

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: DPhil in Information, Communication and the Social Sciences



Course facts

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

About the course

The DPhil in Information, Communication and the Social Sciences provides an opportunity for highly-qualified students to undertake innovative internet-related research.

The Oxford Internet Institute's (OII) students work on multidisciplinary research across the social sciences.

As a DPhil student at the OII (known as a PhD at other universities), your research will be anchored in disciplinary questions (in, for instance, politics or sociology), while also being situated in broader social science theories and methods. OII faculty are international leaders in their research fields, and their teaching and supervision reflect their innovative research.

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 diverse cohorts of doctoral students complement the strength of the course by providing a multidisciplinary peer network for students to engage in ideas, discussion and debate.

Over the course of the DPhil you will produce an important and original piece of scholarship that will make a significant contribution to the dynamic area of internet research.

In addition to the formal requirements of the DPhil thesis, you will have access to regular training in the key professional skills necessary to support your research and future employment. These range from classes on advanced research methods as part of the OII's option course offerings to professional development training (provided both by the department and the University) such as presentation skills, academic writing and navigating the process of peer review.

You will attend a weekly doctoral seminar in which you will present your own work for critique, and critique the work of your peers.

In addition, the department's busy calendar of events brings many of the most important people in internet research, innovation and policy to the OII, allowing students to engage with cutting-edge scholarship and debates around the internet and digital technologies.

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

The part-time degree offers the flexibility of part-time study with the same high standards and requirements as the full-time DPhil course. It also provides an excellent opportunity for professionals in high tech industries to undertake rigorous long-term research that may be relevant to their working life.

If you study part-time, you will be required to attend seminars, supervision meetings and other obligations in Oxford for a minimum of 30 days each year. In particular, in-person attendance is required during Michaelmas term of years one and two (October-December) to attend core teaching. This means spending one day in Oxford for eight consecutive weeks in the autumn term of years one and two. There is limited flexibility in the dates and pattern of attendance, which will normally be determined by the fixed teaching and seminar schedule during term. After the fourth term you will have the opportunity to agree your pattern and dates of attendance in liaison 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 OII is based in the Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities, a brand-new building at the University of Oxford which opened in 2025. In addition to the OII, the building is home to seven humanities faculties and the Institute for Ethics in AI, a new library, an on-site cafe, a large number of well-equipped teaching and seminar rooms, and several performance and arts venues which are open to the public. The Oxford Internet Institute has its own centre and social hub within the building which facilitates interdisciplinary and collaborative work. At the heart of the building is the Great Hall, a large atrium which serves as a space for informal work, relaxation, meeting with friends, taking breaks and having refreshments.

The library, part of the Bodleian Libraries, houses the Oxford Internet Institute's lending collection. There are 340 general reader seats, and around 80 graduate study seats – with a further 320 formal and informal study seats throughout the building outside the library. As well as the Library's extensive staffed hours, there will be a 24/7 study space, including smart lockers for self-collect of borrowable items out of hours.

Students are provided with hot-desk working space in the department. You will have access to OII's dedicated computing facilities and IT support as required for your research project, which includes collaborative software, server space, and compute resource, and may also make use of [Oxford's Advanced Research Computing service \(https://www.arc.ox.ac.uk/\)](https://www.arc.ox.ac.uk/).

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Oxford Internet Institute and it is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff. Please see the [full list of faculty members \(https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/study/dphil-in-information-communication-and-the-social-sciences/?supervisors\)](https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/study/dphil-in-information-communication-and-the-social-sciences/?supervisors) eligible to supervise DPhil students for this course.

Students should normally expect to meet with their supervisor around three to four times a term.

Assessment

The first year is a probationary year, soon after which, subject to satisfactory progress, you will normally transfer from Probationer Research Student (PRS) to full DPhil status. A second formal assessment of progress, Confirmation of Status, takes place later in the programme, normally in the third year if studying full-time, or fourth/fifth year if studying part-time.

The Transfer of Status and Confirmation of Status assessments are conducted by two members of staff other than your supervisor(s).

Examination for the DPhil takes place at the end of the programme by means of a written thesis and an oral examination.

Research areas

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

- AI and the Future of Work
- Digital Economies
- Digital Knowledge and Culture
- Digital Politics and Government
- Education, Digital Life and Wellbeing
- AI Ethics and Philosophy of Information
- Information Geography and Inequality
- Information Governance and Security.

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	£15,350
Overseas	£32,960

Part-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£7,675
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 research topic and the research required to complete it, you may incur additional expenses, such as travel expenses, research expenses, and materials. You are not formally required to undertake field research for your

thesis, but if applicable to your choice of research topic, may also have to meet the costs of any fieldwork. These costs will vary widely according to the location and length of the fieldwork, but the department estimates that this may range from £1,000 to £10,000 or more. You will need to meet these additional costs yourself, although you will have access to some departmental funding towards research expenses and may be able to apply for additional grants. 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 30 days each academic year, and you may incur additional travel and accommodation expenses for this. Part-time students are normally required to attend teaching in person in Year 1 for one day a week across one or two terms (8 to 16 days in total). Accommodation costs in Oxford can start at around £40 per night in a college or around £80 in a hotel (single rate). Students should also factor in costs for meals during their stay. 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 materials. You are not formally required to undertake field research for your thesis, but if applicable to your choice of research topic, may also have to meet the costs of any fieldwork. These costs will vary widely according to the location and length of the fieldwork, but the department estimates that this may range from £1,000 to £10,000 or more. You will need to meet these additional costs yourself, although you will have access to some departmental funding towards research expenses and may be able to apply for additional grants. 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).