UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS AND OUTREACH
University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD

If you require a more accessible version of the document, please contact Undergraduate Admissions by email (uao.comms@admin.ox.ac.uk) or via the online form (www.ox.ac.uk/ask).

Chemistry (MChem) (four-year course) Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026

Entry requirements

Visit Admission requirements for 2026 entry to view a summary table of each undergraduate course's entry requirements.

If English is not your first language you may also need to meet our English language requirements.

About the course

Chemistry is a wide-ranging science concerned with matter at the atomic and molecular scale. Important aspects are:

- synthesis
- structure
- reaction mechanisms
- properties
- analysis
- and transformations of all types of materials.

Chemists are a constant source of innovation: it is hard to imagine any product introduced in recent times that did not require the creative efforts of a chemist.

Chemistry underpins the conceptual framework and methodology of biochemistry and molecular medicine and is at the heart of many major industries.

Teaching and research are closely linked on the course: Oxford has one of the leading chemistry departments in the world with state-of-the-art teaching and research laboratories and world-class research in a broad range of areas including:

- synthesis and catalysis
- medicinal and biological chemistry
- sustainable energy
- advanced materials
- innovative measurement
- theoretical and computational chemistry.

Students will be taught an exciting practical course in our recently-built lab. The department has an outstanding track record in commercialising the innovative work of research staff, which has raised millions of pounds for the University.

The MChem is a four-year course and is not modular, in the sense that the subject is taught and examined as a whole, enabling us to explore the links within the subject.

The core material is taken by all students, with opportunities to specialise later in the course.

The fourth year (Part II) is devoted exclusively to research – a distinctive feature of Chemistry at Oxford since 1916.

To hear more about Chemistry at Oxford, visit our video: Chemistry at Oxford.

To hear more about our undergraduate Teaching Labs, visit our video: Chemistry Teaching Laboratory.

Work placements/international opportunities

The fourth year (Part II) of the course involves full-time work within an established research group, which offers the possibility for a few students to spend time at laboratories in industry or at universities abroad.

Many students find work placements during vacations through the Careers Service and there are some opportunities within the department.

A typical week (Years 1-3)

- Ten lectures (9am to 11am)
- One or two tutorials in your college with set work to be completed in your own time
- Two afternoons of laboratory work (11am to 5pm)
- A problems class, e.g., a mathematics class in the first year.

Tutorials are usually 2-4 students with a tutor. Class sizes may vary but would usually be no more than around 15 students and can be as small as four.

Most tutorials, classes, and lectures are delivered by academic staff who are members of the department. Many are world-leading experts with years of experience in teaching and research.

Some teaching may also be delivered by postgraduate students who are usually studying at doctorate level.

Part II (Year 4)

Part II (the fourth year) involves full-time work with an established research group. Devoting the fourth year exclusively to research has been a distinctive feature of Chemistry at Oxford since 1916 and this will give you research skills that are highly valued by both academics and employers.

This final research year of the Chemistry course has three extended terms of 12 to 13 weeks (instead of the normal eight weeks) and is 38 weeks in total.

To hear more about how our undergraduate course works, visit our video: The Oxford MChem course.

To find out more about how our teaching year is structured, visit our Academic Year page.

Significant self-study is expected of all students – for further details see workload and independent study information. Undergraduate courses at Oxford are full-time during term time. Students typically spend approximately 40 hours per week on academic work.

Course structure

YEAR 1	
COURSES	**ASSESSMENT**
The first year of the course covers the traditional areas of Inorganic, Organic and Physical Chemistry, together with Mathematics for Chemistry. These are broadly based, and include topics such as Biological Chemistry and Physics, which are presented in a chemical context. Students are taught through practical work, lectures and small group classes and tutorials.	Preliminary examination: four written papers; practical work.

YEAR 2	
COURSES	**ASSESSMENT**
During the second year of the course, students build up their understanding of the subject and cover most of the core material in the degree. Examples of some of the topics included are: • Theoretical chemistry • Biological chemistry • Molecular spectroscopy • Synthetic chemistry. Students are taught through practical work, lectures and small group classes and tutorials.	Part IA examinations: three written papers; continuous assessment of practical work.

YEAR 3	
COURSES	**ASSESSMENT**
The third year begins by completing the core material, followed by a wide variety of options courses, some of which relate to research interests in the department.	Part IB examinations: seven written papers; continuous assessment of practical work.

YEAR 3	
Students are taught through practical work, lectures and small group classes and tutorials.	

YEAR 4 (extended terms)	
COURSES The fourth year is spent exclusively on research, providing students with the opportunity to immerse themselves in a significant project in one of the world's premier research departments. Students are supervised by a member of academic staff and have full access to the research facilities of their host laboratory. (Not all options may be available every year - these are subject to change, as explained in the Terms & Conditions and for reasons of staff availability and student demand. The department may add extra options.)	**ASSESSMENT** Part II examination: thesis; oral examination. The final degree classification is determined at the end of the fourth year.

This course is currently under review. Up-to-date details on any course changes can be found on the Chemistry website.

Most Oxford courses are assessed by examinations. These are typically at the end of the first and last years but you may have assessments at other times and some courses have exams in the second year also. First year examinations are often called Prelims or Moderations, and you need to pass these exams to progress to the second year. You must pass your final year exams, or 'finals', to pass your degree. For more information on assessment for your course, please see the Course Structure.

Finals also determine the classification of your degree. For some courses you may also be assessed on your practical work, or you may be required to submit a dissertation. Please check the assessment details for your course.

The University will seek to deliver this course in accordance with the description set out above. 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. For further information, please see the University's Terms and Conditions and information about potential course changes.

You are also referred to the Student Handbook (which is updated every September).

Fees

These annual fees in 2026/27 are for full-time students who begin this undergraduate course here in 2026. Information about how much fees and other costs usually increase each year is set out in the University's Terms and Conditions.

For details of annual increases, please see our guidance on likely increases to fees and charges.

Fee status	Annual Course fees in 2026/27
Home	£9,790
Overseas	£62,820

In the 2027-28 academic year course fees for Home fee status students will rise to £10,050 (in line with the government fee cap.)

Further details about fee status eligibility can be found on the fee status webpage.

Living costs

Living costs for the academic year starting in 2026 are estimated to be between £1,405 and £2,105 for each month you are in Oxford. Students at Oxford can benefit from our world class resources and college provision, which may help to keep costs down. Entitlement to certain types of support may depend on your personal financial circumstances.

Our academic year is made up of three eight-week terms, so you would not usually need to be in Oxford for much more than six months of the year but may wish to budget over a nine-month period to ensure you also have sufficient funds during the holidays to meet essential costs. For further details please visit our living costs webpage.

Living costs breakdown

	Per month		Total for 9 months	
	Lower range	Upper range	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£315	£545	£2,835	£4,905
Accommodation (including utilities)	£825	£990	£7,425	£8,910
Personal items	£160	£310	£1,440	£2,790
Social activities	£50	£130	£450	£1,170
Study costs	£35	£90	£315	£810
Other	£20	£40	£180	£360
Total	**£1,405**	**£2,105**	**£12,645**	**£18,945**

In order to provide these estimated likely living costs (which are rounded to the nearest £5), the University in collaboration with the Oxford SU conducted a living costs survey in May 2025 to complement existing student expenditure data from a variety of sources, including the UK government's Student Income and Expenditure Survey and the National Union of Students (NUS).

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. When planning your

finances for any future years of study in Oxford beyond 2026-27, it is suggested that you allow for potential increases in living expenses of around 4% each year – although this rate may vary depending on the national economic situation.

Additional Fees and Charges Information for Chemistry

Students in their fourth year undertake full-time research under the supervision of a member of the academic staff. This final year has three extended terms of 12 to 13 weeks and is 38 weeks in total, so you will need to budget for higher living costs in the final year, as you will be required to be in Oxford for longer than the standard terms. (View the likely range of living costs for an additional month in Oxford.) This final year, which is entirely devoted to research, is a unique feature of the Oxford course, and will give you research skills that are highly valued by both academics and employers.

Regulation - The University of Oxford is regulated by the Office for Students and subscribes to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education student complaints scheme.