

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: DPhil in Geography and the Environment



Course facts

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

About the course

The DPhil in Geography and the Environment is a research-based degree focused on original work in areas such as climate systems, biodiversity, political geographies, and environmental interactions.

The DPhil is an advanced research degree which is awarded on the basis of a thesis and oral examination (assessment of other work is not taken into consideration). You are required to work independently, to take the initiative in exploring a line of research and to acquire new skills in order to carry out your research. The course provides support and an intellectual environment to pursue your own independent research.

The department has seven research clusters. You will be a member of one of the clusters and are encouraged to attend and participate in the organisation of the research seminars organised by each cluster.

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

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. \(<http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/accommodation/residence-requirements>\)](http://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.

The full-time programme is studied over three to four years. The part-time programme has the same requirements, but is studied over six to eight years.

If you are studying part-time, you will receive an induction and will be expected to attend the core DPhil seminars held in Michaelmas and Hilary Terms over their first two years of study to make sure that you receive this foundational material in the early stages of your programme. Seminars will be take place in Oxford, but there will be the option to attend online when necessary. There will be flexibility in the dates of attendance which will be determined by mutual agreement with your supervisor.

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.

The University of Oxford has an extensive library system and the Radcliffe Science Library is the main lending service within the University for the material required for the course. The Social Sciences Library also holds collections which are valuable for students pursuing postgraduate geography degrees.

Research students share a social space with academic and research staff and are encouraged to interact with academic staff from across the discipline. The department also offers dedicated working space for DPhil students.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the School of Geography and the Environment 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 School of Geography and the Environment.

You will be allocated a supervisor who will meet with you at specifically agreed times and will agree with you a research plan and programme of work and to establish clear academic expectations and milestones.

Assessment

If you are intending to read for the DPhil you are normally admitted to the status of Probationer Research Student (PRS) initially. Within a maximum of four terms as a full-time PRS student or eight terms as a part-time PRS student, you will be expected to apply for, and achieve, transfer of status from Probationer Research Student to DPhil status.

This requires successful completion of a qualifying test. This involves the submission of a piece of written work which is examined by two assessors (neither of whom will be supervisors). This process is to ensure that your work is of potential DPhil quality and that the methodology of the research is appropriate and practicable.

Upon successful completion of the transfer of status, you will also be required to undertake the confirmation of DPhil status by the end of your third year (or the end of the sixth year for the part-time pathway). This will also involve the submission of a piece of written work which is assessed by two assessors (neither of whom are supervisors). The confirmation assessment is different to the transfer assessment as the assessors will be focusing on how the research is progressing, the quality of the draft chapters/papers, and on the plan for completion. The assessors will be looking to ensure that you are making the appropriate amount of progress in the development of your thesis, so that your submission will be achieved within the three/four year time limit (or within the sixth/eight year time limit for the part-time pathway).

The DPhil is awarded on the basis of a thesis and oral examination (assessment of other work is not taken into consideration). The thesis should represent a significant and substantial piece of research which is conveyed in a lucid and scholarly manner which shows that you have a good general knowledge of the field of your thesis.

Research areas

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

- Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Conservation
- Climate Systems
- Landscape Dynamics
- Economy, Society: Transformations and Justice
- Environmental Interactions
- Political Worlds: Place, Power, Politics
- Technological Life: Environments, Bodies, Mobilities.

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

Costs

Annual course fees 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	£24,430
Overseas	£32,960

Part-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£12,215
Overseas	£16,480

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

Depending on your choice of topic and the research required to complete it, you may incur additional expenses, such as travel expenses to a field location and research expenses for equipment. These costs will vary according to the type of

research. Some theses will use online data sources, or be lab or computer based and there may be no additional costs beyond fees and living costs. If you choose to undertake research in the field, you may incur expenses in the range of £2,000-£10,000 or more. You will need to meet these additional costs yourself, although there is a department grant of £550 which can be used towards these expenses. There are no other compulsory elements of this course that entail additional costs beyond fees and living costs.

Part-time study

Please note that this course requires that you attend in Oxford for a minimum of 30 days a year and you may incur additional travel and accommodation expenses for this. Accommodation costs in Oxford can start at around £100 a night in a hotel (single rate). Rates for college rooms will be lower. Students should also factor in costs for meals during their stay. Depending on your choice of topic and the research required to complete it, you may incur additional expenses, such as travel expenses to a field location and research expenses for equipment. These costs will vary according to the type of research. Some theses will use online data sources, or be lab or computer based and there may be no additional costs beyond fees and living costs. If you choose to undertake research in the field, you may incur expenses in the range of £2,000-£10,000 or more. You will need to meet these additional costs yourself, although there is a department grant of £550 which can be used towards these expenses. There are no other compulsory elements of this course that entail additional costs beyond fees 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).

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 ([//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 ([//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 \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs\)](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).