

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



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	2 to 3 years

About the course

The MSc by Research in Chemistry MSc(Res) is a research-based course focused on original projects in areas like catalysis, materials, energy, biology interface, theory, and synthesis, offering advanced training in cutting-edge chemical science.

The main aspect of the course is an original research project, which develops research skills, knowledge and expertise in an area of cutting-edge chemistry. In many ways, the course is very similar to the DPhil in Chemistry, the key difference being that a DPhil project would normally take longer to complete and would be expected to make more significant advances in the field of research. The MSc(Res) offers an alternative to a DPhil, for students wishing to undertake a shorter research degree.

You will work with one or more academic supervisors, on a project that falls within the department's research themes.

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

Many students work on projects that cut across the traditional boundaries of chemistry, and some work in interdisciplinary fields that exploit the Department of Chemistry's strong connections with other departments of the University. Students are supervised by some of the country's most gifted research chemists, many of whom have world-class reputations.

You will work in an environment which encourages and inspires you to acquire and develop a wide range of communication, study, and research skills.

A typical week would primarily be spent carrying out your research, along with attending research group meetings, preparing reports, and keeping up-to-date with the scientific literature. You will also have access to a range of training opportunities, including specialist training within the department on key research techniques. Alongside your research project, you will be expected to develop your transferable skills, and many courses and opportunities for this are provided by the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences division and the wider University.

The Department of Chemistry has a strong and vibrant research community, of which you will become part, and you will be encouraged to attend a range of events including seminar series, lectures from distinguished visiting researchers, and the annual Graduate Symposium.

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). ([//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.

Workspace will be related to individual circumstances. If undertaking experimental work, you will be provided with space in a laboratory with access to all the required equipment. If undertaking theoretical research, you will have shared office space.

The Department of Chemistry has one of the largest and well-resourced research laboratories in the world. You will have access to the department's IT support staff, to the Radcliffe Science Library and other University libraries, and centrally provided electronic resources, technical workshops and glass workshops. Experimental facilities are available as appropriate to the research topic. The provision of other resources specific to your project should be agreed with your supervisor as a part of the planning stages of the agreed project.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Department of Chemistry 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 Chemistry.

You will join a research group supervised by one or more members of the Department of Chemistry, sometimes in collaboration with other departments.

If you require specific help to adjust to an academic programme or to develop a new range of skills, your supervisor can work with you to help find additional support where necessary.

Most students have the opportunity to meet with their research supervisor to discuss and review their progress on a weekly or fortnightly basis.

Assessment

You will be admitted as a Probationary Research Student. At the end of the first year, you will undergo a Transfer of Status assessment, to ensure that you have the potential to gain an MSc by Research degree. This assessment is made by independent assessors on the basis of a report, a short presentation and an oral examination. Assuming that you satisfactorily transfer to MSc by Research status, your research proceeds with quarterly reporting throughout the remainder of the course.

You will be expected to submit an MSc by Research thesis within, at most, three years from the date of admission. The vast majority of students submit their thesis within two years. Your thesis will be read by two examiners, one of whom is normally from Oxford and one from elsewhere, and you will be assessed via the thesis and an oral (viva voce) examination. The examiners will judge, along with other requirements, whether you have made a worthwhile contribution to your particular field of learning.

Research areas

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

- Advanced Functional Materials and Interfaces
- Catalysis
- Chemistry at the interface with Biology and Medicine
- Energy and Sustainable Chemistry
- Innovative Measurement and Photon Science
- Kinetics, Dynamics and Mechanism
- Synthesis
- Theory and Modelling in the Chemical Sciences.

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);
- [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, research expenses, and field trips. You will need to meet these additional costs, although you may be able to apply for small grants 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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