

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: DPhil in Neuroscience (1+3)



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	4 years

About the course

The DPhil in Neuroscience (1+3) is a four-year taught and research-based course at Oxford. It begins with a taught MSc year covering molecular to cognitive neuroscience, followed by a three-year doctoral project in a chosen neuroscience field.

The course takes an integrated approach to neuroscience and provides a wide range of skills training in experimental and theoretical methods that is intended to enable you to ask questions and tackle problems that transcend the traditional disciplines from which this field has evolved.

Course structure

An overview of the course structure is provided below. Details of the compulsory and optional elements of the course are provided in the *Course components* section of this page.

The first year follows the taught [MSc in Neuroscience](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/msc-neuroscience) course and is outlined below. After successful completion of the MSc, students continue with a three-year doctoral research project (DPhil).

Year one

During your first year, you will join those students taking the stand-alone MSc in Neuroscience. Having a larger cohort of students enhances and expands the training opportunities available, helping you to make a more informed decision about the topic and design of your doctoral research project.

The MSc academic year begins in late September and is divided into three terms. The first term provides an introduction to neuroscience and research methods through five compulsory introductory modules and associated practical classes. During the second and third terms you will combine advanced taught courses, essay writing and two laboratory rotations (research projects).

You will undertake two extended research projects from a choice of over 100 offered each year by the extensive neuroscience research community in Oxford. You will also attend the graduate programme lecture series, which provides a broad education covering molecular, cellular, systems, computational and cognitive neuroscience.

Each of the MSc research projects lasts for about 16 weeks and is selected from a very extensive list of approved abstracts. With over 100 abstracts submitted each year there is always plenty of choice, but if you are interested in a particular lab or research topic, you are welcome to discuss a potential project independently with an appropriate supervisor. Many of these projects lead to publications.

Early in May of the first year, you will meet with the course director and course lecturer to discuss the process for selecting your DPhil project. You will decide which laboratories and supervisor(s) you wish to work with and prepare a proposal for your three-year doctoral research project. It is recommended that you talk to several potential supervisors and, in many cases, collaborative projects are proposed. Your project can take place in any area of neuroscience within the Oxford network of laboratories

Years two to four

You will begin the DPhil in October of the second year. At this point, you will become integrated within your chosen department(s) and follow the same progression as other research students who work there.

To learn more about the research topics you'll have the opportunity to explore, please refer to the *Research areas* section on this page.

Attendance

The course is full-time and requires attendance in Oxford. Full-time students are subject to the [University's Residence requirements](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/accommodation/residence-requirements).

Provision exists for students on some courses to undertake their research in a 'well-founded laboratory' outside of the University. This may require travel to and attendance at a site that is not located in Oxford. Where known, existing collaborations will be outlined on this page. Please read the course information carefully, including the additional information about course fees and costs.

Resources to support your study

As a graduate student, you will have access to the University's wide range of resources including libraries, museums, galleries, digital resources and IT services.

The Bodleian Libraries is the largest library system in the UK. It includes the main Bodleian Library and libraries across Oxford, including major research libraries and faculty, department and institute libraries. Together, the Libraries hold more than 13 million printed items, provide access to e-journals, and contain outstanding special collections including rare books and manuscripts, classical papyri, maps, music, art and printed ephemera.

The University's IT Services is available to all students to support with core university IT systems and tools, as well as many other services and facilities. IT Services also offers a range of IT learning courses for students to support with learning and research, as well as [guidance on what technology to bring with you as a new student \(https://www.it.ox.ac.uk/what-to-bring\)](https://www.it.ox.ac.uk/what-to-bring) at Oxford.

Hot desks, within the Department of Experimental Psychology in the heart of the University Science Area, provide a base for MSc in Neuroscience students, which can be particularly important to students on an interdisciplinary course. IT support is provided by an in-house team and all the MSc lectures are given in this department.

This office provision is most important: the department is very conscious that people on interdisciplinary courses that span different departments are prone to suffer from a lack of identity, as compared to students who work within a designated department.

The Radcliffe Science Library is the main library facility for students throughout the four-year course.

The Cortex Club, a student-led organisation for those studying neuroscience in Oxford, provides an extensive series of seminars and social events where students from all departments can meet to exchange ideas. This is in addition to the seminars and other events that are organised at both divisional and departmental level.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Medical Sciences Division 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 Medical Sciences Division.

Students on this programme choose their own project and supervisor and the proposal is assessed in Summer of the MSc year by the Organising Committee. It is expected that all students will meet their supervisors at least once per month and with the Directors of the programme annually.

Assessment

In the first year, each of the MSc projects are written up as dissertations. The course concludes the following September with an oral examination.

In the second year, you are initially accepted as Probationary Research Students (PRS) and transfer to full DPhil status by the end of the fourth term. This involves the preparation of a transfer report and an interview to discuss the research you have carried out so far and your future plans with two independent scientists who have relevant expertise.

During the final years of the course you will write a thesis which you will need to defend orally (*viva voce*).

Course components

The course components of the [MSc in Neuroscience \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/msc-neuroscience\)](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/msc-neuroscience), which you will follow in your first year, comprise compulsory study, option courses, and two research projects as detailed below.

Compulsory study

The first term provides an introduction to neuroscience and research methods through five compulsory introductory modules and associated practical classes:

- Introduction to Neuroscience
- Neuroanatomy
- Synapses and Transduction

- Neuronal Cell and Molecular Biology
- Systems Neuroscience

You will also attend the graduate programme lecture series, which provides a broad education covering molecular, cellular, systems, computational and cognitive neuroscience.

Options

During the second and third terms, alongside your research projects (see below) you will take four advanced option modules and a course in essay writing (Journal club).

Advanced Option modules for the second and third terms offered in previous years have included:

- Cognitive Neuroscience
- Neuroscience and Clinical Mental Health
- Computational Neuroscience
- Sensory Systems
- CNS Development, Plasticity and Repair
- Molecular Neuroscience
- Genes, Circuits and Behaviour.

Research projects

Alongside the advance options (see above) you will undertake two extended research projects from a choice of over 100 offered each year by the extensive neuroscience research community in Oxford. If you are interested in a particular lab or research topic, you are welcome to discuss a potential project independently with an appropriate supervisor.

Lab rotations are available in at least nine University departments or research centres that contribute to the MSc.

Examples of previous MSc Neuroscience rotation projects from the past five years include:

- Inhibition of alpha-synuclein aggregation and glial activation as a therapeutic strategy for Parkinson's disease
- A functional and anatomical mechanism for hippocampal-neocortical interaction during memory recall
- Extracting hierarchical structure from experience
- Comparative Mapping of Brain Connectivity
- Developing a robust, high-throughput, probabilistic reversal learning assay to assess behavioural flexibility in mice
- Can Ketamine Reduce Stress Reactivity in Humans? A Double-blind, Placebo-controlled Investigation
- Purinergic Modulation of Striatal Dopamine Release
- Towards temporal prediction models of touch for naturalistic stimuli
- The effects of constant light on sleep and torpor
- The contributions of GABA and acetylcholine to attention: a combined pharmacological-TMS study.

Research areas

During the DPhil component of the course, you will undertake research within a specialised theme.

Previously submitted DPhil projects have included:

- Exploring normative models of the visual and auditory systems
- Probing the Mechanisms Underlying the Modulation of Dopamine Release by Axonal Cholinergic Inputs in Mice and Drosophila
- Neuromodulation in Depression: Mechanisms, Practice and Innovation
- Organising memories in the medial temporal lobe: from simple associations to complex hierarchical sequences
- Cortical regulation of sleep

The DPhil research project in years two to four can also be carried out in the same departments as the MSc, giving students the opportunity to choose from a very wide range of research areas.

You may opt to continue one of the MSc lab rotations as your DPhil project, or combine the subject areas or methods encountered during both MSc lab rotations as a collaborative DPhil project. You may also choose a research area that they have not previously tried out during the MSc year.

Changes to this course

The University will seek to deliver this course in accordance with the description set out in this course page. 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. The safety of students, staff and visitors is paramount and major changes to delivery or services may have to be made if a pandemic, epidemic or local health emergency occurs. In addition, in certain circumstances, for example due

to visa difficulties or because the health needs of students cannot be met, it may be necessary to make adjustments to course requirements for international study.

Where possible your academic supervisor will not change for the duration of your course. However, it may be necessary to assign a new academic supervisor during the course of study or before registration for reasons which might include illness, sabbatical leave, parental leave or change in employment.

For further information please see our page on [changes to courses](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses) ([//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses)) and the [provisions of the student contract](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-contract) ([//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-contract](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-contract)) regarding changes to courses.

Costs

Annual course fees

The fees for this course are charged on an annual basis.

Fees for the 2026-27 academic year at the University of Oxford

What do course fees cover?

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

How long do I need to pay 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 fees will usually increase annually, as explained in the University's [Terms and Conditions \(//www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract).

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

The University continuation charge, per term for entry in 2026-27 is £656, 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 will be between £150 and £500, as explained in our [information about continuation charges \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/continuation-charges\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/continuation-charges). Please contact your college for more details, including information about whether your college's continuation charge is applied at a different rate for part-time study.

Where can I find more information about fees?

Our [fees and other charges \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges) pages provide further information, including details about:

- [course fees and fee liability \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/courses-fees-and-liability\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/courses-fees-and-liability);
- [how your fee status is determined \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/fee-status\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/fee-status);
- [changes to fees and other charges \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/changes-to-fees-and-charges\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/changes-to-fees-and-charges); and
- [continuation charges \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/continuation-charges\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/continuation-charges).

Information about how much fees and other costs will usually increase each academic year is set out in the University's [Terms and Conditions \(//www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract).

Additional costs

Living costs

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

Living costs for full-time study

For the 2026-27 academic year, the range of likely living costs for a single, full-time student is between £1,405 and £2,105 for each month spent in Oxford. We provide the cost per month so you can multiply up by the number of months you expect to live in Oxford. Depending on your circumstances, you may also need to budget for the [costs of a student visa and immigration health surcharge \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs) and/or [living costs for family members or other dependants \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs#field_listing_content_content-item--2\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs#field_listing_content_content-item--2) that you plan to bring with you to Oxford (if [dependant visa eligibility criteria \(//www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/family\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/family) are met).

Further information about living costs

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. For study in Oxford beyond the 2026-27 academic year, it is suggested

that you budget for potential increases in living expenses of around 4% each year – although this rate may vary depending on the national economic situation.

A breakdown of likely living costs for one month during the 2026-27 academic year are shown below. These costs are based on a single, full-time graduate student, with no dependants, living in Oxford.

Likely living costs for one month in Oxford during the 2026-27 academic year

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£315	£545
Accommodation	£825	£990
Personal items	£160	£310
Social activities	£50	£130
Study costs	£35	£90
Other	£20	£40
Total	£1,405	£2,105

For information about how these figures have been calculated as well as tables showing the likely living costs for nine and twelve months, please refer to the [living costs \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs\)](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs) page of our website.

Document accessibility

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