

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



About the course

This programme aims to train students in cutting-edge laboratory research applying techniques in bionanotechnology, biophysics, computational biology, microscopy, molecular biology, structural biology and systems biology to a broad range of fields including cell biology, chromosome biology, drug discovery, epigenetics, host-pathogen interactions, membrane proteins, ion channels and transporters, and RNA biology.

You will be admitted directly to a particular research area led by departmental members who will be appointed DPhil supervisors. If you are admitted to a particular research supervisor you will not normally do laboratory rotations. You will be based in a research lab and undertake research on a subject agreed with your supervisor.

There are no taught courses examined by written papers, however you will have access to a wide range of lecture courses at foundation or preliminary level, as appropriate. If you have changed fields, this will allow you to fill in gaps in your background knowledge. There is also a wide range of courses and workshops which you can 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 length of the programme ranges from three to four years with the exact duration depending on the following factors as judged by your supervisor(s) and assessors:

- focus and rate of your research development and progress
- achievement of acceptable focus and scope of thesis
- publication quality research
- length of available funding.

A small proportion of DPhil students (about 5%) submit their theses within three years from starting, however on average most students submit within three to four years. By the end of the fourth year, 70-90% of students have submitted their theses.

Research at the Department of Biochemistry is divided into five main themes:

- cell biology, development and genetics
- chromosomal and RNA biology
- infection and disease processes
- microbiology and systems biology
- structural biology and molecular biophysics.

Supervision

For this course, the allocation of graduate supervision is the responsibility of the Department of Biochemistry 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 Biochemistry. Information about supervisors connected with this course can also be found at the Department of Biochemistry website.

You will typically meet with your supervisor on a weekly or fortnightly basis. In addition, your supervisor may appoint a senior member of the laboratory as your day-to-day supervisor. Most laboratories also have weekly meetings where members present and discuss their results with other members of the laboratory.

Assessment

You will begin your course as a probationary research student (PRS) and near the end of the first year you will apply to transfer to DPhil (PhD) status. To do this you write a research report and statement of future research plans. This will be assessed by two independent experts, who interview you as part of the process. Continuation in the programme is subject to passing the Transfer of Status exam.

After eight terms of study you will need to apply formally to confirm your DPhil status. This involves writing a short progress report and thesis outline and giving a presentation. The application is assessed by two independent experts. Continuation in the programme is subject to successfully completing the Confirmation of Status.

The final stage of the research programme is submission of your DPhil thesis, which needs to be done within four years. Your thesis is assessed by two independent experts (one of which will be external to the University of Oxford), who conduct a viva examination with you.

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>).