

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



About the course

The Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) in Philosophy is a three- to four-year full-time research programme whereby you undertake a doctoral level research project under the guidance of your supervisor(s). This course is not available in part-time mode of study and is not offered via distance learning.

The primary aim of the faculty's DPhil in Philosophy is to prepare you for an academic career in philosophy. Each year, the Faculty of Philosophy welcomes students from a range of courses who have already completed substantial graduate work in philosophy. Typically, students who are successfully admitted to the DPhil course have already completed study that is equivalent or nearly equivalent to that required for Oxford's BPhil in Philosophy course. The faculty's Graduate Studies Committee recommends progression from Oxford's BPhil in Philosophy to the DPhil course, considering the BPhil offers the opportunity to study a wide range of philosophical topics over two years as well as to focus on a narrower field of research interest (unlike most one-year masters in a specialised subject, as offered elsewhere).

Students may also progress from the faculty's specialised MSt programmes - the MSt in Philosophy of Physics, the MSt in Ancient Philosophy and the MSt in Practical Ethics.

As part of your doctoral research you will produce a substantial 75,000-word thesis. Students proceeding to the DPhil programme via the BPhil will normally write a DPhil thesis which is an expansion of their BPhil thesis and may be able to incorporate the full contents of their 30,000-word BPhil thesis into the 75,000-word DPhil thesis. However, this is not a formal requirement; sometimes the BPhil thesis topic is not suitable for expansion into a DPhil thesis, or you may wish to write your DPhil thesis on a different topic.

You are not required to attend any taught graduate classes as part of your DPhil degree, but you are encouraged to participate in lectures, classes, seminars and other educational opportunities offered throughout the university as relevant to your topic of study. The course has no fieldwork, industrial placement or year abroad element, but you may decide to attend conferences, workshops or research training elsewhere.

You may attend any graduate or undergraduate classes, seminars and lectures in and outside of the Faculty of Philosophy which are of interest to you, provided that those classes, seminars and lectures are open to you.

Each term, many graduate classes and research seminars are organised by faculty members in which graduate students are full and important participants.

Graduates are encouraged to organise their own seminars and reading groups, and they also run two societies: one invites distinguished speakers from the UK and around the world, while the other gives graduates the opportunity to present papers to a graduate audience.

Each year there is an Oxford Graduate Philosophy Conference, in which most graduate philosophy students participate in some way.

The **Masters of Letters (MLitt)** in Philosophy is awarded on the basis of a thesis of maximum 50,000 words. In practice, applicants are admitted for the MLitt only in exceptional cases, and few students submit a thesis for the MLitt. The MLitt is more often an exit award for DPhil students who fail or withdraw from the DPhil degree but meet the requirements for the MLitt.

Course Outcomes

As a DPhil student, you will research, summarise, present and defend an argument with some of the best scholars in their subject, under the direction of (an) experienced researcher(s), and will extend your skills and experiences.

During the DPhil you will learn new or hone existing intellectual, practical and transferable skills, as follows:

- analyse and clarify an abstract question, grasp and critically compare different approaches to answering it, and develop an approach of your own
- put complex arguments together for and against a position and take them apart
- interpret difficult historical texts produced within a historical context

- construct extensive pieces of writing that provide a clear overview of a subject and a sustained independent argument about it, presented in a lucid, objective and scholarly manner
- demonstrate excellent oral presentation
- have effective time organisation (since you must produce extensive pieces of written work at regular intervals and to tight deadlines)
- sustain intensive work to a deadline over an extended period
- make effective use of libraries, information technology and other sources of information

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Faculty of Philosophy 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 Faculty of Philosophy.

You should have regular one-to-one tuition sessions with your supervisor(s). These will normally happen twice per term but in some terms, especially at the start of the degree and during the final stages of the thesis, the number of sessions may be increased.

You will normally be assigned one supervisor to start with but towards the end of your course, after you have been awarded confirmation of status, it is usual for you to receive a second, additional supervisor, to offer another view on your work as well as to provide another reference for you if required.

Assessment

You will initially be enrolled as a Probationary Research Student (PRS), unless you have previously completed the BPhil course at Oxford (see below). Normally in the third term after enrolment onto the DPhil as a PRS student, you are required to complete a transfer of status from PRS to full DPhil student status. Two appointed examiners will interview you on:

- your thesis outline, which explains the intended line of argument or contribution to the subject;
- a piece of written work in the area and philosophical style of the proposed thesis which is typically, though not necessarily, a draft chapter of the thesis.

If you progressed from the MSt in Philosophy of Physics course, you are required to write a 20,000-word thesis during your year as a PRS, as your MSt does not have a thesis element.

Normally at the end of the second year after you enrolled, you will be required to apply for confirmation of your DPhil student status. This application will involve an interview by one or two appointed examiners on:

- your thesis outline, comprising both a reasoned statement of the nature of, and some detail on, the proposed thesis together with a provisional table of contents; and
- a piece of written work intended as a part of the thesis, in final or near-final draft.

If you progress from the BPhil, you will normally enter the DPhil without being required to pass a year as a PRS and as a result you will normally apply for confirmation of DPhil status in the third term after enrolment onto the DPhil and, according to the Examination Regulations at time of publication, you will only have six terms (instead of the usual nine terms) of fee liability for your DPhil.

The doctoral work culminates in a 75,000-word thesis that is defended orally in front of two appointed examiners (*viva voce*).

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	£9,270
Overseas	£26,450

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

The Philosophy Graduate Studies Committee has a research and travel fund for graduate students to which students may apply for assistance with, for example, the costs of attending conferences or workshops. BPhil and MSt students may only apply for funding if they are presenting a paper. Probationary Research Students and DPhil students are entitled to apply for funding to attend a workshop, conference, etc, whether or not they are presenting a paper.

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>).