

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

*What you need to know...*

# WELCOME

Being an international student in Oxford can seem very daunting – meeting new people and coping with a new workload, as well as having to acclimatise to the notoriously unpredictable English weather, adjust yourself to the hearty English cuisine, and understand what people around you are saying, accents and all! And none of this is made easier by an international pandemic!!!

The most important thing to remember, however, is to keep an open mind: you are, after all, moving to a whole different country and adaptability is the key to making the most of your university experience. It doesn't hurt that Brasenose has a reputation for being one of, if not the, friendliest colleges! Here, you'll be settling into an environment that is friendly, welcoming and open to accepting people from all backgrounds and from all over the world.

## **Before Arriving:**

Simply because you are an international student, you'll be forced to handle many more administrative issues than most of your college mates. Be sure that before you leave for the UK you have a valid British visa that will last for the duration of your entire course; relevant information can be found on the UK Border Agency website, and some follow-up action may be required once you reach the UK if you are travelling on certain passports (i.e. police registration, which is a much more chill process than it sounds, so no need to worry!)

You might like to pack plenty of warm clothing with you, or purchase some once you reach England – it can get pretty cold later on in Michaelmas, and the last thing you want to do is freeze on the way to lectures or tutorials! Of course we shouldn't forget about the infamously rainy weather, a raincoat/umbrella and shoes that won't get soaked will go a long way. Also bring along any relevant medication that you have been taking. Don't worry about bringing kettles, cutlery, etc. all of these things can be bought here in Oxford. Any books you have been asked to read for vacation work can usually be found in the Bodleian Libraries too, so don't bring them over unless you really want to.

## **Flying in the times of COVID:**

As of now, the UK has no COVID travel restrictions, so nothing to worry about there! However, be sure to double check the rules of your home country and any other countries you may stop in on the way to prevent any issues!

## **Once in the UK:**

If you're traveling directly from a London airport to Oxford, there are multiple ways to get into the city. One that is really convenient is the Airline Bus, which operates from Heathrow and Gatwick directly into the center of Oxford – the High St / Queens Lane stop is just a 4 minute walk to the Brasenose gate! . It is useful if you open a bank account speedily once you reach the UK, because college batels (college and accommodation fees) will have to be paid fairly early on in the term. Appointments can be made with the banks directly to facilitate this process. Many banks also have ways to sign up on their apps, as well as several banks that are entirely online (although many of these are harder if you plan to deposit a check). It doesn't hurt to do a little research on different banks before arriving to get a sense of which one you want to use.

You also might want to buy a UK SIM card, depending on which country you are from. Some international carriers like Vodafone have affordable plans for you to be able to use your home SIM in the UK, but especially from non-EU countries it's usually cheaper to just get a new SIM

### **Freshers' Week and Beyond:**

During Freshers' Week, remember to look after yourself - Freshers' Flu is a common ailment in the first few weeks, and the entire adjustment process for international students tends to make it a little bit harder. Be sure to enjoy yourselves plenty though - there's so much to do and only this one week to really cut loose before work starts properly! Everyone in college has come from different backgrounds and will be looking to make friends, but don't worry if you don't feel like you've found your people during freshers week as friendships continue to form long after Freshers' Week is just a distant memory. If you need any help throughout Freshers' Week, feel free to contact Niamh, who is in charge of Freshers' Week at [jcr-freshers@bnc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:jcr-freshers@bnc.ox.ac.uk) or our Diversity and Equality rep Ish, at [jcr-diversity@bnc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:jcr-diversity@bnc.ox.ac.uk) -- they will be more than happy to help! As mentioned in the Freshers' pack, we have a wonderful international rep, Hafeez, who would be more than happy to answer any questions and offer any advice at [hafeez.merali@bnc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:hafeez.merali@bnc.ox.ac.uk). Freshers' Week will include a range of events, which should include one for international students to help you all meet each other.

It's good to try and meet a variety of people during your years at Brasenose, and not just stick to other international students or people from your country; after all, moving overseas provides a great opportunity to immerse yourself in a new culture and meet people with different backgrounds. Participating in college life by going to hall and JCR meetings and signing up for college sports, clubs, and societies are all great places to meet people, and they are open to everyone.

We also have an "international godparent scheme" here at Brasenose to help you settle in. You should have received a letter from your godparent (let me know if you haven't!) offering words of advice and giving you their contact details for questions. Please use them! There will also be an event in Freshers' week, an international brunch, for you to get to know other international students in Brasenose to help you settle in.

Your college parents will also be around if you need any help or advice, and Brasenose has a great support network that you can rely on. You can think of Brasenose as your new family, now that you're perhaps far away from home. As with all families, you'll need to do your part to make the most of it, but the support and experiences you'll share in return will be priceless.

Finally, we have a Brasenose Internationals Facebook group and we will be in touch shortly with details!

The main takeaway is try not to stress and do not hesitate to reach out with any questions you may have!



Have a safe journey and see you soon xx

