

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: MSc by Research in Oncology



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	1 to 3 years

About the course

The MSc by Research in Oncology is a research-based course at Oxford focusing on DNA biology, tumour microenvironments, and immuno-oncology. It involves lab-based training and culminates in a thesis and viva.

The Department of Oncology employs multidisciplinary approaches from physics, biology, chemistry and mathematical modelling to investigate DNA biology and epigenetics, cell and environmental biology of tumour tissue and both systemic and local immunological responses in cancer. The programme focuses on expanding scientific knowledge with a particular focus on therapies involving drug discovery or action and combination therapies with radiotherapy.

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 MSc by Research in Oncology course accepts students for one to three years of study, however, the majority of students in this department complete their project in a year. Applications are accepted from both basic scientists and clinicians.

This course does not include a timetable of lectures but there is a wide range of courses and workshops you will be able to 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. The Department of Oncology provides an induction to the department in the first weeks of study and encourages attendance at divisional and University induction events.

You will be encouraged to make the most of the doctoral training and research methods provision available across the Medical Sciences Division and to attend departmental and divisional seminars. As an MSc by Research student you will be given the opportunity to present your work at a variety of seminars and sessions in the department.

You will be encouraged to attend training opportunities that include both subject-specific and generic research and transferable skills.

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). (<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) (<https://www.it.ox.ac.uk/what-to-bring>) at Oxford.

Students are provided with laboratory workspace, desk space and IT facilities in support of their research. In addition there are on-site library and social facilities.

Supervision

You will be admitted directly to a particular research area led by a Principal Investigator who will be appointed your supervisor. You will be based in a research lab and undertake research on a subject agreed with your supervisor. All MSc by Research candidates are assigned two supervisors in total, one acting as the main day-to-day research supervisor and the second as an additional academic mentor.

The allocation of graduate supervision is the responsibility of the Department of Oncology and it is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff.

Students will normally have two strands of supervision and the support of the Director of Graduate Studies, as well as administrative support within the department. Students can expect to meet with their supervisors several times each month, depending upon the requirements of their research project.

Assessment

Assessment for this master's degree course is by submission of a thesis and a viva with two examiners.

You will begin your course as a probationary research student (PRS). Towards the end of your first year you will apply to transfer to "MSc by Research" status. To transfer your status, you must apply formally, submit a research report and statement of future research plans, and take an independent assessment by two assessors. Progression on the course is dependent upon passing the Transfer of Status assessment.

Following successful completion of the transfer assessment then candidates will progress and are able to submit their thesis prior to examination by viva.

Research areas

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

- DNA biology and epigenetics
- Cell and environmental biology of tumour tissue
- Systemic and local immunological responses in cancer.

These multidisciplinary research areas have a particular focus on therapies involving drug discovery or action and combination therapies with radiotherapy.

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

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

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, equipment, materials and field trips. These costs will vary according to the choice of research topic, and the research required to complete it. You will need to meet these additional costs yourself, although you may be able to apply for small grants from the department. There are no other 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](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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