



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

An American student's guide to undergraduate study at Oxford



WHY OXFORD?

Oxford combines all the resources of an internationally acclaimed research-intensive University with the supportive and personal environment of our colleges. As an Oxford undergraduate you'll be part of one or more departments, depending on the course you're studying. You'll also be a member of a college – a community of students and academics from many different subject areas.

Whichever college you go to, you will be studying for the same degree.

NEARLY

250
COURSES

FROM OVER

30
FACULTIES AND
DEPARTMENTS

ACROSS

35
UNDERGRADUATE
COLLEGES AND HALLS

IN GROUPS OF

2 OR 3
FOR SPECIALISED
TUTORIAL TEACHING

'Though the academic reputation was definitely a factor, I was really attracted by the collegiate structure. Everything works on a smaller scale with concentrated resources, a close-knit community and highly individual teaching with tutors who really take an interest in you.'

Archie, 2nd year



COURSES

Undergraduate degrees at Oxford are more specialised than those at most American universities and allow you to study your chosen course in depth. You apply for one course only, so making the right choice is very important. There are no major and minor subjects at Oxford, so you can't mix and match different courses.

Although you follow one course throughout your studies there are lots of options for specialising within your subject areas, but there is little opportunity to study electives or options from other subjects. A course is usually only one academic subject (like Mathematics or History); but there are some courses which combine two or more subjects (like Physics and Philosophy). These joint courses are usually not major/minor combinations – you would need to demonstrate your aptitude for, and academic interest in, each subject.

Most undergraduate courses are three years long. Some science courses enable students to do a research-focussed fourth year to gain a master's degree. Most language courses take four years, including up to one year in a country where that language is spoken.

TOP TIPS

See our full undergraduate course list at ox.ac.uk/courses

In the UK, the word 'course' refers to the whole degree instead of it's individual components. It has the same meaning as 'program' in the USA.

There are lots of opportunities to study, research or work abroad whilst studying at Oxford ox.ac.uk/students/goabroad

'Oxford is a fantastic university, renowned for academic excellence- the teaching is world class, and being taught by experts in my subject area in this way really appealed to me. Also, Oxford is a great city so this factored into my decision too.'

Megan, 1st year



COLLEGES

Oxford University is made up of colleges spread across the city of Oxford. These buildings provide accommodation, a dining hall, bar, common room, library and gardens. Every undergraduate lives in college accommodation in their first and usually last year. It is also here that college tutors will oversee your studies and normally arrange your tutorial teaching. The relatively small number of students at each college ensures a ready-made community which nurtures all undergraduates' academic development and welfare.

TUTORIAL TEACHING

Alongside lectures, practicals or other forms of teaching, all undergraduate students also attend tutorials. Around once a week in each subject studied, you will meet your tutor, usually with one or two other students, to discuss your work in depth. This personalised 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 possible in a lecture. Oxford tutorials require you to think for yourself – an essential skill for academic success and something that the best employers look for in Oxford graduates.

TOP TIPS

'Tutor' is Oxford's name for a member of academic staff. They are specialists in their field, and usually active researchers – tutorials are the small group teaching that you will have with your tutor.

Two nations divided by a common language...

UK/Oxford	USA
University	College or school
Course	Program
Tutor	Professor
Module or paper	Course or class
Qualifications	A student's test scores



APPLYING TO OXFORD

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

Competition for places at Oxford is very strong, and even excellent grades will not guarantee you a place. Our entry requirements are based on standardised tests, such as:

- The SAT or ACT combined with at least three Advanced Placement Tests or SAT Subject Tests
- The International Baccalaureate

We don't have a specified high school GPA requirement.

Some courses have specific subject requirements, in which case you would need to be taking any required subject as an AP, SAT Subject Test or equivalent. Check the requirements tab of your course page at ox.ac.uk/courses.

Most students will apply straight from high school, at the beginning of their senior year. The UCAS application asks you to list the exam grades or test scores you have already achieved, and also any exams or tests you are scheduled to take. It is fine to apply before you have finished taking the required tests or before you have received your scores, although your expected grades should be mentioned in the UCAS reference (see the next page for more on this).

SELECTION CRITERIA

We are looking for academic achievement and academic potential. Although we take many all-round talented students, who, amongst other things, may captain sports teams, run volunteer societies, and write plays, we do not select students for their extra-curricular achievements, leadership, or for their 'demonstrated interest' in our University. In contrast to our US peer universities, we select on academic criteria alone. Our academics – your future tutors – are the people making the admissions decisions and conducting admissions interviews. You can find specific selection criteria for each of our courses at: ox.ac.uk/criteria.

TOP TIPS

For all of the testing systems that we accept, and to check which tests and scores you would need, see

ox.ac.uk/intquals

If you wish to spend up to one year in Oxford on an undergraduate course, you can apply to a college for a place as a registered Visiting Student:

ox.ac.uk/visiting



APPLICATION PROCESS

All candidates must apply through UCAS by 15 October. All courses at Oxford start in October, almost a full year after the application deadline: [ox.ac.uk/apply](https://www.ox.ac.uk/apply).

OCTOBER: UCAS APPLICATION

UCAS is similar to the Common App – you can apply to several UK universities with one online application, but you can only apply for one course at Oxford and cannot apply to both Oxford and Cambridge in the same year. Your school can register as a UCAS centre, or you can apply as an individual – either option is fine.

In the UCAS application you provide details of your high school record, and also write a personal statement outlining why you want to study the subject you have chosen. There is also a section for your teacher or guidance counsellor to provide a reference for you. **It is very important that this reference includes the grades that they expect you to achieve in any exams you still have to take.**

Application deadline: submit by 6pm UK time on 15 October at www.ucas.com

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER: ADMISSIONS TESTS

For most courses, an admissions test also forms a compulsory part of your application. **Advance registration is required for all admissions tests** but they can be sat at your own school (as long as the school registers in advance), or at one of several open centres in the USA. **It is important to make these arrangements in good time, well before the deadline.**

For most admissions tests you must **register by 15 October** to sit the test in early November. To check the deadlines for your course please visit: [ox.ac.uk/tests](https://www.ox.ac.uk/tests)

NOVEMBER: WRITTEN WORK

For some courses, you also need to send in written work as part of your application. For exact requirements for each subject, please visit [ox.ac.uk/writework](https://www.ox.ac.uk/writework).

TOP TIPS

On your UCAS form you can choose to apply to one particular college, or you can make an 'open' application. All colleges follow the same selection process.

[ox.ac.uk/collegechoice](https://www.ox.ac.uk/collegechoice)

The personal statement is quite different to college essays in the US. For advice on how to write one see:

[ox.ac.uk/ucasps](https://www.ox.ac.uk/ucasps)



DECEMBER: INTERVIEW

Oxford tutors carefully review each UCAS application, along with any admissions test or written work, in order to shortlist candidates for interview. You will find out whether or not you have been shortlisted in late November or early December. Candidates who are able to travel to Oxford for interview are welcome to do so. If you are not able to travel, tutors may choose to interview you by Skype.

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.
ox.ac.uk/interviews

JANUARY: DECISIONS

You will hear by mid-January whether or not your application has been successful. If you have not yet completed all your high school qualifications then this offer will probably be conditional on your final grades.

This is not the same as the wait list for a US university. If you achieve the grades required in a conditional offer then your place at Oxford is guaranteed. See the UCAS website for reply dates for a UK application.
ox.ac.uk/outcomes

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

Our Student Information and Immigration team provides visa and immigration information to new students, and also offers an orientation programme to help you settle in:
ox.ac.uk/students/new/international

TOP TIPS

Check whether you need to sit an admissions test or submit written work on your course page:

ox.ac.uk/courses



FEES AND FUNDING

Most American students pay University fees at our international rate, which is very competitive with US universities. Many of our undergraduate courses are just three years long, which can significantly reduce the cost of your degree. Our world-class resources also help keep your living costs low. For example, our outstanding libraries mean that you won't need to buy many books.

US students can apply for federal student loans through the US Direct Loan Programme. These loans will fund up to your full cost of attendance and are available for nearly all courses at Oxford. Alternatively, some US students choose a private student loan through Sallie Mae. If you are interested in either loan, please review the information at www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/us-loans before making your application.

Unfortunately, we are not able to provide financial aid to international students except in certain rare circumstances. In general, international students need to be confident that they will be able to meet the costs themselves.

TOP TIPS

For more information on living costs see:

ox.ac.uk/funding



LIVING IN OXFORD

THE CITY OF OXFORD

Oxford is both young and old. It has the youngest population of any city in England and Wales, but also has many beautiful historic buildings. Oxford is surrounded by traditional countryside, but is also just an hour to London by train, and has excellent connections to airports.

There is no campus as such, as most colleges and departments are situated in and around the city centre. Amongst these buildings you will also find world-class libraries and famous museums as well as lots of shops, cafés, restaurants, theatres, cinemas, pubs and clubs. There are plenty of green spaces too: riverside walks, England's oldest botanic garden, the University Parks and college gardens.

STUDENT LIFE

Student life is primarily based in the individual Oxford colleges – where you would live, at least in your first year, and make your first friends. There are dozens of clubs and societies in colleges, but there are also hundreds more across the University, suitable for your level of interest in all kinds of sports, dance, music, drama, journalism, volunteer work – or whatever else you want to do.

ACCOMMODATION

Almost all students will decide to live within their college for at least their first year. All colleges have accommodation, and this is always a single student bedroom – there are no dormitories. After the first year, you may choose to stay within the college or 'live out' with friends in another part of the city.

TOP TIPS

For information about each college, including accommodation, see: ox.ac.uk/ugcolls



AFTER OXFORD

The Careers Service offers Oxford graduates lifelong careers advice. This service advertises more jobs than there are students to fill them, and can help you find an internship, learn business skills and land your dream job.

Oxford graduates are highly valued by employers for their communication, leadership and problem-solving skills. It doesn't matter which subject you choose, studying at Oxford prepares you for a very broad range of careers.

'I had the opportunity to learn from faculty who have truly shaped their subjects and to become friends with students from around the world. My tutorials were both challenging and yet very rewarding, while teaching me how to critically think through global issues. My time at the University of Oxford as an undergraduate prepared me for later postgraduate studies in international trade and diplomacy, and now a global career that has included time at the United Nations (UN), an NGO, and a leading global asset management firm.'

Andrew from Texas, PPE graduate

'During my senior year of high school I had to make a tough decision between choosing one of the excellent American universities my friends were planning to attend or to take a leap of faith, cross the pond and accept my offer from Oxford. I chose to study history at Oxford and have never looked back. To my mind, the clearest advantage of an Oxford education is the unrivalled ability of the tutorial system to teach students how to think critically and form meaningful opinions. These skills are as integral to my success today working at a hedge fund as they were to my success as an undergraduate studying history.'

Kaitlin, from New Jersey, History graduate

TOP TIPS

Take a look at Oxford's Careers Service:

www.careers.ox.ac.uk

The USA is home to the largest number of Oxford University graduates outside the UK, creating an extensive network of alumni groups.

In the USA:

Over 30,000 alumni

Around 40 alumni groups

www.alumni.ox.ac.uk





FINDING OUT MORE

Oxford's Student Recruitment Team visits the US every year. To find out about events near you check: ox.ac.uk/intvisit

If you are coming to Oxford, then we really recommend you come to an open day if possible: ox.ac.uk/opendays

If you have any questions at all, please contact our admissions information team: study@ox.ac.uk

Call: **+44 (0) 1865 288000**



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Produced by the University of Oxford Public Affairs Directorate and the Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach Office University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD

Photographs: Oxford University Images. Contributing photographers: John Cairns, PS:unlimited, Rob Judges, Whitaker Studio, Greg Smolonski, iStock/Chris Schmidt, Emily Alexander, Gurinder Punn, PS:unlimited, Phil Sayer, Whitaker Studio, Rob Judges Photography

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