

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



Course facts

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

About the course

The DPhil in Pharmacology (DPhil) is a research-based course at Oxford, offering projects in molecular pharmacology, drug discovery, neuropharmacology, cardiovascular pharmacology, and more, within a world-renowned department.

A typical day or week in the first two to three years of the course will mostly focus on lab work and data collection and analysis. It will also involve reading of the literature, attendance of departmental seminars, lab meetings and skills training. Once sufficient progress has been made, laboratory research will taper off and efforts will focus on data analysis and interpretation and writing of the thesis.

DPhil students in the department are also offered the opportunity to be formally trained in, and to participate in, some elements of teaching to undergraduate students (eg as teaching assistants during practical classes in pharmacology for undergraduate students).

Prospective applicants are required to identify a potential departmental supervisor(s) to outline a research project to be submitted as part of the online application.

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 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.

Through their host labs, all postgraduate research students have access to office/desk space and specialised equipment for projects (eg in vivo and ex vivo electrophysiology and imaging methods and facilities for proteomics, molecular biology and medicinal chemistry).

The department offers up to date lecture and seminar room facilities. Meeting rooms are also available for social and networking events organised by the department and its students. A subject-specific librarian offers support to students on library services and resources.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision is the responsibility of the Department of Pharmacology 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 Pharmacology.

DPhil candidates will be assigned to at least two supervisors forming the supervisory team. In most cases, one supervisor is responsible for the day-to-day research supervision while the second supervisor serves as an advisor and mentor. Additional supervisors will be included in interdisciplinary projects involving multiple departmental labs or labs from other departments within the University.

Supervisors will ensure that students will receive the appropriate support and training for their projects. Most students have the opportunity to meet with their supervisor at least once a week.

Assessment

The length of the course ranges from three to four years and follows the assessment format established by the Graduate School of the Medical Sciences Division. Initially students enrol as probationary research students (PRS). Towards the end of the first year, they are required to submit a report and apply to transition to DPhil (PhD) status. This process entails an independent evaluation of the report by two assessors, followed by an oral examination.

A further formal assessment of progress, termed 'Confirmation of Status', occurs towards the end of the second year/ start of the third year of the course. During this assessment, students present an outline of their thesis structure and a timeline for the completion of the project, which is evaluated by two independent assessors.

The programme ends with the submission of a thesis on the project, which undergoes assessment by both an internal and an external examiner. This process includes a formal viva voce examination.

Research areas

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

- molecular and cellular pharmacology
- calcium signalling
- medicinal chemistry
- drug discovery
- cardiovascular pharmacology
- neuropharmacology
- lysosomal disorders.

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); 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. 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. You will need to meet these additional costs, although you may be able to apply for funding 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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