



DPhil in Cancer Science Programme 2027 Intake Guidance for Supervisors

Overview

With its first intake in 2020, the DPhil in Cancer Science Programme provides research-based doctoral training for cancer researchers from clinical, biological, chemistry, physical, engineering, mathematics and statistics backgrounds. For the 2027 intake, we are seeking to appoint a cohort of approximately 12-15 students made up of clinical trainees; medicine undergraduates; and biological, medical, physical, engineering and mathematical scientists.

There are four types of application we welcome:

- **Application Type 1 – Clinical Trainees.** Qualified doctors at all stages of training (from foundation to higher specialist training).
- **Application Type 2 – Medical Undergraduates.** Medical students who are currently undertaking a primary medical qualification (MBBS, MBChB or equivalent). At entry, we will be looking for evidence of completion of at least the first two years of a primary medical qualification and achievement at the level of an upper-second or first-class honours degrees (or iBSc).
- **Application Type 3 – Non-Clinical/Fundamental Scientist*.** Science graduates that hold (or be predicted to achieve) the equivalent of a first-class or strong upper second-class undergraduate degree with honours in biological, medical, or chemical science, as appropriate for the projects offered.
- **Application Type 4 – Non-Clinical/Fundamental Scientist*.** Science graduates that hold (or be predicted to achieve) the equivalent of a first-class or strong upper second-class undergraduate degree with honours in engineering, mathematical/data, *or* physical science, as appropriate for the projects offered

We are now open to applications for project submissions from cancer researchers across the Oxford University and Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust who are interested in supervising a student/fellow from the above tracks. The deadline for applications is **Friday 5th June 2026**. Submissions will be reviewed and projects advertised in our booklet for potential students to apply to from September 2026 until the graduate application deadline in early December. The top-ranked students after interview (taking place mid January 2027), will then be allocated their preferred project to start in October 2027.

Non-Clinical Rotations

In order to diversify the training and multidisciplinary on-course experience, and to stimulate interdepartmental research collaborations across Oxford Cancer, we have introduced first year lab rotations for our **non-clinical students**. These rotations will consist of two 6-month periods in different research groups and will provide students with a broad base of experience and the opportunity to explore different aspects of research. At the end of each of the rotations, students will be required to submit a project write up and deliver a presentation to a selected scientific audience. After the 2nd project rotation, students will be asked to decide on a final 3 year project for the remainder of their DPhil.



When completing your application, you will be asked to summarise a 3 year DPhil research project and stipulate which track of applicant would be suitable for your project. This is necessary for projects for which non-clinical students are eligible, who will initially only be committing for a 6 -month rotation.

For those projects applicable to non-clinicians, you will also be required to give a brief outline of a project suitable for the 6 month rotation which forms part of the overall 3 year DPhil.

We expect the majority of projects to be applicable across all 4 tracks.

Funding

Each studentship provides:

- Three years of salary/stipend for clinicians, or four years of stipend for non-clinicians.
- Home tuition fees for three years or four years for non-clinicians
- Consumables budget

Supervisor Eligibility

Before you submit a project for consideration for the 2027 intake, please ensure you are able to meet all of the supervisor eligibility criteria below.

- Each project must have a minimum of two named supervisors, and all supervisors must be independently funded investigators in posts that are expected to continue until the end of the Fellowship (September 2030 – September 2031)
- The Primary Supervisor must be laboratory based (this includes data/epidemiology laboratories) and you can only have two Cancer Science students under your supervision within a four year period.
- Each Primary Supervisor can only submit one project for consideration in this call.
- They should have adequate space and support for the student and a strong track-record of supervising students. Excluding students that failed to transfer, at least 80% of their students in the most recent 5-year cohort must have submitted within 4 years
- The Primary Supervisor is also responsible for ensuring relevant operational groups within their departments are aware of the Fellowship, appropriate contact details are supplied on the project submission form, and endorsements are secured e.g. HR / Personnel, Finance, Director of Graduate Studies, Head of Department
- If any supervisors have previously supervised an Oxford Centre student who has completed their Fellowship, they must have reported to the Centre on the Fellow to the satisfaction of the Committee. If you are unsure if a report is due, or has been accepted, then please email cancertraining@medsci.ox.ac.uk.

Application Process

Please complete the **attached application form** and return to cancertraining@medsci.ox.ac.uk by **Friday 12th June 2026**. Supervisors should outline the fundamental scientific premise of the project, the clinical/translational relevance of the project and the potential impact on patient care, and the training opportunities available to the student. If you would like to develop a project for a specific trainee already identified, please feel free to do so.



Projects will undergo a review process and will be ranked based on the following:

- The quality of the scientific rationale behind the studentship request
- Potential impact of the project on the scientific community or patient care
- The extent to which the project/programme draws together collaborators from different disciplines.
- Track record of supervisor
- Their alignment to Cancer Research UK and the Oxford Centre's research strategy

Student Application Review Process

Once applications close in December, supervisors receive the details of all applicants who have applied to their project. We provide a set of criteria to be used to assess each individual's suitability to undertake a DPhil. Supervisors are required to rank all applicants and return their shortlisting within the specified timeframe.

All rankings are collated, with the highest ranking applicants in each track taken forward to interview.

Please contact cancertraining@medsci.ox.ac.uk with any questions regarding the application process