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## Physics and Philosophy (BA) (three-year course); (MPhysPhil) (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

This course combines the most rigorous and fundamental subjects in the sciences and the humanities.

Physics is concerned with unravelling the complexities of the universe from the smallest to the largest scale. Philosophy deals with foundational questions of the most general kind: what there is, what we know and how we came to know it, and how we ought to act and structure our lives.

Central to both subjects is the development and application of clear and precise thinking to foundational problems, the questioning of received wisdom and the critical articulation of ideas which aim for an understanding of how things are, in the broadest possible terms.

Physics and Philosophy are historically intertwined and each continues to contribute to developments in the other.

Philosophy played a crucial role in the two revolutions of 20th-century physics – namely, relativity and quantum mechanics. It continues to contribute both to foundational research in theoretical physics and to the articulation and critique of scientific method. Conversely, discoveries in physics provide profound implications for philosophical inquiry, such as the nature of space and time and the behaviour of matter at the quantum realm.

Students on this course can expect to investigate not only central developments in both subjects, but also this interplay.

Oxford has one of the largest physics departments in the UK, with over 100 academics leading research that spans the breadth of physics. This expertise ensures the curriculum is updated in the light of developments in research.

The Philosophy Faculty is the largest in the UK, with more than 70 full-time members; it admits around 450 undergraduates annually to read the various degrees involving Philosophy.

The Oxford research group in Philosophy of Physics is the largest in the world. It has interests ranging from classical space-time theories and foundations of classical statistical mechanics, to quantum mechanics, quantum field theory and quantum gravity.

Philosophy of Physics runs through the first three years of the course.

In the first-year students delve into 18th-century investigations into matter and motion.

In Years 2 and 3 they investigate the philosophical foundations of relativity and quantum mechanics.

The fourth-year MPhysPhil options bring you to the threshold of current research. In this year students may specialise in either Physics or Philosophy, or continue with a combination, including advanced study in the Philosophy of Physics. Alternatively, students may complete the course in three years, leaving with a BA.

### A typical week

Your work will be divided between independent study, tutorials, two or three classes and about ten lectures each week. Independent study (reading for and writing essays, completing problem sets) will take up the majority of your working time.

Tutorials typically take the form of 2-4 students discussing themes arising from essays or problem sets with a tutor in the students' college. Lectures and classes are typically held in either the Department of Physics or Faculty of Philosophy.

Class sizes may vary depending on the options you choose. There would usually be no more than around 10 students though classes for some of the more popular papers may be up to 20 students.

Most tutorials, classes, and lectures are delivered by academics who are specialists in their subject. Many are world-leading experts with years of experience in teaching and research. Some teaching may also be delivered by postgraduate students who are studying at doctoral level.

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

There are two Physics and Philosophy degrees, the three-year BA and the four-year MPhysPhil. Decisions regarding continuation to the fourth year do not have to be made until the third year.

Year 1	INDICATIVE COURSES	ASSESSMENT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physics<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Classical mechanics and special relativity</li><li>○ Mathematical methods</li><li>○ Differential equations and waves</li></ul></li><li>• Philosophy<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ General philosophy</li><li>○ Introductory philosophy of physics</li><li>○ Philosophical topics in logic and probability</li></ul></li></ul>	First University examinations: three written papers in Physics; two written papers in Philosophy

## Year 2

### INDICATIVE COURSES

- Physics
  - Thermal physics
  - Electromagnetism
  - Quantum physics
  - Mathematical methods
  - Physics practicals
- Philosophy
  - Philosophy of Science
  - Philosophy of special relativity

### ASSESSMENT

Final University examinations, Part A: three papers in Physics; satisfactory lab work

## Year 3

### INDICATIVE COURSES

Core topics:

- Physics - choose two of the following:
  - Symmetry and relativity
  - General relativity
  - Classical mechanics
- Philosophy - compulsory topics:
  - Philosophy of quantum mechanics
  - A choice of one from the following: Early Modern Philosophy; Knowledge and Reality; Philosophy of Mind; Philosophy of Logic and Language; Philosophy of Mathematics; Philosophical Logic

### ASSESSMENT

Final University examinations, Part B: three or four written papers in Philosophy; two or four subjects in Physics

Extra subjects, choose:

- Either two Physics papers and/or projects from:
  - The remaining core subject not chosen
  - Atomic and laser physics
  - Computational and experimental projects
  - Condensed matter physics
  - Fluids
  - Nuclear and particle physics
- Or one Philosophy paper from a range of options

## Year 4

### RESEARCH

Three units chosen in any combination from the lists for Physics and Philosophy, including an advanced philosophy of physics option.

### ASSESSMENT

Final University examinations, Part C: a mix of three written papers and essays, or thesis (in Philosophy), or project (in Physics)

The options listed above are illustrative and may change. More information about current options is available on the [Physics website](#) and [Philosophy 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	£47,570

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
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,405</b>	<b>£2,105</b>	<b>£12,645</b>	<b>£18,945</b>

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 Physics and Philosophy

There are no compulsory costs for this course beyond the fees shown above and your living costs.

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.