

The University of Oxford Department of Economics



Information for DPhil applicants

October 2012 Entry

Candidates are strongly advised to submit their applications by the first deadline of **20 January 2012**, as places on the second deadline will be limited. Please note that all documents needed for the application must be submitted by the chosen deadline. If the accompanying documentation is incomplete, consideration of the application will be postponed to the following deadline (if there is one).

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1. Economics at Oxford

Oxford University has one of the strongest, largest, and most varied groups of economists in the world. Its research output is consistently highly rated in international comparisons. The Oxford Economics Department has about 60 faculty, an additional 30 research staff, and 300 students enrolled on graduate courses, making it one of the leading centres for graduate studies in economics in the world. Amongst the current faculty, 14 are Fellows of the British Academy, 4 are Foreign Honorary Members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 13 are Fellows of the Econometric Society and 7 are Fellows of the European Economic Association. In the most recent UK Research Assessment <http://www.rae.ac.uk/> the department had more members placed in the top category for research than any other economics department in the United Kingdom. Current strength builds on a tradition of excellence with past faculty including Francis Edgeworth, Roy Harrod, John Hicks, James Mirrlees, Joe Stiglitz and Amartya Sen.

The research interests of Oxford economics cover virtually every aspect of modern economic analysis and its applications. Active research groups include: *Econometrics, Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Industrial Economics, Labour Economics, International Trade, Development Economics, Economic History, Financial Economics, Resource Economics*. The Department is also active in Experimental Economics, and has close links with the Centre for Experimental Social Sciences at Nuffield College.

Each group holds regular seminars and/or workshops at which research by faculty and graduate students are presented and discussed; many distinguished researchers from outside Oxford also visit us to present their work at seminars. In addition the Department hosts two important annual lecture series: the Hicks Lecture and the Clarendon Lecture series; recent speakers include Daron Acemoglu, Ernst Fehr, Olivier Blanchard, Elhanan Helpman, Caroline Hoxby and Angus Deaton.

Economists at Oxford help to edit some of the world's leading academic journals in Economics. Members of the Department have recently served or are currently serving on the editorial boards of the *American Economic Review*, *Econometrica*, the *Review of Economic Studies*, and the *Economic Journal*, amongst others. The Department itself houses four economics journals: *Journal of African Economics*, *Oxford Economic Papers*, *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, and *Journal of Economic History*. A recent development is the launch of the journal *Oxonomics*. Established and edited by research students in the Department, the journal aims to publish articles that engage critically and originally with economic issues in an accessible way.

The Department has close links with influential outside bodies. Members of the Department currently serve or have served as Director of Policy Research in the World Bank, Director General of Fair Trading, members of the Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of England and members of the Competition Commission. Faculty have served as consultants to institutions as diverse as the IMF, World Bank, WTO, ILO, European Commission, Select Committees of the United Kingdom Parliament, and various UK government departments. These external contacts help to inform and stimulate our work at the frontier of economic research.

2. The DPhil in Economics

Oxford has a thriving group of research students studying for the DPhil. in Economics. The DPhil is the name Oxford gives to its doctoral degree rather than the more familiar name PhD. used in most other universities, but the structure of the degree is identical to that of the PhD at leading economics graduate schools worldwide.

There are two- main routes leading to a DPhil at Oxford. The first route is the two-year Oxford MPhil programme followed by a further two/three years of research for the DPhil. The MPhil provides training in economics at the graduate level, comparable to the first two years of the PhD programme in the best US universities.

If you have not completed the MPhil in Economics at Oxford University but hold a masters degree or equivalent -in economics and wish to undertake research for the DPhil then you may apply to be admitted as a **Probationer Research Student (PRS)**. Typically, an applicant who is admitted as a PRS would have performed exceptionally well in a one-year masters' degree (or equivalent) in economics or a closely-related subject at a top university. (Graduates of the Oxford [MSc in Economics for Development](#) and the [MSc in Financial Economics](#), who are accepted to study for a DPhil degree will usually be admitted as PRS.) In a typical year, approx 6-8 students enter the DPhil programme through the PRS route

If you wish to undertake research for the DPhil and do not currently hold a taught postgraduate qualification then you should apply for the MPhil in Economics programme. Further information is available -on the Departmental website.

3. PRS Requirements

A student who is admitted as a PRS is expected to transfer to DPhil status after three or four terms. Transfer to DPhil status requires that you pass two papers from the MPhil degree programme to a satisfactory standard, write a substantial research paper and prepare an acceptable research plan. The choice of MPhil papers must be approved by the Department. Exemption or modification of these requirements may be granted_-depending on your academic background As a PRS, you should expect to devote a substantial part of your time in the first year (i.e., before transfer to DPhil status) to coursework. More information on the papers on the MPhil can be found in the MPhil prospectus.

4. Requirements for the DPhil

The award of this degree is based on a thesis of not more than 100,000 words in length. It should constitute a significant and substantial piece of research, of a kind which might reasonably be

expected of a diligent and competent student in three years of study. The maximum time allowed for completion of the degree is four years.

DPhil students work closely with a supervisor (or sometimes with joint supervisors) who will be a specialist in the subject under investigation. Prospective students (especially PRS applicants) should check with the list of Department members' [research interests](#) to determine if there is likely to be a suitable supervisor for the area in which they wish to work.

All DPhil students are required to 'confirm' their DPhil status no later than nine terms after admission to Oxford as a graduate student. The candidate for confirmation has to present a detailed outline of the complete thesis and some complete draft chapters, and has to present a research paper at a workshop or seminar.

5. Fees and funding for PRS/DPhil applicants

Information about the fees charged for the PRS/D.Phil. can be found at <http://www.ox.ac.uk/feesandfunding/> . Most of our students have their fees and maintenance paid for by scholarships (e.g. Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), -Commonwealth, Clarendon, Rhodes, Marshall, Soros, Chevening, Nuffield College funded studentships, etc). A number of Colleges also provide scholarships for outstanding applicants.

The University of Oxford is an ESRC-accredited Doctoral Training Centre with an annual allocation of 45 ESRC studentships, the largest number for a single institution. The Department of Economics typically receives around nine ESRC scholarships each year. An ESRC scholarship pays fees and maintenance for up to four years; two years on the MPhil and another two years on the DPhil.

All students who apply are eligible to be considered for an ESRC funding.

- Indicate on your University application form that you are applying for ESRC funding.
- The Graduate Admissions Committee makes awards to the most outstanding candidates, subject to meeting the ESRC eligibility conditions.
- The successful candidate will be contacted by the Department offering to nominate them for the award.
- The application will be sent to the University's Doctoral Training Centre for approval.
- Student will be contacted by the DTC confirming their award.

Department-based funding opportunities

The Department of Economics has a Doctoral Studentship Scheme, which is open to all students who have achieved DPhil status and do not have full funding from other sources (e.g. ESRC) (A PRS can normally expect to be eligible for such an award in his second year at Oxford, but not in his first.) Each award offers funding of £11,548 (*2011/12 figures*) per annum for two years, with the possibility of renewal for a third and final year.. Award holders are required to teach for the Department or a College for up to four (contact) hours per week during term. Where a fees-only award permits their doing so, a student may hold such an award simultaneously with the Department's Doctoral Studentship. In July 2011, 13 new Doctoral Studentships were awarded.

In addition to these studentships, the Department also employs some research students as graduate teaching assistants. Payment varies with the teaching load; for example, a two-hour per week teaching commitment currently pays £4,000 per annum.

Lastly, it is worth pointing out that economics is a popular subject for undergraduate study at Oxford and Oxford is a collegiate University. Many colleges directly employ our DPhil students to help senior faculty with undergraduate economics teaching.

6. Employment After Graduation

The interests and strengths of our doctoral students are many and diverse and this is reflected in the positions they take up after graduation: some take up tenure track positions in academia; others find employment in government, international organizations, or the private sector. The international reputation of Oxford's doctoral programme also means that our DPhil graduates can be found making a contribution in many different parts of the world.

The Department recognizes the importance of helping our doctoral students find suitable employment. Our placement efforts are directed by a senior member of the faculty (currently Marcel Fafchamps). We provide advice and help on all aspects of the job application process, including limited financial assistance to cover expenses.

For the job destinations of some of our recent DPhil graduates, see http://www.economics.ox.ac.uk/index.php/news/more/job_placements/.

7. Facilities

The Department of Economics occupies a modern building, designed by Foster & Partners, which also accommodates Politics and International Relations, Centre for Criminology, Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, Department of Sociology, and the Institute of Ageing. It houses the Social Sciences Library, research facilities - including a graduate workspace area, lecture theatre, teaching rooms, an IT training room, and a large common room for faculty and graduate students.

The Department is supported by a first-class research library open to all members of the University. It possesses approximately 350,000 books and more than 2,000 periodical subscriptions on open shelves. Online databases (currently 350) and electronic journals (over 8,000) can be accessed 24/7. There are over 350 reader places and special study rooms reserved for graduate students.

8. Application Procedure for PRS/DPhil applicants

Information about the application process can be found on the [Graduate Admissions Office](#) web site. You can either apply online or download the application material from the website. Completed forms should be returned to the Graduate Admissions Office together with the required supporting materials. Note that all documents needed for an application must be submitted by the chosen deadline. In particular, candidates are responsible for ensuring that references are submitted on

time. If the accompanying documentation is incomplete, consideration of the application will be postponed to the following deadline (if there is one). The application fee for 2012 is £50.

Supporting materials

Candidates must submit transcripts of their undergraduate and graduate studies and two specimens of work written in English by themselves on economic topics.

Applicants who do not hold, or will not shortly hold, a UK undergraduate degree must submit the results of a recent GRE General Test. Applicants from UK universities are recommended to submit a GRE. In some cases offers may be made conditional on GRE results. A fluent command of English (both written and spoken) is essential. Candidates whose first language is not English are required to provide evidence of proficiency in English at the higher level (e.g. TOEFL minimum score 630 (or 267 in the new computer-based test) or IELTS minimum score 7.5).

9. Important Dates

Deadlines

20 January 2012

9 March 2012

Applicants are strongly advised to submit their application for consideration at the first gathered field. Places on the second gathered field will be limited.

10. College Placement

All applicants accepted by the Department will be offered a place at a college. You may indicate on your application form which college you would like to be considered for; if you have no preference the Admissions Department will make a selection for you. Students do not necessarily get accepted by their first choice

Although both lectures and classes are run by the Department, the choice of a college can still be significant. One distinction is between colleges that cater only for graduates, and colleges that have a mix of graduates and undergraduates. Among the graduate colleges, Nuffield and St Antony's specialise in the social sciences in terms both of facilities and numbers of Department members holding fellowships, but there are also Department members and economics graduate students at

many other Colleges. Points to look for in a college are: provision of accommodation for graduates, financial help and scholarships for graduates, facilities specifically for graduates, the total number of graduate students, and the Department members who are also fellows of the college. You can gain an impression of a college by visiting its website. If you need further information, write to the Tutor for Graduates of the college concerned.

11. Who to contact

For questions on the course, please contact Julie Minns, Graduate Administrative Officer
econgrad@economics.ox.ac.uk, tel: +44 (0)1865 281162.

12. Useful Links

[Graduate Admissions](#)

[Guidance for International Students](#)

[Student Funding](#)