

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2023-24: DPhil in Cellular Structural Biology



About the course

The DPhil in Cellular Structural Biology is jointly organised by the University of Oxford, Diamond Light Source and the Rosalind Franklin Institute. It provides outstanding training in structural biology methodology, allowing students to apply their knowledge to methods development or to the study of important molecular and cellular systems.

Students spend the first year learning a range of structural biology techniques, undertaking two five-month projects in different laboratories and following taught courses. We encourage students to learn two of the major structural biology techniques during these two projects.

Students then spend years two to four of the programme primarily engaged in their research projects. They have the opportunity to work with outstanding structural biologists, continuing to develop structural methods, or to investigate the molecular basis for cellular processes, including in infection or membrane biology. Collaborative projects are highly encouraged, with students building supervisory teams, which contain their primary structural biology supervisor as well as others with expertise in complementary methods or particular biological questions.

Training in key research techniques should include:

- X-ray crystallography
- nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy
- electron cryo-microscopy and electron tomography
- synchrotron radiation and integrative structural biology
- high-resolution light microscopy
- computational biochemistry and molecular simulations.

The students write reports at the end of each rotation project and have the opportunity to discuss the report and their research project with one of the principal investigators associated with the programme. They also prepare a project proposal at the end of the first year to outline what they plan to do during their DPhil project. Both of these activities provide valuable training in proposal and report writing.

Supervision

Each student will be guided and supported by a supervisory team. The students are encouraged to be flexible about the supervisor until they arrive in Oxford, as the first week of their course is spent meeting all of those associated with the programme and making decisions about where to work during their rotation projects. A primary supervisor will be an expert in a core structural biology technique and will ensure the provision of training. Co-supervisors will bring expertise in specific methods, which may be structural or may be other techniques which enrich the training and the research. Students will receive termly progress reports from their supervisors, and in addition, the programme directors will regularly meet with students to provide guidance, support and careers advice.

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Medical Sciences Doctoral Training Centre. It is also not always possible to offer students their preferred supervisor, as Wellcome have guidelines about the number of students who each individual supervisor can work with. However, with such a broad pool of excellent supervisors, this is rarely a problem. Under exceptional circumstances a supervisor may be found outside the Medical Sciences Doctoral Training Centre.

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 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 the submission of a report on progress to date on research and future plans. Students who are successful at transfer will also be expected to apply for and gain confirmation of DPhil status within ten 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 an original thesis of up to 50,000 words within a maximum of four years from the date of admission. To be successfully awarded a DPhil in Cellular Structural Biology 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	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>).