

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2023-24: DPhil in Astrophysics



About the course

The DPhil in Astrophysics is a research-based degree offered by the astrophysics and theoretical physics sub-departments of Physics, available to students interested in carrying out research in observational or theoretical astrophysics, or in astronomical instrumentation. The course has a strong track record of preparing students for careers in academia and elsewhere.

The DPhil is a research-based course that normally takes three to four years of study. You will be expected to carry out your own research in areas drawn from the sub-department's exceptionally broad range of research, exploiting access to high performance computing and to the full range of space and ground-based facilities where necessary.

You should closely consult the the sub-department's areas of research interest and the list of available projects. Particular strengths include the study of cosmology, galaxies and black holes, stars and exoplanets, and include instrumentation and large telescope projects.

You will be a member of a lively research environment, and the department places great emphasis on matching student and supervisor so that work on the main research project can begin as soon as possible. A taught graduate course in the first year runs in parallel to this work, providing a comprehensive overview of both the state of modern astrophysics and the necessary skills required to make progress in 21st century research. Students are also expected to select and attend one or two relevant optional courses from the MPhys or other courses. No part of this graduate course is examined.

The lively programme of seminars, colloquia and discussion meetings held in the department ensures that you remain in touch with the cutting edge of the subject and provide an opportunity to interact with staff and with the large number of visitors who pass through the department each year. They also provide plenty of opportunity for you to gain experience in presenting your science, a critical part of a modern researcher's life.

Supervision

For this course, the allocation of graduate supervision is the responsibility of the Department of Physics and it is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff.

Your DPhil offer is based on working with a named supervisor(s), who will meet with you regularly (typically at least weekly). Your supervisor(s) will be your main source of information and advice throughout the course of your research. Their responsibilities include giving you early advice about the nature of research and the standard expected, and about planning the framework of your research programme. It is likely that you will also be working closely with other members of that supervisor's group, and sometimes collaborators from other institutes (some of you may even be jointly supervised by an academic from another institute). There may be an option to add a co-supervisor if you find yourself working closely with another group member. Under exceptional circumstances, a supervisor may be found outside the Department of Physics.

Assessment

All students will be initially admitted to the status of Probationer Research Student (PRS). Within a maximum of six terms as a PRS student (and normally by the fourth term) you will be expected to apply for transfer of status from Probationer Research Student to DPhil status.

A successful transfer of status from PRS to DPhil status will require satisfactory attendance at the compulsory graduate lecture programme. You will also be required to write a report on your progress during the first year and you will be assessed by two members of staff (neither of whom will be your primary supervisor) . Students who are successful at transfer will also be expected to apply for and gain confirmation of DPhil status within nine terms of admission, to show that your work continues to be on track.

Both milestones normally involve an interview with two assessors (other than your supervisor) and therefore provide important experience for the final oral examination.

You will be expected to submit a thesis of no more than 250 pages (roughly 125,000 words) within four years from the date of admission. To be successfully awarded a DPhil in Astrophysics you will need to defend your thesis orally (viva voce) in front of two appointed examiners.

Changes to courses

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. These may include significant changes made necessary by a pandemic (including Covid-19), epidemic or local health emergency. For further information, please see the University's Terms and Conditions (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/terms>) and our page on changes to courses (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges>).

Expected length of course

	Full Time Only
Expected length	3 to 4 years

Costs

Annual fees for entry in 2023-24

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£8,960
Overseas	£29,700

Information about 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, please be aware that fees will usually increase annually. Information about how much fees and other costs may increase is set out in the University's Terms and Conditions (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/terms>).

Course fees cover your teaching as well as other academic services and facilities provided to support your studies. Unless specified in the additional cost information (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 cost information.

Graduate students who have reached the end of their standard period of fee liability may be required to pay a termly University and/or a college continuation charge.

The University continuation charge, per term for entry in 2023-24 is £572, 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 is likely to be in the region of £100 to £600 per term. Please contact your college for more details.

Additional cost information

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 and/or college to help you cover some of these expenses.

Living costs

In addition to your course fees, you will need to ensure that you have adequate funds to support your living costs for the duration of your course.

The likely living costs for 2023-24 are published below. These costs are based on a single, full-time graduate student, with no dependants, living in Oxford. We provide the cost per month so you can multiply up by the number of months you expect to live in Oxford.

Likely living costs for one month

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£300	£470
Accommodation	£715	£860
Personal items	£180	£305
Social activities	£40	£90
Study costs	£35	£80
Other	£20	£35
Total	£1,290	£1,840

Likely living costs for nine months

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£2,700	£4,230
Accommodation	£6,435	£7,740
Personal items	£1,620	£2,745
Social activities	£360	£810
Study costs	£315	£720
Other	£180	£315
Total	£11,610	£16,560

Likely living costs for twelve months

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£3,600	£5,640
Accommodation	£8,580	£10,320
Personal items	£2,160	£3,660
Social activities	£480	£1,080
Study costs	£420	£960
Other	£240	£420
Total	£15,480	£22,080

When planning your finances for any future years of study at Oxford beyond 2023-24, it is suggested that you allow for potential increases in living expenses of 5% or more each year – although this rate may vary significantly depending on how the national economic situation develops.

More information about how these figures have been calculated is available at www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/livingcosts.

Document accessibility

If you require an accessible version of the document please contact Graduate Admissions and Recruitment by email (graduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk) or via the online form (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/ask>).