

# Guide for International Students

Undergraduate study  
at Oxford University



UNIVERSITY OF  
OXFORD



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## Why Oxford?

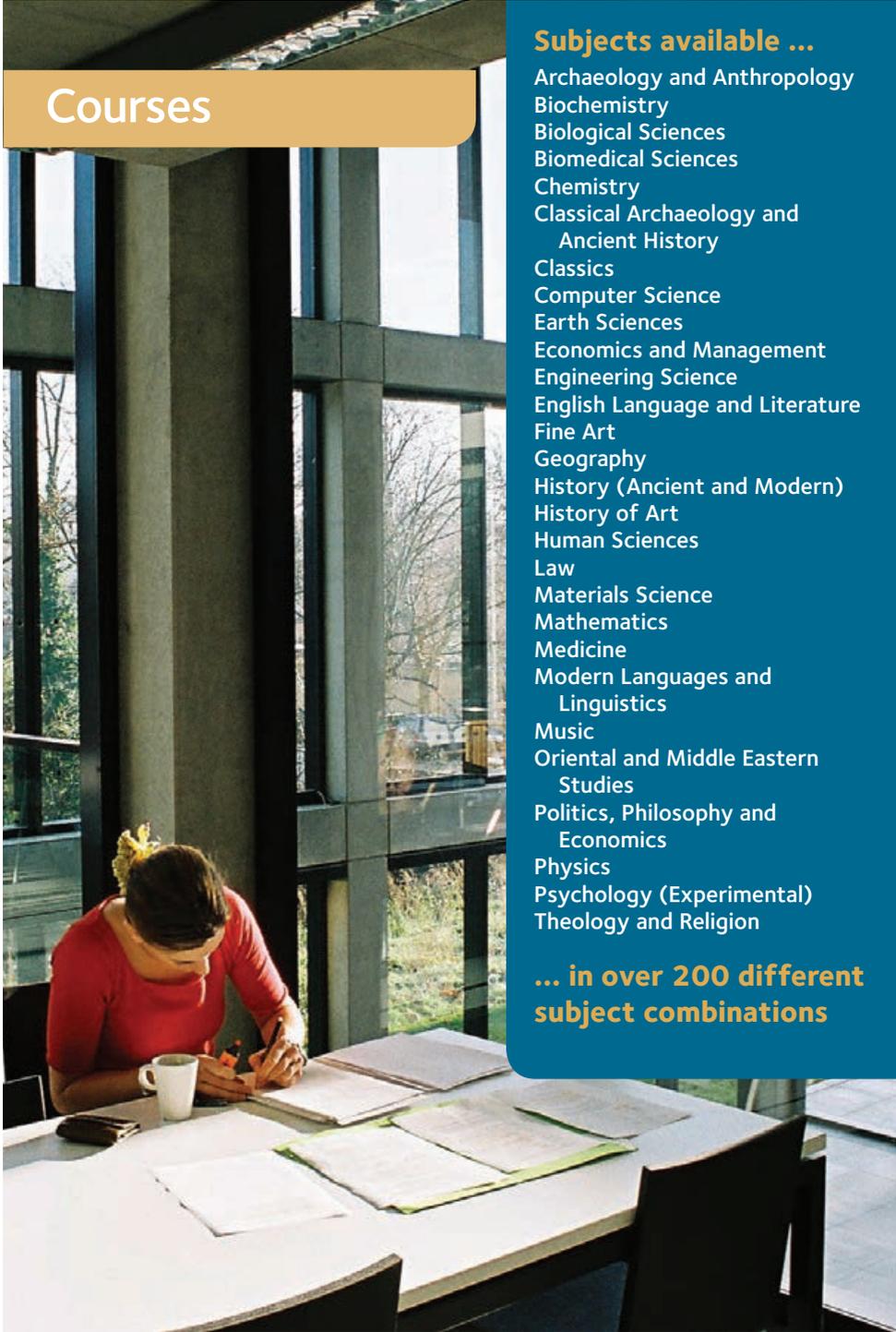
Oxford University is internationally renowned for academic excellence. We encourage applications from academically strong students irrespective of their background, and welcome the diversity that international students contribute to the University.

Centuries before most of today's leading universities existed, Oxford welcomed the first international student, Emo of Friesland, in 1190. Oxford is now one of the most international universities in the world. Today, one third of its students, including 17% of undergraduates, are from outside the UK and come from 140 countries.

Oxford students receive an intensive education, including personalised tutorials, taught by academic leaders in their field. The University is made up of colleges. These are multidisciplinary communities within which students are supported and intellectually challenged, and have the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life, many different cultures and from all around the world.



Oxford is  
consistently ranked  
one of the world's  
top five universities.



## Courses

### Subjects available ...

Archaeology and Anthropology  
Biochemistry  
Biological Sciences  
Biomedical Sciences  
Chemistry  
Classical Archaeology and  
Ancient History  
Classics  
Computer Science  
Earth Sciences  
Economics and Management  
Engineering Science  
English Language and Literature  
Fine Art  
Geography  
History (Ancient and Modern)  
History of Art  
Human Sciences  
Law  
Materials Science  
Mathematics  
Medicine  
Modern Languages and  
Linguistics  
Music  
Oriental and Middle Eastern  
Studies  
Politics, Philosophy and  
Economics  
Physics  
Psychology (Experimental)  
Theology and Religion

**... in over 200 different  
subject combinations**

Whichever college you go to, the course is the same: the University organises the lectures and practical classes, and sets the examinations. Whichever course you choose, an Oxford degree aims to make you think for yourself, logically and laterally.

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You will spend all your time at Oxford studying just the subject or subjects that you choose when you apply. This will suit some students really well, though perhaps not everyone, as it means you focus on the course you've chosen, right from the start. You will see that our courses do not offer practical, vocational training but are based on academic study. For example we do not offer a course in Journalism although you may be aware that many leading journalists at the BBC and other renowned institutions studied at Oxford. The tutorial system (see p7) means that students learn skills transferable to most professions, whatever course they are studying.

When you apply, you need to choose one course. See the box opposite for a list of subjects available. Courses may be single honours courses (one subject) or joint honours courses (two or more subjects). For the full list of courses please see: [www.ox.ac.uk/courses](http://www.ox.ac.uk/courses)

You should make sure that your chosen degree and the way it is taught at Oxford are right for you. Usually, you cannot change courses after you start; where this is possible, the course website mentions it.

The first year of each course usually follows a core programme, where everyone on your course covers the same topics, leading up to first year exams. In later years there are usually still core papers, but also a wide range of options, so you can specialise in areas of your course that particularly interest you. The course pages on our website and in our prospectus give examples of options. A standard bachelor's degree in England usually takes three years, in contrast to degree courses in many countries. In the sciences, students may do a fourth year to gain a master's degree. Some language courses take four years, including up to one year in a country where that language is spoken.

Law and Medicine can be studied as undergraduate degrees at Oxford. They do not have to be graduate degrees. If you are planning to study either of these courses, you should check with the regulatory institution in your own country to see if our course would qualify you to practise there.

Please be aware that there is a Government-imposed quota which means that we are only allowed to offer 14 places per year on the Medicine course to students from outside the EU.

# Tutorials



Oxford is one of the few universities in the world that bases its teaching on the tutorial system. Tutorials are essentially very small group teaching; usually this will be two or three students plus a tutor. A tutor is a specialist teacher.

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Tutors at Oxford are often world-leading experts in their field, so spending time with them is extremely valuable. This is especially true in tutorials: the tutors are not just lecturers, delivering their knowledge to hundreds of students at a time; they share their insights and expertise in these very small groups, giving personalised attention to each student.

This attention means that you will face rigorous academic challenges on a weekly basis, encouraging and facilitating your learning in a way that just isn't usually possible at other universities. It also means that tutors are immediately aware if you need any extra support with any aspect of your course, so they can help you right away.



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## STUDENT VIEW

### Bill from the USA

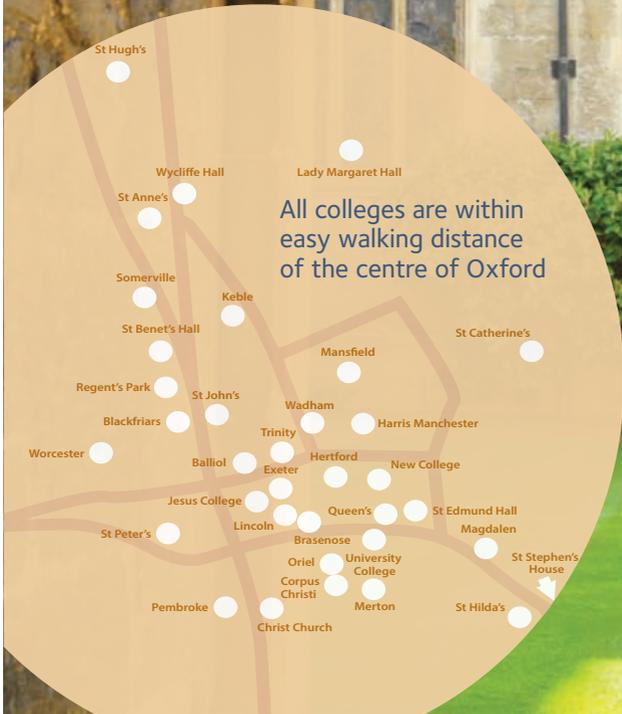
*'I was considering a lot of different options when making the decision to study abroad and Oxford offered a unique opportunity. Because we're in the tutorial system, we really get that personal attention that can be really pivotal in the learning process...'*



Hear more about Bill's time at Oxford, at the Wall of 100 Faces:  
[www.ox.ac.uk/videowall](http://www.ox.ac.uk/videowall)

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# Colleges



# Oxford University is made up of different colleges. They are academic communities, rather like mini-campuses. If you study here you will be a member of a college, and probably have your tutorials there. Your college will be your home for much of your time at Oxford.

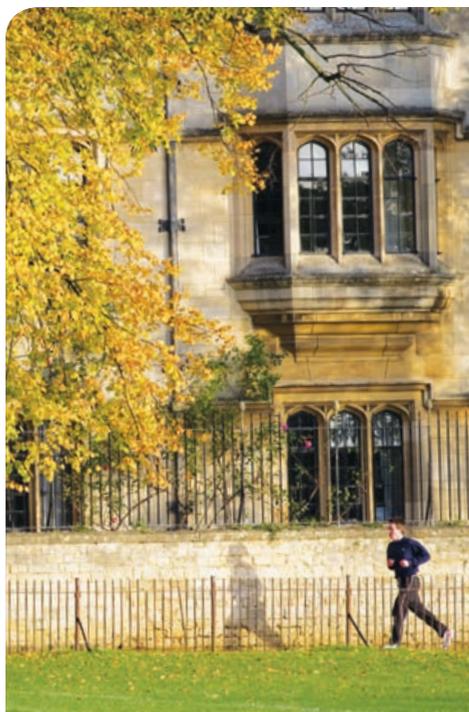
All colleges offer accommodation to their students for at least two years of their course and some offer it for the entire duration. Each college has its own dining hall, bar, common room and library, and lots of college clubs and societies. The relatively small number of students at each college allows for close and supportive personal attention.

You will also be a member of the wider University with access to University and department facilities like laboratories and libraries, as well as hundreds of University groups and societies. You would usually have your lectures and any lab work in your department, with other students from across the colleges.

This means that you will have all the resources of an internationally acclaimed, research-intensive University, as well as the supportive community environment of your college.

Colleges have a lot more in common than they have differences; all colleges are very strong academically, and most colleges offer most courses. This means that there will be students of many other subjects in your college, as well as students from all over the world. Whichever college you go to, your course syllabus will be the same and you will take the same exams as other students on your course. For more information about choosing a college, watch a short video at [www.ox.ac.uk/collegechoice](http://www.ox.ac.uk/collegechoice)

When you apply through UCAS (see 'how to apply' on p18) you can choose a college if you wish, or make an open application. Making an open application is just like saying, 'I don't mind', and we will assign your application to a college. This doesn't mean that your application is more or less likely to be successful. Whether or not you choose a college, other colleges may also interview you, and any one college may offer you a place.



## Student life



## Clubs and societies

With more than 400 groups to choose from, your time at Oxford will be full of opportunities.

### Drama

Oxford is famous for drama, with about 30 student productions every term, at the Burton Taylor Studio and the Oxford Playhouse, or in one of the colleges, whose gardens provide wonderful settings for outdoor shows in the summer term. On stage, backstage or in the audience, you can take in a great variety of traditional, contemporary and experimental productions.

### The Oxford Union

The world's most famous debating society has long had a reputation for bringing internationally known guests and speakers to Oxford. Established in 1823, it aims to promote debate and discussion not just in the University, but across the globe. The Union is also a social centre and there are frequent lectures by all kinds of figures, from Ronald Reagan, the Dalai Lama and Diego Maradona to Doris Lessing, Stephen Hawking and Kermit the Frog.

[www.oxford-union.org](http://www.oxford-union.org)

## Media

Budding journalists and broadcasters have a wealth of opportunities at Oxford, whether they want a distraction from work or the first step in a career. Oxide is a student-run radio station broadcasting 24 hours a day and combining a diverse playlist with talk shows and interviews. The *Cherwell* and *Oxford Student* newspapers publish everything from restaurant reviews and crosswords to investigative journalism and sports reports. *Isis Magazine* is Britain's oldest student publication, but Oxford has dozens of others, in print and on the web, in the University and colleges.

[www.oxfordstudent.com](http://www.oxfordstudent.com)

[www.oxideradio.co.uk](http://www.oxideradio.co.uk)

[www.cherwell.org](http://www.cherwell.org)

[www.isismagazine.org.uk](http://www.isismagazine.org.uk)

## Music

The opportunities for music are extensive when studying in Oxford. From classical to jazz, through indie, rock and electric, all the styles of music you could dream of (and then some) are represented. Whether you want to sing, perform, DJ, or just listen, you will find what you are looking for here.

## Sport

It isn't all rowing and rugby at Oxford. You can play for fun, try a new sport or just get fit. But, if you want to represent the University, you have the chance to join a rich tradition and some very competitive teams. The University's top athletes gain the status of 'Blue' – an accolade that stems from the first boat race in 1829, when Cambridge tied light blue ribbons to their boat and Oxford adopted Christ Church's dark blue.

## Volunteering

Oxford offers a wealth of opportunities for volunteering, many of which can be found through the Oxford Hub. The Oxford University Student Union also has a Vice-President for Charities and Communities who coordinates fundraising for a range of local and national charities through Raise and Give (RAG), campaigning and volunteering through the Environment and Ethics committee, and is there to help you with any questions about volunteering in Oxford.

[www.oxfordhub.org](http://www.oxfordhub.org)

[www.ousu.org/get-involved/raise-and-give](http://www.ousu.org/get-involved/raise-and-give)

<http://ee.ousu.org>

## STUDENT VIEW

### Lucy from Australia

*'When I came to Oxford I expected to be the only international student amongst lots and lots of English people. But then I realised upon coming here that actually there's heaps of international students...'*



Hear more about Lucy's experiences at Oxford at the Wall of 100 Faces:  
[www.ox.ac.uk/videowall](http://www.ox.ac.uk/videowall)

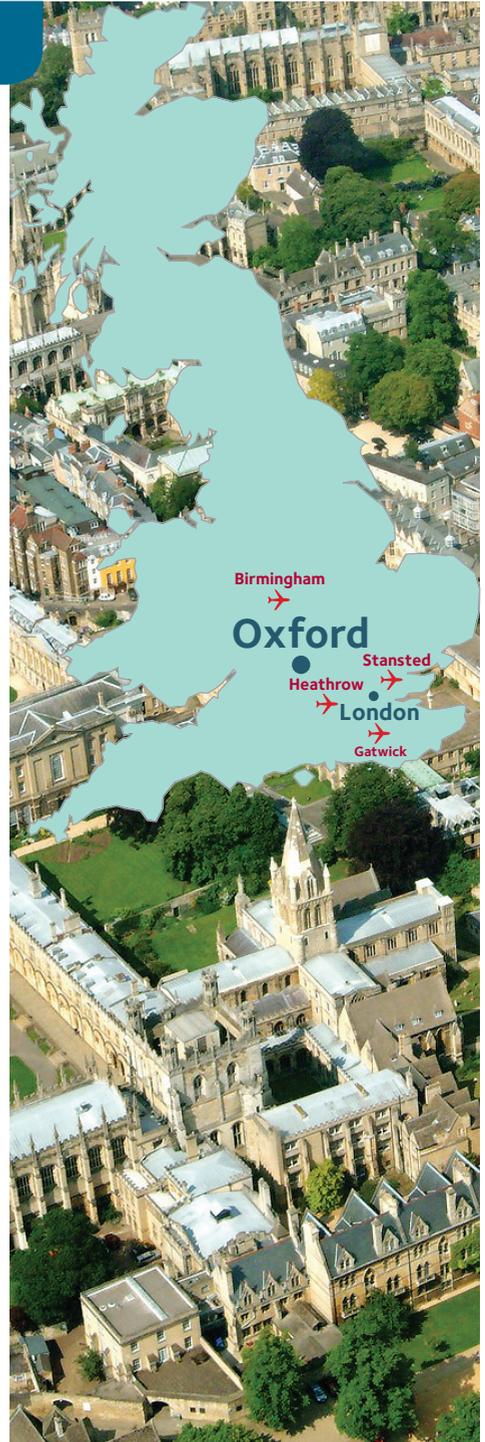
# The city of Oxford

Oxford is in the Thames Valley and close to the beautiful Cotswolds region, with traditional English scenery. It's just an hour to London by train, and there are excellent connections to the airports.

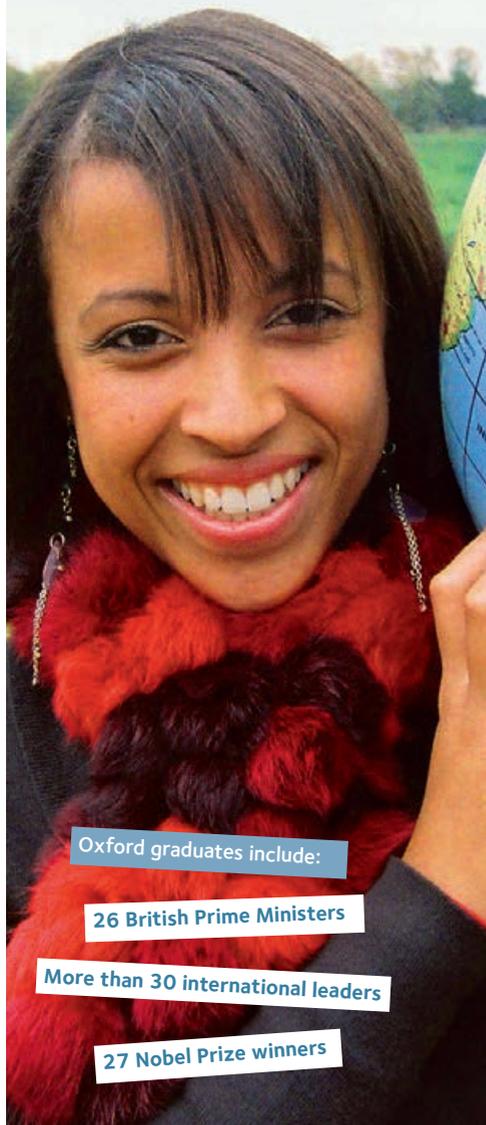
There are two universities in the city: Oxford University itself, and Oxford Brookes University. This means that for a fairly small city, Oxford has a large student population of around 40,000, bringing a youthful and cosmopolitan atmosphere and plenty to see and do.

There is no campus as such, as most colleges and departments are situated in and around the city centre. The city centre is very compact and everyone gets around by bicycle or on foot. The beautiful and historic architecture may be familiar to you from films such as *Shadowlands*, *The Golden Compass* and *Harry Potter*. After all, Oxford is the city which inspired writers such as JRR Tolkien, Lewis Carroll and CS Lewis.

As well as the ancient buildings, there are also retail stores of course, numerous coffee shops and restaurants, and a thriving bar and club scene. Oxford also has a surprising amount of green space, including beautiful riverside walks, the oldest botanic garden in the UK, the University Parks and college gardens.



# Oxford around the globe



Oxford graduates include:

**26 British Prime Ministers**

**More than 30 international leaders**

**27 Nobel Prize winners**

Oxford University has connections with virtually every country in the world. Academic research spans all regions of the globe, and tackles issues of major global significance, both within and across disciplines. Our international presence includes more than 60,000 alumni in 194 countries outside the UK, the world's largest university press and leading tropical medical research facilities.

An interactive map showing Oxford's international presence around the world can be found at:

[www.ox.ac.uk/international/oxford\\_around\\_the\\_globe](http://www.ox.ac.uk/international/oxford_around_the_globe)

Visit the Alumni Office website and find out what Oxford alumni around the world have gone on to achieve.

[www.alumni.ox.ac.uk](http://www.alumni.ox.ac.uk)

# Getting a job after Oxford

Studying at Oxford is a fantastic preparation for many careers.

## Studies

Undertaking an intellectually demanding course equips students for the demands of many jobs. The tutorial system provides practice in researching, summarising, presenting and defending an argument with tutors and other students. You will also be able to extend your skills and experiences through practical or project work, placements or fieldwork, writing extended essays or dissertations.

Surveys of our employers report that they find Oxford students better or much better than the average graduate from a UK University at key employability skills such as problem solving, leadership and communication.

*'We can rely on the quality of the training, level of reasoning and problem solving ability, integrity, and respect of Oxford students.'*

## Extra-curricular activities

Students at Oxford also have extensive opportunities to develop transferable skills through involvement in extra-curricular teams, clubs and societies. For example, participation in sport, music or drama groups can demonstrate drive, commitment and good time management skills. Working in student journalism may give useful experience as an interviewer, writer and critic. Organising college events can develop skills in organisation, fundraising, negotiation, sales and marketing.

## Work experience

Oxford students can also take advantage of many opportunities for work experience, through placements, internships and other roles.

For example, the Oxford Student Consultancy links students to local businesses, charities and community organisations. Students work in small groups, over one term, to offer consultancy services to an organisation, addressing a particular strategic issue or business problem.

The Internship Programme offers full time work projects for 4 to 12 weeks during the summer holidays. Based in countries all over the world, students work on a defined project and gain valuable professional experience.

## Careers Service

Each year, the Careers Service run a dozen recruitment fairs, with hundreds of employers attending, including many multinational organisations. Oxford's annual International Careers Day brings together many organisations that have opportunities abroad, and The Careers Service collaborates with other UK universities to give students access to careers fairs in international locations, including the EU, Hong Kong and China.

Students can also meet 1:1 with skilled Careers Advisers, to discuss their career options, CVs and applications. Appointments can also be conducted by telephone or skype if not in the UK during the vacations. This support continues after graduation; Oxford graduates can continue to use The Careers Service for as long as they need it.



*'Oxford University consistently produces bright and very smart students, who are not only extremely well educated, but well rounded individuals.'*

## Jobs

**94%** of Oxford leavers are employed, in further study, or both, six months after graduating

Source: HESA DHLE survey (average 2009-12)

**86%** of leavers were in graduate level employment

Source: HESA DHLE survey 2012/13

Around **8000** opportunities were advertised last year on The Careers Service's online job board: more than the number of students to fill them.

Source: CareerConnect

**Most** of the jobs advertised through The Careers Service don't specify a required degree subject.

Source: CareerConnect

Oxford graduates join us with impressive leadership skills, inquisitive minds and the confidence to challenge the status quo.

Graduate recruiter

The Oxford system produces graduates who are able to think independently and creatively, and above all, know how to go about continual learning. In our business, the ability to handle new situations, and new skills, is much more important than any specific vocational or subject-specific training.

IT Services firm

# Applying to Oxford

## Entrance requirements

Competition for places at Oxford is very strong and even excellent grades will not guarantee you a place. As a guide to the minimum we would usually expect, you would need either:

- **A-levels:** Between A\*A\*A and AAA depending on the subject, or
- **IB:** 38–40 points, including core points, with 7s and 6s in the higher level subjects, or
- **Standardised tests:** SAT Reasoning Test with at least 1,400 in Critical Reading and Mathematics and preferably also 700 or more in Writing, giving a combined score of at least 2,100 OR ACT with a score of at least 32 out of 36.  
AND  
Grade 5 in three or more Advanced Placement Tests in appropriate subjects OR SAT Subject Tests in three appropriate subjects at 700 or better.
- Or another equivalent qualification from your country. For more information please see [www.ox.ac.uk/intquals](http://www.ox.ac.uk/intquals).

## Selection criteria

We are looking for academic achievement and academic potential. Although we take many all-round talented students, we do not select students for their extra-curricular achievements or their leadership.

In contrast to some other universities, we select on academic criteria alone. This means that our academics – your future professors – are the people making the admissions decisions and conducting admissions interviews.

## English language requirements

All teaching at Oxford University is carried out in English (with the exception of some language-specific teaching) so we must be convinced that you have sufficient fluency in written and spoken English to cope with your course from the start.

If you are not a native speaker you may be asked to take an English test. For details of acceptable qualifications and grades required please see [www.ox.ac.uk/enlang](http://www.ox.ac.uk/enlang).

If this is not achieved at the time of application it will form part of any conditional offer, and must be met by 31 July before the start of your course.

The University Language Centre offers English language support to Oxford students in academic writing, seminars and formal presentations. The centre also offers text, audio, video and computer-based materials in about 150 other languages, satellite reception in 13, and subscriptions to many language-learning websites.  
[www.lang.ox.ac.uk](http://www.lang.ox.ac.uk)





## Fees and funding

### EU students

The tuition fee for one year of undergraduate study for full-time students from the EU will be £9,000 in 2014-15. Students from EU countries who are undertaking their first undergraduate degree can access a loan for the full amount of their tuition fee from the UK government and do not need to pay this cost upfront. Oxford also offers generous annual bursaries of up to £4,300 to EU students from lower-income households to cover some of the costs associated with living in Oxford. The latest information on financial support from Oxford and the UK government for students starting in or after 2015 will be confirmed at [www.ox.ac.uk/funding](http://www.ox.ac.uk/funding).

### Students from outside the EU

Students from outside the EU will be classed as Overseas students, and charged tuition fees at the Overseas rate. As a guide, in 2014-15 these fees vary from £14,415 to £29,225 per year, depending on the course. There is also a college fee of around £6,750 per year. We estimate living costs in Oxford to be between £8,500 and £11,980 each academic year if you are living in Oxford for nine months. You will also need to budget for flights home, as well as any visa required. Please note, there is no financial support available from the UK government or University for students from outside the EU. You should ensure you have enough funding in place to support your costs at Oxford.

**For the most up to date fees and funding information please visit: [www.ox.ac.uk/funding](http://www.ox.ac.uk/funding)**

## Visa information and other support

The Student Information and Advisory Service provides visa and immigration information to new students. This includes how to obtain a visa to study, information about your status and your legal obligations, immigration for family members, travel during your stay and staying on to work after your studies. The Service also offers a meet-and-greet service to welcome you on arrival to the UK, as well as an orientation programme to help you settle in.

[www.ox.ac.uk/students/international\\_students](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/international_students)

## Making an application

All candidates must apply through UCAS between 1 September and 6pm UK time on 15 October, almost a full year before the courses start in Oxford.

UCAS is the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. It's used by all universities in the UK. You need to complete an online form at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) where you can list up to five university courses to apply to. Please note that you may apply to one course only at Oxford, and you cannot apply to both Oxford and Cambridge in the same year.

You will need to provide details of past academic performance and predicted grades for any pending qualifications. (Most people apply to Oxford before they have completed their final year at school.) You will also need to write a personal statement outlining your reasons for wanting to study the course you are applying for. There is also a section where your teacher or counsellor provides a reference as part of the UCAS application.

As there is such strong competition for places at Oxford, many courses also require applicants to take aptitude tests and/or send in samples of written work. Please see [www.ox.ac.uk/tests](http://www.ox.ac.uk/tests) and [www.ox.ac.uk/writwork](http://www.ox.ac.uk/writwork) for further details.

Tutors will read your application and take into account your academic achievements, your personal statement, the academic reference from your teacher and any examples of written work or admissions tests. They will then draw up a shortlist of the strongest candidates who will be invited to an academic interview in December.

Shortlisted candidates who are able to travel to Oxford for interview are welcome to do so. If you are not able to travel, or you can't get a visa, tutors may choose to interview you by telephone or some other remote means, such as skype. Please note that all shortlisted applicants for Medicine must attend interviews in Oxford.

The teachers' e-guide has information for teachers who may be unfamiliar with this system. [www.ox.ac.uk/teachers](http://www.ox.ac.uk/teachers)

## STUDENT VIEW

### Kevin from Bermuda

*'I was a bit nervous at first, because I didn't think I would get in but I found that once I gave it a try, anything is possible.'*

Hear more about Kevin's experiences at Oxford at the Wall of 100 Faces:

[www.ox.ac.uk/videowall](http://www.ox.ac.uk/videowall)





Chris Doaghtie

## How to apply

- 1 Why not now?**  
Choose your course ([www.ox.ac.uk/courses](http://www.ox.ac.uk/courses)) and find out:  
**The entrance requirements**  
**How to apply** (is there a test or written work?)  
**Which colleges offer it** (you can give a preference, or make an open application: [www.ox.ac.uk/collegechoice](http://www.ox.ac.uk/collegechoice))
- 2 By 15 October (at 6pm UK time)**  
**Submit an application at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)** (any time from early September – don't leave it to the last minute)  
**Register for any admissions tests**  
Tests take place in November, usually in your own school or college, (except the LNAT for Law – register by 5 October and sit by 20 October).  
See [www.ox.ac.uk/tests](http://www.ox.ac.uk/tests)
- 3 In December**  
**If shortlisted, you'll be invited to interview** (set dates for each subject – [www.ox.ac.uk/interview](http://www.ox.ac.uk/interview))
- 4 By mid-January**  
You'll be told whether or not you have an offer of a place
- 5 And by August**  
Complete your qualifications and get your results; receive a final decision about your place  
**October**  
- start your course?

## Interviews

An Oxford admissions interview is an academic interview: in the sciences, you might be asked to solve an equation; in the humanities, you might be given a poem to read and analyse. We want to understand your academic potential, and give you a chance to experience Oxford learning. See [www.ox.ac.uk/interviews](http://www.ox.ac.uk/interviews) for videos, podcasts, sample questions and other information about interviews.



If your application is successful, you will receive an offer of a place by mid-January. If you have not yet completed all your high school qualifications then this offer will probably be conditional on your final grades. If you achieve the grades required in a conditional offer then your place at Oxford is guaranteed. For further details of the application process, please see [www.ox.ac.uk/apply](http://www.ox.ac.uk/apply).



## Finding out more

For further information about undergraduate study, please see [www.ox.ac.uk/study](http://www.ox.ac.uk/study) and [www.ox.ac.uk/int](http://www.ox.ac.uk/int). If you still have further queries you can telephone +44 (0)1865 288000 or email [study@ox.ac.uk](mailto:study@ox.ac.uk)

Oxford's Recruitment Team visits many countries every year. To find out if there are any events near you please see [www.ox.ac.uk/outreach](http://www.ox.ac.uk/outreach)

If you are coming to Oxford, then we recommend that you come to an open day if possible. For information please see [www.ox.ac.uk/opensdays](http://www.ox.ac.uk/opensdays)

If you are interested in studying for a graduate degree at Oxford please see [www.graduate.ox.ac.uk](http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk). If you still have further queries visit [www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/ask](http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/ask) or telephone +44 (0)1865 270059



Hear more about students' experiences at Oxford at the Wall of 100 Faces. [www.ox.ac.uk/videowall](http://www.ox.ac.uk/videowall)



iTunes or <http://itunes.ox.ac.uk>  
[www.youtube.com/Oxford](http://www.youtube.com/Oxford)  
[www.facebook.com/the.university.of.oxford](http://www.facebook.com/the.university.of.oxford)  
[www.twitter.com/UniofOxford](http://www.twitter.com/UniofOxford)