

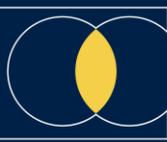


# DPhil in Cancer Science

## University of Oxford

### Welcome Booklet





## Welcome

We are very happy to welcome you to the DPhil in Cancer Science, funded by the Cancer Research UK (CRUK) Oxford Centre and administered through Oxford Cancer. Whatever your academic background, whether you've gone straight through from Bachelor's or Master's to a DPhil without a break, or if you've followed a different route, this DPhil will present you with completely unique experiences. Your DPhils will be an incredible personal and intellectual journey and one we hope you look back on fondly throughout your career. At times it will also likely infuriate, puzzle, and challenge in unexpected ways. But the Oxford Cancer team and your host department will be with you every step of the way to support you to access the training, to explore ideas and ensure you enjoy your time at Oxford.

We designed this booklet to help you get started and take full advantage of the unique training environment that Oxford and the Centre provides. It will also help you to understand more about some of the unique features that being a member of the CRUK Oxford Centre and Oxford Cancer entitles you to.

We hope that you will find this booklet helpful and remember, we're available for any questions you have throughout the duration of your studies here in Oxford. Please don't hesitate to contact us at [cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk).



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Centre Co- Director



**Tim Elliott**  
Centre Co- Director



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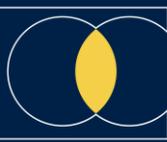
To see who else makes up the Oxford Cancer Team have a look on our [website](#)

### Useful Links:

[cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk)  
<http://www.cancer.ox.ac.uk>  
[@OxfordCancer on Twitter](#)

### Address:

New Richards Building  
Old Road Campus  
OX3 7LG  
01865 617043



## CRUK Oxford Centre

### 1.1 Introduction

The CRUK Oxford Centre supports key infrastructure and studentships within Oxford Cancer; a city-wide network that represents the collective force of cancer research, outreach and care that happen across the city of Oxford.

Oxford Cancer is a partnership between Oxford University and Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust. It harnesses Oxford's world-leading cancer research from across disciplines, with the core aim of facilitating collaboration to ensure rapid translation from scientific discovery to treatments for patients.

Oxford Cancer currently comprises over 1,000 members from around 90 different Departments, Units, Institutes of the University, as well as the NHS Trust who invest over £55m each year into translational cancer research.

Oxford Cancer is an inclusive network for whom cancer research is a priority focus which supports and connects people working across a range of disciplines and aim to facilitate research collaboration on a local, national and international scale to speed up translation from scientific discovery to treatments in patients.

As a DPhil in Cancer Science student you will automatically become a member of the Oxford Cancer network, which provides access to the monthly newsletter, funding opportunities, support & services, and more: [Membership Page](#).

#### **Oxford Cancer's Mission**

To enable and combine the best research and clinical resources in order to innovate cancer treatment and care world-wide.

We aim to do this through discovery, collaboration and education – and empowered by strategic leadership and world-leading facilities.

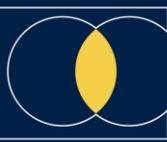
#### **Oxford Cancer's Values**

*Empowering* – Aspiring to give everybody in Oxford the tools to advance and translate their discoveries in cancer science.

*Coordinated* – Through a city-wide cancer strategy, Oxford Cancer will facilitate collaborations between researchers across many disciplines, from across Oxford and beyond.

*Innovative* – Oxford is at the forefront of delivering better care for cancer patients through world leading cancer research.

We are very proud to have you as part of this network and hope you're able to use this to further your studies while you're a part of the Centre, and throughout your career.



## OXFORD CANCER MEMBERSHIP

1,000+



The number of academics and clinicians across the University of Oxford and Oxford University Hospitals Trust in our membership, working on cancer-related research.

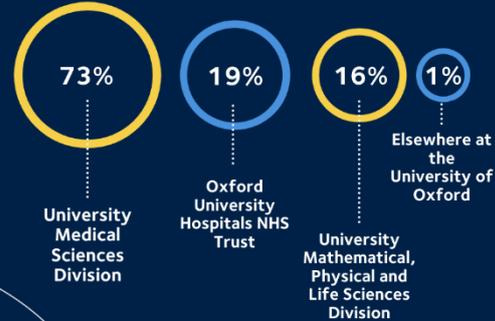
20+



The number of departments our Oxford Cancer members can be found in at the University of Oxford alone.

## ACROSS OXFORD

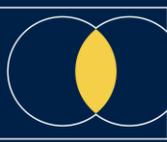
Oxford Cancer's community is spread across the City of Oxford, spanning the University, Hospitals Trust, and key partners. Our membership comprises of staff from...



## WITHIN DIVISIONS

Our members are multi-disciplinary. Through collaborations they are tackling some of cancer research's biggest challenges. Across the University cancer research is found in many departments, including....





## 1.2 Contacts for your DPhil

Your studentship (or fellowship), DPhil in Cancer Science programme and associated training are organised via the CRUK Oxford Centre. If you have any questions concerning your CRUK Oxford Centre funding, or you're looking for advice related to your training/ development, please contact the Training Project Manager ([cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk)).

Your academic studies and day-to-day work associated with your DPhil will be completed within one of the Oxford University Departments, alongside your primary supervisor. Your department will organise your University card, which is your ID card used for accessing buildings and using the libraries. They are also the place to contact for any day-to-day queries, inductions, health and safety training, local policies, lab spaces, building access, and so on. You should be provided the Graduate Studies contact for your specific department during your student induction, if you are unsure, email us at [cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk) and we can point you in the right direction.

Queries relating to your graduate studies processes (transfer of status, etc.) are managed by the Medical Sciences Doctoral Training Centre (MSDTC) administrators who can be contacted via email at [antoinette.moffa@medsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:antoinette.moffa@medsci.ox.ac.uk) and [louise.samson@medsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:louise.samson@medsci.ox.ac.uk). You can also email any queries relating to this area to the Training Project Manager at [cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk).

As a graduate student at Oxford, you are also a member of a college or hall. All colleges provide library and IT facilities, welfare support, and sports and social events. Often, they also offer accommodation. Graduate students benefit from the Middle Common Room (MCR) in their college – both a physical space and an organisation, it provides social events, advice, and a link to Oxford's graduate community.

Your college will have a 'Tutor for Graduates' or 'Senior Tutor' whose role includes a general oversight of all graduate members of the college, although your academic studies will be directed by your department or faculty. Each graduate student has a college adviser, a senior member of the college's staff who will be able to offer support and advice.

In addition to all the above, you are a student based within either the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division (MPLS) or the Medical Sciences Division (MSD). They will run student events which are a great way to network with other students from different science disciplines, and they run lots of relevant training courses which you may find helpful during your DPhil.

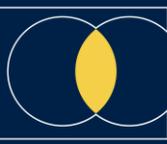
## 1.3 Money awarded as part of your training

Your CRUK position includes:

- Salary/stipend;
- University and College fees, at home rate;
- Research consumables budget of £13k per year.

The consumables budget will be administered by your supervisor. It can be used to pay for project-related expenses as well as training expenses, including attending a conference, workshop or summer school that is relevant for your project. The budget can be spent on training activities, and we encourage you to use it, simply discuss this with your supervisor.

CRUK do have a policy on leave (sick leave, family leave, etc.) during your studentship/fellowship, you can find the details here [Conditions of your grant | Cancer Research UK](#)



## Course Structure

Your DPhil in Cancer Science focuses on multidisciplinary, translational research, and throughout your programme you will receive training tailored to your specialist area to help you become an independent cancer researcher. Alongside your research, here is an overview of what events to expect from us over the next four years.

### 2.1 Year One – Seminar Series & Sandpit Workshop

In your first year, you will attend a series of seminars which will provide you with the broad base of knowledge about all aspects of cancer biology. Modules One and Two will include the following

Topic	Date
Overview – Cancer in Nature	October
Cancer Genetics	November
Epigenetics, Transcription and Translation	November
Cell Biology	December
Tumour Microenvironment	February
Immunology	March
Novel Analytic Approaches	April
Analysis of Large Cohorts	April

Attendance is expected at all seminars, and you will receive a calendar invite for all of the above. Module Three is Clinical Cancer Science. It is a full two-day event and will be held after Easter 2023. Module Four is Onco-Innovation. It is a full day event and will be held around May / June.

Towards the end of your first year / the beginning of your second year, we will be hosting a Sandpit Event. This follows on from Module Four where you will be grouped with your fellow students in order to develop a multidisciplinary research proposal from start to finish, with the aim of transforming your novel research idea into a pilot study. This will involve pitching your final idea to an award panel, and one collaboration will be awarded funding.

### 2.2 Year Two – Mentorship Scheme & Transfer of Status

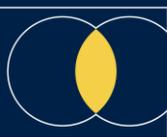
In your second year, we will provide you with a mentor to help you within your professional development.

Before the end of your fourth term, you must complete your 'Transfer of Status'. This process moves your position from a 'Probationer Research Student' to a DPhil. The purpose of this is to ensure that you have a convincing DPhil research proposal, that you are making progress in its development, and to ensure the work is of DPhil-level quality. Your supervisor will support you in preparation for this, more information can be found here: [Key milestones for DPhil students at the University of Oxford](#), and MSD run some training around the process, [Skills Training Calendar – University of Oxford, Medical Sciences Division](#). If you have any additional questions email us – [cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk).

### 2.3 Years Three and Four – Thesis Development, Writing and Viva

Your DPhil is awarded based on a thesis and an oral examination, the 'viva voce' (aka. the viva). The thesis is a significant and substantial piece of research which makes an original contribution to its field and is presented in an articulate and scholarly manner. In the viva, you are required to defend your thesis and demonstrate a good general knowledge of your field of study.

Typically, the second half of your third (for clinicians and medical students) or fourth (for non-clinicians) year onwards you will be writing your thesis. Again, there will be some relevant training to help you think about the writing process. Your supervisors will support you along your writing journey, though we are also here if you have any questions.



## Training and Development

### 3.1 Mentoring

Being mentored means developing a professional relationship with an experienced person (the mentor) who will assist you (the mentee) in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance your career and personal growth. In order to benefit from mentoring, it is important to be honest with the mentor and committed to taking the actions planned, as well as prepared to be challenged when the mentor feels that this might be beneficial.

We will allocate you a mentor in your second year, wholly engaging in this relationship with an experienced senior researcher will be of great benefit to your professional development.

### 3.2 MPLS and MSD Training Opportunities

You also have access to the MPLS and MSD Training Courses. This includes research skills training on statistics, analysing data, etc. as well as training on transfer of status and how to write your thesis. You can view all the courses on offer here [Training and Development course programme — Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division \(ox.ac.uk\)](#) and [MSD Skills Training — University of Oxford, Medical Sciences Division](#)

### 3.3 Other University Training Resources

You have access to a multitude of training support from within the University. Some examples include:

- [IT Services](#) (courses from data analysis to document design)
- [LinkedIn Learning](#) (1000s of free e-learning courses)
- [University Career Services](#) (they have dedicated advisors for medical sciences career options).

If you have any ideas for training events that you would like to discuss or you would like to get involved in organising an event, please contact us, [cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk).

### 3.4 External Conferences & Opportunities

The British Association for Cancer Research ([BACR](#)) and The European Association for Cancer Research ([EACR](#)) are just two of the big cancer associations that you might find useful. They both provide opportunities to apply for bursaries, fellowships, and prestigious awards, they'll also both offer you networking opportunities, reduced fees for conferences and platforms for presenting your work.

You will find some specialised conferences tailored to your field of research, though there are some broad cancer conferences which may be worth attending such as the American Association for Cancer Research Annual Meeting (AACR), the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) Congress Meeting, the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Conference, and the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) Cancer Conference.

### 3.5 Other

Other opportunities that arise that may be of interest are often advertised on the Oxford Cancer newsletter, released monthly. This newsletter includes information about training, events, funding, and other cancer-related news relevant to Oxford and the wider international community. We encourage you to sign up to this mailing list on the Oxford Cancer website here: [Sign Up](#).

## Communications Opportunities and Support

### 4.1 Profile pages

Having a profile page on our website ensures visibility for yourself as a researcher and is a great opportunity to share an overview of your work. Profiles endorse your association with the CRUK Oxford Centre, as well as Oxford's cancer research community, and can be linked to your Department's website, your LinkedIn page and any other pages you would like to add.

Your profile doesn't have to be static information either. We encourage you each year to update the information as your research and development progresses. Eventually we will move you to our alumni pages to highlight your work and the career path you have chosen.

Existing profiles can be found here: [Student profiles](#). Towards the start of your time as an Oxford DPhil student, one of our team will reach out with a template for you to fill in. We encourage you to complete the information, with as much detail as you would like, and return it to our mailbox with a headshot ([cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk)). We will then add your profile to the page.

### 4.2 X (formally Twitter) Takeovers

Our X (formally Twitter) channel can be found at [@OxfordCancer](#) (follows welcome!) We use this channel to spread news about Oxford's cancer research, as well as community events and opportunities.

Learning to communicate your science is becoming increasingly important – so we offer our students the opportunity to do a channel takeover. You will be provided access to our X (Twitter) account for a day to talk about your research and its importance.

Guidance and assistance are provided by Oxford Cancer's Communication Manager. The Centre will be offering this opportunity throughout the year – contact us for more information at [cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk).

### 4.3 Blogs

The Oxford Cancer website ([cancer.ox.ac.uk](http://cancer.ox.ac.uk)) is used to spread news about Oxford research outcomes, progress and milestones. If you have a recent publication, or just want to talk about how important your work is to cancer research, we'd love to discuss a student-written blog with you.

Blogs are a brilliant, less formal way of discussing your thoughts on a particular topic. They help to convey the human side of science, connecting researchers with an audience. Blogs aren't meant to be perfect; they aren't necessarily meant to be methodical accounts of science. Yet, when explained in an accessible way, the technical details of science can be quite exciting. This can help you to learn how to discuss your research topic in basic science terms for people who aren't specialists within your field. Your blog can be on whatever topic you choose, if you'd like to write a blog for the website, email us at [cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk).

As with social media, the Communication Manager at Oxford Cancer is on hand to help generate content and ensure that your work is best communicated to your target audience.

### 4.4 News and Media

If you have any news or stories such as an upcoming publication, funding success or other announcements you would like press and communications support on, contact our Communications Manager at [cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:cancer@medsci.ox.ac.uk).





