into research groups.

You will be admitted directly to a particular research area led by departmental members who will be appointed DPhil supervisors. If you are admitted to a particular research supervisor you will not normally do laboratory rotations. You will be based in a research lab and undertake research on a subject agreed with your supervisor.

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

There are no taught courses examined by written papers, however you will have access to a wide range of lecture courses at foundation or preliminary level, as appropriate. If you have changed fields, this will allow you to fill in gaps in your background knowledge. There is also a wide range of courses and workshops which you can attend to acquire skills that will be necessary for the pursuance and presentation of your research, as well as your professional development as a research scientist.

Departmental seminars and colloquia bring students together with academic and other research staff in the department to hear about on-going research, and provide an opportunity for networking and socialising.

The length of the programme ranges from three to four years with the exact duration depending on the following factors as judged by your supervisor(s) and assessors:

- focus and rate of your research development and progress
- achievement of acceptable focus and scope of thesis
- publication quality research
- length of available funding.

A small proportion of DPhil students (about 5%) submit their theses within three years from starting, however on average most students submit within three to four years. By the end of the fourth year, 70-90% of students have submitted their theses.

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>)

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>) at Oxford.

You will have access to:

- experimental facilities, as appropriate to your research
- IT support from the Department of Biochemistry
- library services, such as the [Radcliffe Science Library \(http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/science\)](http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/science) and the [Cairns Library \(http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/medicine\)](http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/medicine).

The provision of project-specific resources will be agreed with the relevant supervisor during the planning stages of the research project.

There is the possibility to use facilities in other departments across the division and to access remote facilities at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, [DIAMOND Light Source \(http://www.diamond.ac.uk/Home.html%20target=\)](http://www.diamond.ac.uk/Home.html%20target=), and Harwell Science and Innovation Campus.

Supervision

For this course, the allocation of graduate supervision is the responsibility of the Department of Biochemistry 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 Biochemistry.

Your supervisor may appoint a senior member of the laboratory as your day-to-day supervisor.

Most students have an opportunity to meet their supervisor on a weekly or fortnightly basis. In addition, most laboratories also have weekly meetings where members present and discuss their results with other members of the laboratory.

Assessment

You will begin your course as a probationary research student (PRS) and near the end of the first year you will apply to transfer to DPhil (PhD) status. To do this you write a research report and statement of future research plans. This will be assessed by two independent experts, who interview you as part of the process. Continuation in the programme is subject to passing the Transfer of Status exam.

After eight terms of study you will need to apply formally to confirm your DPhil status. This involves writing a short progress report and thesis outline and giving a presentation. The application is assessed by two independent experts. Continuation in the programme is subject to successfully completing the Confirmation of Status.

The final stage of the research programme is submission of your DPhil thesis, which needs to be done within four years. Your thesis is assessed by two independent experts (one of which will be external to the University of Oxford), who conduct a viva examination with you.

Research areas

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

- [cell biology, development and genetics \(https://www.bioch.ox.ac.uk/cell-biology-development-and-genetics\)](https://www.bioch.ox.ac.uk/cell-biology-development-and-genetics)
- [chromosomal and RNA biology \(https://bioch.web.ox.ac.uk/chromosomal-and-rna-biology\)](https://bioch.web.ox.ac.uk/chromosomal-and-rna-biology)
- [infection and disease processes \(https://www.bioch.ox.ac.uk/infection-and-disease-processes\)](https://www.bioch.ox.ac.uk/infection-and-disease-processes)
- [microbiology and systems biology \(https://www.bioch.ox.ac.uk/microbiology-and-systems-biology\)](https://www.bioch.ox.ac.uk/microbiology-and-systems-biology)
- [structural biology and molecular biophysics \(https://www.bioch.ox.ac.uk/structural-biology-and-molecular-biophysics\)](https://www.bioch.ox.ac.uk/structural-biology-and-molecular-biophysics).

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

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); 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

There are no compulsory elements of this course that entail additional costs beyond fees (or, after fee liability ends, continuation charges) and living costs.

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 \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs), and/or [living costs for family members or other dependants \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs#field_listing_content_content-item--2\)](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 \(//www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/family\)](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 \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs) page of our website.

Document accessibility

If you require a more accessible version of this document please [contact Graduate Admissions and Recruitment by email \(graduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk\)](mailto:graduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk).