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# Student News

Preparing for Oxford



## July 2015

Congratulations on receiving an offer from the University of Oxford, whether unconditional or conditional at this stage. This newsletter provides information to help you to prepare for arriving and studying at Oxford.



## Get involved in clubs and societies at Oxford

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With more than 150 officially recognised [clubs and societies](#) to choose from, there is something for everybody at Oxford.

When it comes to sport, Oxford has a breadth and history to be proud of – from rowing and rugby to korfbal and octopush, the University offers pretty much every sport you've ever heard of, and a lot that you haven't, and at every level. Some leagues are quite informal offering a chance to stay fit and socialise with friends, while others are much more competitive, with some of the best teams nearing University standard. The main event for any University sports team is the Varsity match – an annual fixture against the Cambridge University equivalent club, where participants in selected sports have a chance to earn themselves the famed 'Oxford Blue', the highest sporting recognition the University offers. Whatever level you choose to play at, the most important part of sport at Oxford is you. Each club is always looking for new members, and many hold preseason training camps before the start of term, which are open to people of all abilities. To find out more, visit [Oxford University Sport](#).

The [Oxford Newcomers' Club](#) provides a meeting point for partners of newly arrived

graduate students, including coffee mornings, tours of Oxford colleges, visits to museums, and coach trips to places of interest in the surrounding area.

## Vaccinations before you arrive

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Oxford colleges are at the core of welfare provision, each college has a link to a group of National Health Service (NHS) General Practitioners (GP), often referred to as the 'college doctor'. You are strongly encouraged to register with the practice and will receive information from your college on how to do so.

Due to an increase in cases of Meningitis type W, new first year students (aged under 25) at all UK universities are now recommended to have the Meningitis ACWY vaccine. This is different from the previous Meningitis C vaccine. Please make an appointment with your local doctor/general practice to have this vaccine before coming to Oxford. The ACWY vaccine has not been part of the routine immunisation schedule before, although some people will have had it for travel purposes. If you have had the ACWY vaccine in the last five years, you do not need another dose.

If you have not had both the normal doses of the mumps, measles and rubella (MMR) vaccine, it is strongly recommended that you are immunised before coming to Oxford, as there have been clusters of cases of mumps and measles at various universities. The MMR vaccine can be given at the same time as the ACWY vaccine if required. It is better to be immunised before arrival (because of the risk of transmission during events at the start of term) but it will be possible to have the vaccine later, once you have registered with a [college doctor or another Oxford General Practitioner](#) if you prefer.

## Have you returned your University contract?

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When you satisfy all the conditions set by both your department and college (unless you have received an offer for a non-matriculated course which does not require a college place) in their initial offer letters, you will be sent a final letter by your department confirming your offer. This letter will include the University [student contract](#) for you to sign and return as a condition of your enrolment. Please sign and return the contract promptly if you wish to take up study at Oxford. The University will not be able to start the process to enrol you as a student unless your contract is returned. Please contact your department or faculty if you have met both your academic and financial conditions but not yet received your contract.

## Finding graduate housing

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There is a wide range of accommodation options available to graduate students, both privately and within the University, to suit a variety of needs and living arrangements. Your college will contact you to confirm whether they are able to offer you accommodation during your studies. If college accommodation is not available or right for you, the University's [Graduate Accommodation Office](#) can help find a

suitable property for you and, where required, your partner and/or children. You can find out more about living in Oxford through the [Graduate Admissions website](#), the [Oxford University Student Union](#) or the [Oxford Student Pad](#).

Graduate students must reside within twenty-five miles of Oxford Carfax Tower (in the city centre) unless given special permission to work away from Oxford for a period, or granted a dispensation from the residence limits by the Proctors. You must also be resident for at least six weeks in each term of your course unless excused by the Proctors. Research students may be granted dispensation from the requirements to keep residence if it is necessary to carry out academic work elsewhere.

## Contents insurance

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Check with your college if you need to arrange contents insurance before your arrival at your accommodation. Some colleges have insurance policies that cover their students' belongings. [Endsleigh](#) is the official insurance service of the National Union of Students and offer a student policy protecting you against theft, loss and accidental damage on items including laptops and mobile phones. An international student policy is also offered by Endsleigh for those coming from overseas.

## Changes to how Tier 4 student visas are issued and collection of BRP cards

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If you are applying for a Tier 4 student visa from outside the UK, you will receive a 30 day vignette/sticker in your passport allowing you to travel to the UK. On arrival, you will need to collect your longer visa for the duration of your course in the form of a biometric residence permit (BRP) either from the Examination Schools between 09:00-17:00 from Tuesday 29 September - Tuesday 6 October 2015 (excluding Sunday 4 October) or from the Oxford St Aldates Post Office outside of this period. You will need to use the code **2HE627** on the online visa application form to choose the Examination Schools collection option. You will also need to let us know which morning or afternoon you intend to collect the card. For more information on how to select the relevant option, please read the [Oxford guide to completing your visa application](#).

## Your community

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A great way of getting to know Oxford is to contribute to the local community. With students making up 24% of the city's population the positive impact you can make is enormous. While the vast majority of Oxford University students are members of a college community, you are situated in the heart of a diverse and multi-cultural city which is waiting to be explored. Volunteering through the [Oxford University Student Union](#), [Oxford Hub](#) or a wide range of [community projects](#) is a great way to make a positive contribution to your local area and to get involved in your chosen cause or passion. Volunteering opportunities also act as a valuable addition to your CV and

help broaden your horizons with a view to future employment. For more information, visit the [Oxford Students website](#).

## The Oxford Careers Network

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The Oxford Careers Network is a fantastic way to learn about how to get ahead in your chosen career from University of Oxford alumni who have already achieved success in a wide range of employment sectors. You can use the network to find inspiration on what you could do with your degree subject, gap year activities, and options for further study. Find out more from the [Careers Service website](#).

*Note:* This email has been sent to conditional and unconditional University of Oxford offer holders. This email does not mean that your place is confirmed.

Student News is produced by [Academic Administration Division Communications](#), Examination Schools, 75-81 High Street, Oxford OX1 4BG.