

NIH Oxford-Cambridge Ph.D. Program FAQs

What areas of research/study does the NIH-Oxford-Cambridge partnership support?

Students may carry out dissertation work on any topic in laboratory or clinical research in which a joint project involving a faculty member in the intramural program at NIH and Oxford or Cambridge can be established. This includes almost all areas of contemporary biomedical research.

Technically, the OxCam Program is administratively located in NIAID, and this can create some confusion on the part of prospective students who believe they can only work in NIAID labs. This is false. The program is only affiliated with NIAID for internal management purposes that have no bearing on student research. OxCam Scholars may work in any of the NIH Institutes.

How do I find a dissertation project?

A database of participating faculty and established collaborations and other resources can be found by accessed on the Collaborations page in the Prospective Students section of the program website. Students also have the option of developing a dissertation project of her/his own choosing, under the guidance of their Class Dean and other program administrators. As with the other projects, this will take the form of a collaborative project with a mentor at NIH and a mentor at Oxford or Cambridge. In the June prior to matriculation, the Scholars are invited to spend one week each at NIH and Oxford or Cambridge visiting potential mentors and labs in order to confirm their selections. Because of new visa regulations, mentors should be selected by beginning of July if the student wishes to begin his or her dissertation research in the UK.

In the months of August and September, the students come to NIH to create a project proposal with the help of their mentors and Class Dean. This document serves as a blueprint for the doctoral training.

What about combined M.D./Ph.D. training?

Beginning in 2006, new funding has become available to allow students to receive support (tuition, fees, and stipend) for combined M.D./Ph.D. training in which they would carry out their medical studies at a US medical school and their Ph.D. work in the NIH Oxford-Cambridge program as described above. Students should apply to US medical schools with an NIH Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP) and the NIH-Oxford- Cambridge program simultaneously and if accepted to both, they may be eligible for combined degree funding. This will provide an international collaborative dimension to the Ph.D. portion of a combined program and will likely allow the student to progress more rapidly to the completion of both degrees.

What is the funding mechanism for the NIH-Oxford-Cambridge program?

The NIH intramural research program will provide support for living stipend, health insurance, travel allowance, and other educational expenses. MSTP funding will be provided by the NIH extramural research program.

What courses are required during the program?

The program is based on the British system in which students carry out doctoral research with little emphasis on formal courses. At present there is no formal coursework required as part of the degree requirements. We will admit students who already have a sophisticated scientific background and who have already completed basic coursework in biology, chemistry (both inorganic and organic), physics, and mathematics. Nevertheless, the academic background of each Scholar will be reviewed by a faculty member in the scientific discipline of the intended area of research who will make recommendations regarding coursework that would be valuable to take to fill any deficiency and/or to ensure that the Scholars will have a well-rounded background. It is possible that special tutorials or small individualized courses will be offered to students to enhance their knowledge in emerging areas of research such as bioinformatics or genomics.

Where will I take the required courses?

If coursework is needed, arrangements will be made with Oxford or Cambridge, with local universities near NIH, or with the NIH faculty.

Where can I find housing while performing my dissertation research in the UK and the US?

Both Oxford and Cambridge provides housing within one of the College residences. This allows the student to take meals in the residential college and thereby associate with students from a variety of academic disciplines including those outside science. While at the NIH, students live in the very pleasant suburban neighborhood surrounding the campus in Bethesda, Maryland. The Scholarship has recently established a Scholar's Residence across the street from the NIH which provides some year-round and short stay accommodations for students in the program. This housing is available on a first-come, first-served basis. You can visit the Current Student Resources page for

Are there other educational aspects of the program?

Yes. There is an annual Colloquium for all of the Scholars and Mentors in the program, the interdisciplinary Frontiers in Bioscience where students present research to their peers in the program, special lectures by scientific leaders, as well as leaders in biotechnology, genomics, public-policy and other areas of interest. There are special social and academic events designed to bring together the Scholars from both universities.

When will I be notified as to whether or not I was selected for the NIH-Oxford-Cambridge program?

Students must apply for consideration for selection to the Scholarship by **January 4th, 2010**. All required admission documents must be received by this date. The most highly qualified candidates will be interviewed at the NIH campus in Bethesda, MD on **February 23rd and 24th, 2010** and final admissions decisions will be made by the end of February. If you intend to apply, please reserve these interview dates, though a limited number of interview slots are available the week before for those unable to attend. Students are encouraged to apply to Oxford and/or Cambridge as soon as they accept an offer of admission, if not before. Admission to the program is contingent upon admission to one of the participating universities. However, 99.9% of students accepted to the OxCam Program are accepted to the university.

When will I leave for the UK?

This will be determined individually by the particular research project. Most current students have elected to begin their work in the UK in the fall of their first year in the program, but all admitted students have the flexibility to begin at NIH.

Is the program restricted to US citizens?

Admission to the first year class is restricted to US citizens and permanent residents. We will also accept applications from outstanding UK students who have already completed at least two years of graduate work at Oxford or Cambridge to work in NIH laboratories as **Advanced Scholars** in the program. Funding is also available through the Wellcome Trust for international students (please consult the NIH-Wellcome Trust page of the website for more information).

Sounds terrific, how do I apply?

The application is available online and **there is no fee to apply**. The application package must include:

- Completed Application Form
- Photocopy of the official report of either the basic Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT). A GRE Subject Test in biology, chemistry, or biochemistry, cell and molecular biology is not required but will be considered favorably.

- Official copies of all college transcripts
- Three letters of recommendation submitted electronically by student identified references. At least one reference should be from a current or former research advisor.

For more information on how to apply, please visit the How to Apply section of the website.