

HCR Freshers Guide

2023/2024



Hulme Common Room
Brasenose College
University of Oxford
Radcliffe Square OX1 4AJ

<https://www.bnc.ox.ac.uk/> | <https://brasenosecollegehcr.wixsite.com/brasenosehcr>

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Brasenose College, affectionately known as BNC, and the friendliest college in Oxford! As you probably know by now, The University of Oxford is something of a misnomer; Oxford is a federation of colleges that are largely self-governing. Thus, for graduates, life is a peculiar mix of college-centred and course-centred (for those on taught courses run by university faculties) or department-centred activities. On the college front, Brasenose is well-known as a friendly, welcoming community.

We hope that you are as excited about joining our community as we are to have you.

We understand that everyone has some worries about arriving at a new university. This perfectly normal and there will be others that share similar sentiments as you. You will meet senior graduate students around BNC and in Oxford ever so ready to help you settle into this stunning city. We all know what it is like to be a fresher, and we intend to make your integration into life at BNC and Oxford seamless. Our VP Secretary together with members of the HCR committee has painstakingly curated a fun filled series of events to introduce you to the larger HCR community and call this place your home away from home.



This document serves as an introductory guide to life at Brasenose and Oxford, comprising of everything from laundry locations to hall meals to helpful hints compiled by current BNC students. Important contacts and details can be found throughout this guide, and on the [HCR website](#). In addition, the [Blue Book](#) (College Information and Regulations) available on the BNC website, contains important regulations about being a member of Brasenose College. We recommend all incoming students to browse through it prior to arrival.



Before the 1960s, there was little provision for graduate students in Oxford colleges. Brasenose was one of the first colleges to set aside facilities specifically for graduates. In most colleges, graduates belong to either the Middle Common Room (MCR) or Graduate Common Room (GCR) but here at Brasenose, we are called the HCR.

Hulme Common Room (HCR) is named after a 17th century benefactor who left the College property in Manchester. Little did he know that Manchester would develop into one of England's largest cities. The HCR used to occupy the Old Cloisters (below the library) and was moved in 2004 to where it is now; between Staircases III and IV (pictured above).



The Hulme Common Room (HCR)

The HCR is both the place where graduate students gather, and the phrase commonly used in reference to the BNC graduate student body. The definition of “graduate” is vague, though. If you are studying for a higher degree, a second B.A., are a mature student, a “junior year abroad” programme student from an American university, or an exchange student from an E.U. country, then you will be a member of the HCR.

The HCR itself is a place where you can come to relax, make tea/coffee, eat your meals, and catch up with friends (e.g. watching a movie or playing Mario Kart). We also hold many of our social events here, such as games nights, cocktail parties and our infamous ‘Second Desserts’! Check out the [HCR website](#), for a quick introduction and easy access to information (including your social calendar aka HCR Term Card)!

HCR Committee

The HCR is a democratically run institution that receives termly grants from college to cover the cost of events. The HCR has its own committee and constitution which represents graduate interests within the college and university. They also act as a point of contact for general welfare issues and organises various social events. Elections are held every year at the end of Hilary Term (or when needed) and any full member, duly proposed and seconded, may stand for a position in the HCR Committee.



HCR President: Matthew Buckland

Hi everyone! I'm Matt, the President of the HCR. In this role I attend meetings at college to represent the interests of the HCR and, beyond that, I also organise HCR meetings every term to discuss and vote on motions and to vote in elections for committee positions. About me: I'm a 4th year DPhil student in the Statistics Department doing research that focusses on Probability theory. I've been at Brasenose for several years now (first my undergraduate and now my DPhil!) and have thoroughly enjoyed my time here. Finally, my interests include yoga, running and watching football – I'm a big West Ham fan! 😊

VP Secretary: Shoba Laxmi

HELLOO Friends! I'm Shoba, 2nd year DPhil student reading for Inorganic Chemistry from Singapore and the Editor-in-Chief of this Handbook. I split my time between my research labs in Harwell & Oxford. Outside of lab, I'm a massive F1 Fan (#TeamLH) and love exploring new places and anything nature. On the side, I am hustling for the HCR as your Secretary and covering IT & Fresher's Rep. Very excited to meet all of you very soon. Keep a look out for all my emails/messages to navigate your first few weeks in Oxford. Come say hi if you see me around!





Treasurer (Vice-President): Rachel Keane

Hey everyone, my name is Rachel and I'm a fourth year DPhil student at the Department of Civil Engineering. I carry out experimental work in the area of offshore wind. I play Gaelic football in my spare time (always recruiting if anybody wants to try out!). This year I'm your HCR Treasurer, responsible for all of HCR finances. I also support the committee in other aspects as much as I can. I can't wait to meet and have a great year with you all :D

Domestic Officer: Finley Bettsworth

Hi! I'm Finley, your current domestic officer for the HCR. I am your point of contact for all things related to how things are done and run in Brasenose, don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have any niggling doubt.



Welfare Officers: Becci Davis

Hi! My name's Becci and I'm a second year DPhil student in Experimental Psychology, researching anxiety in autism. Along with Dana and Robyn, I'm one of your welfare officers and a peer supporter. I run a regular welfare event on Wednesday nights but you're always welcome to grab me for a chat!!

Welfare Officers: Dana Vuckovic

My name is Dana and I'm a 3rd year DPhil student in French. As a DPhil fresher, I felt a little uneasy and nervous to join such a large college, however, it is thanks to the Welfare team that I found it much easier to feel like a part of the Brasenose family. With the help of the Wellness teas and yoga sessions, I instantly felt a sense of peace and belonging. As one of Brasenose's Welfare Officers and Peer Supporters, I'm here to ensure that students feel safe, tranquil and relaxed.





Welfare Officers: Robyn Haggis

Hello! I'm Robyn, 3rd year DPhil student in Geography and one of your HCR welfare reps! Having done my master's and now DPhil at Brasenose I know the stresses that graduates and those new to Oxford can face. Alongside Dana & Becci, I am here to support you in your welfare needs, whether you need someone to chat to, help coping with various struggles, figuring out life in Oxford, or finding the right professional welfare services.

Social Secretaries: Despoina Vasilaki

Hi, I'm Despina, a proud 3rd year nostril and 1st year DPhil student in Law. When I'm not curating my growing meme library or raving about the Greek islands, you will find me in the Stally writing my thesis which looks at the regulation of ARTs and the law of parental recognition. Participating actively in college life and interacting with the members of our HCR has undoubtedly been the most memorable and fulfilling part of my student experience here. Armed with this experience and plenty of Mediterranean gusto, as your Social Secretary, I am committed to creating events that will make your time at Brasenose as unforgettable as mine has been.



Social Secretaries: Piotr Sliwa

Hi! I'm Piotrek and I am the Social Secretary this year! I am looking forward to organising various social activities this term - think picnics, formal or wine & cheese exchanges, tours of other colleges, pub and punting outings, walks, board game nights. If you have any ideas and want to get engaged, please reach out, we can work something out. When I don't do social sec things, I work on statistical approaches to molecular health data integration, I play squash or row and run, and I really enjoy checking out the latest exhibitions in the Ashmolean. I'm looking forward to meeting you soon!

Ethnic & Diversity Officer: Aditi Upmanyu (*stand-in*)

Hi, I'm Aditi, your stand-in E&D officer. I am a DPhil researcher in English literature. As an intersectional and post-colonial feminist, I aim to engage with concerns of race, class, caste, gender in the college space and attempt to make the HCR an open, diverse and inclusive space. I am also an amateur baker and cook and love hosting High Teas and anything food related. The college and HCR is organising E&D training on implicit bias, consent among others and I encourage all freshers to enrol in them. I am looking to fill my E&D dream team, so please do consider applying to the amazing rep roles.





Environmental Officers: Linqing Zhu

I'm Linqing Zhu, DPhil student in Oriental Studies, and your environment officer at the HCR. I am here to support our community maintain a healthy and eco-friendly lifestyle. I lead walks to nearby parks and meadows, follow up with our college's Net Zero commitment, and regularly update you with environment-related events happening in college and in town. If you know of events around us, or if you have any ideas or suggestions for the college to be greener, don't hesitate to let me know!

Library Rep: Isabelle St-Hilaire

Hi, my name is Isabelle and I'm starting the second year of my DPhil in Law, studying the regulation of medical AI under Canadian and EU law. Outside of my studies, I love exercise, nature walks, and language learning. If you speak or are leaning Mandarin or Spanish, I would be grateful to practice with you - and I'm always keen to chat in French, my mother tongue. As your library rep, I will gladly serve as the link between you and the Brasenose library staff and will do my best to help you find answers to your library-related questions. I look forward to meeting you!



We are always looking for enthusiastic individuals with a passion to serve the HCR community. Check out the HCR website for [vacant positions](#). Come meet and chat with all of the HCR committee members at the **Committee Tea, held on the 5th Oct from 2-5pm @ the HCR.**

In addition to the above HCR Committee, *Junior Deans* are graduate members who have been appointed by the College as resident advisors to support the Dean in disciplinary and student welfare matters. For example, they must ensure that the Bar is cleared after closing time and shut down any illegal and parties past 11pm on college grounds.

Please remember that the Junior Deans are graduate students like the rest of us and deserve the same respect as any of us. Little sympathy will be given if you are abusive toward them or ignore their requests in any way.

HCR General Meetings (GM)

HCR General Meetings take place at least twice a term and are always well-advertised via email and social media notification beforehand. As a member of the HCR, you are entitled to attend as many meetings as you like and voting for motions is performed online on the SU website so you will always have your say on the motions you care about. These meetings are the easiest way of making sure you have your say in college matters.

All HCR members can submit a motion for discussion & improvement. Templates are available on the website or on request from the HCR Secretary. HCR General Meetings are well known for pizzas, so come on down during GMs and check out what the hype is all about.

GRADUATE ACCOMODATION

Location

Brasenose graduate students who live in college accommodation typically live in one of two locations: St Cross Annexe or Hollybush Row.

A word of warning: DO NOT give St. Cross or Hollybush Row as your mailing address. It is important to note that sending your mail/parcels to college, allows it to be kept safely by our lovely porters. **There is no mailbox or delivery reception at both St. Cross & Hollybush Row accommodations.** The actual address of each graduate accommodation is typically used for food delivery services & navigating your way back home:

The addresses you should be using are as follows:

Mails/Parcels

(Your name)
Brasenose College
Radcliffe Square
Oxford, OX1 4AJ (UK)

Food Delivery /Navigation



St. Cross Annexe, St. Cross Road,
Oxford, OX1 3TU



Brasenose Graduate
Accommodation, Hollybush Row,
Oxford, OX1 1JR

Domestic Facilities

1. Laundry

St. Cross: Washers and dryers are available in an adjacent out-building and are shared between the two colleges (BNC and St Cross). There is an ironing board available for those who would like to iron their clothes – bring your own iron.

Hollybush Row (HBR): There are two washers and dryers available on the top floor (4th level) which uses contactless payment. Similarly, an ironing board is conveniently found in the laundry room with abandoned irons – use at your own risk!

Additionally, there are laundry facilities in the main college near the High Street entrance for students who live out of college and need a place to do their laundry. Whoohoo!

2. Kitchen

In both accommodations, basic kitchen amenities include a four-element cooker, oven, kettle, and a refrigerator (in some there may be a freezer), a microwave, and cupboards assigned to individual rooms and equipped with locks. Cooking utensils and other kitchenware may have been left by previous residents which will be kept in unlabelled cupboards. We recommend you take a peek at those before buying things that you need during your time in Oxford.

3. Printing Services

There are printers available around both graduate accommodations and HCR and college Library. These can be accessed through the printing portal, print.bnc.ox.ac.uk, and incur a standard charge which is added to your batels payment at the end of term. More information can be found on the [Brasenose College IT website](#).

4. Bicycles

Brasenose college and the two graduate accommodations are centrally located, so most places are accessible by foot. There are bike racks at the St. Cross Annexe, Hollybush Row and around the college (within the college look for the place called Amsterdam). Good locks (such as D locks) are essential, and you should always lock your bike to something solid, especially in town. The general rule is "cheap bike... expensive lock!" Lights are required by law after dusk and helmets are highly recommended. Also it is recommended that you register your bike with college at the lodge.



Rules & Regulations

As highlighted before, the BNC Blue book contains a detailed and comprehensive list of guidelines and regulations for all BNC students, staff, and visitors to follow. The latest blue book can be accessed easily via the [HCR website](#) as well as [BNC website](#). Here are some of the main pointers you need to pay attention to with regards to housing:

- Rooms are allocated on the condition that rent is paid each term. Beware: Batels are sent out at the beginning of each term and must be paid promptly.
- Remember to lock your room every time you leave it.
- The College gate will be locked at 9.00 pm (term time). If you are going out, don't forget your fob - there is no other way to get into or out of college.
- Any gathering of more than 10 people in a college room requires permission from the Dean. Failure to obtain this can result in substantial fines.
- Excessive noise constitutes a disciplinary offence – consult the Blue Book for allowable “music hours.”
- Take care of your room and allow scouts access to clean it. Blue/white tack will be removed, and you will be fined, so don't use it.

People who live out of college should have their addresses and phone numbers kept with the lodge. If you want to get hold of them leave a note in their pigeon-hole. If living out, please remember to make a note of your contact information on the sheets provided in the lodge.

COLLEGE LIFE

Meal & UPay

Breakfast is available in halls **8:00 to 9:00 am Monday - Friday** and is replaced with **Brunch 11:00 am to 12:15 pm on Saturday - Sunday**. These meals are cafeteria style. **Lunch** is available **12:30 to 1:15 pm on Monday - Friday**, and is cafeteria style of usually 3 main meals, and desserts.

Dinners at Brasenose come in two forms: **Informal Halls** which are held every evening (unless specified otherwise) and **Formal Halls** which are a 3-course meal attended in gowns which starts at **7:15 pm on Tuesdays and Fridays, and 7:30 on Sundays**. Formal Halls must be pre-booked by 1:00 pm on the day itself (they often sell-out much before then, however there are usually people selling tickets on the our [HCR whatsapp group](#) chat at the last minute!) People often buy drinks to bring to Formal, but you **MUST buy it** from the **College Bar**. There's no seating plan for this (unless its grad dinner), so its first come first serve – come early and secure yourselves a good spot. You are **not permitted** to continue to **hold a place** for your friend(s) if they have not entered the hall after the gavel **has sounded** for the first time. Dinner is served after grace is read.

A typical formal dinner begins with High Table diners processing in, followed by the banging of the gavel by the head of the high table for the night (usually a senior SCR fellow or the principal) which commences the reading of grace. Once you hear the gavel, you are expected to stand up and once you hear “Amen”, you are allowed to sit back down, and dinner will be served. Formal Dinner ends when the gavel is sounded again, everyone stands, a shorter grace is read and after which, high table members will file out into the SCR. At this point, we are allowed to leave the hall or remain in the hall for a short time to snap photos.

Here at BNC, we respect all religious backgrounds, and as such you are not required to recite any prayers or take part in it, we ask that you respectfully remain standing and quiet each time grace is read.

All meals must be booked via [UPay](#), and you must have credit on your account to book meals. A guide for students using UPay can be found [here](#)!

During the term time you are allowed to bring guests over for meals, either ordering for them (informal meals), or by buying guest tickets for Formal Hall (up to 2 guests per person). There are some special dinners every so often for Michaelmas we have: Blurbs, Guest Night Dinner (you can bring guests to this) & Christmas Dinner.

Outside of the term, guests are usually not allowed, and the meal timings differ (with the kitchen closed on certain weeks and vacations). **There are no Formal Halls outside of the term.**

On-Site Activities & Facilities

Brasenose College provides a wide array of academic and recreational facilities which support and enrich student life, the full details of which are most easily found on the college

website. Some places to take note are our college libraries, computing office, sports and music facilities, and active college chapel.

- **The Porters Lodge**

Open 24 hours a day, this is a very busy part of college and run by the porters, whose job is to help keep the College running smoothly. The porters can be very helpful if you have any enquiries, but they can also act as disciplinarians should the need arise (so it is wise to stay on their good side). Here is where you will find your pigeon-hole, a mailbox which you will share with one other person. Mail (internal and external) is delivered daily, so check your pigeon-hole regularly, especially in the first few weeks.

- **NOTICE BOARDS**

There are many notice boards around college for events, sports, meal menus, and other important information. You will find these mainly at the bottom of staircases, as well as in the lodge and HCR. Electronic screens are also used in the lodge to provide news and other information. There are also the Academic Notice Board (messages from tutors, exam information, etc.), the Decanal Notice Board (matters relating to discipline), the Bursarial Notice Board, and blackboards with urgent messages on them.

- **THE BAR ('DTB')**

The bar is open on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays (non-Formal nights) from 7.00 pm to 11.00 pm, and opens at 6.30 pm on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays so you can buy drinks to take to Formals. You can pay with bank card or Bod card (which charges to your UPay). It is faster and usually more convenient for you to pay with Bod Card, so it is recommended you do that. We will be running some events DTB through the term so keep a close eye on our holy grail ([Term Card](#)).

- **BOOKABLE SPACES**

You can book rooms for events, functions, soirees, and anything else using the Decanal Booking form (ask a current committee member for the latest form). Non-alcoholic events need 3 working days' notice, and alcoholic events need 7 working days. You log into this with your **brasXXXX username** and **SSO password**.

You can book music practice rooms via the Brasenose website. Anyone can book music practice rooms, but you need to collect a fob for the room from plodge, or make sure it's added to your fob.

If you need a quiet space for study or a meeting, you can also book a conference room in the main BNC Library (Cloisters, ground level) – there is a booking sheet at the entrance where you can book this room for specific time. More about information about BNC libraries can be found [here](#).

Useful College Contact Details

- **Academic related:** Contact our college officers (**Eliza**, Maternity Cover and **Henry**) at college.office@bnc.ox.ac.uk for all things academic related from signing and approving student status, bod card replacement, academic administration etc.
- **Accommodation:** Our Accommodation Manager (James Hellyer) is your first port of call for anything related to your room from answering questions and sorting something that's broken or put up. You can easily contact him via email: accommodation@bnc.ox.ac.uk. If you have any problems over the weekend (e.g. water leaks, no hot water, etc), contact the lodge.
- **IT and Computer:** If you face any IT related issues, book an appointment with BNC IT department at this [link](#).
- **Bar and UPay:** Email the **Steward** (Martin Wiseman), and will be able to help.
- **Kitchen:** Contact the kitchen via their email kitchen@bnc.ox.ac.uk first for food-related matters (e.g. allergies) or having to change dietary requirements for formal dinners.
- **Non-urgent security issues:** drop the lodge or Andy Talbot (**Head of Security**) and email.
- **Emergencies:** Contact Porter's lodge at **01865 277830**. At night, the porters would be doing their rounds around college accommodation and grounds, if they are not answering the lodge's call, you should always try contacting the **night porter's cell** at **07710 916095**.

If you're not sure who to get in touch with, or want to chat about anything domestic related, email **HCR Domestic Officer** (Finley Bettsworth) at hcr-domestic@bnc.ox.ac.uk.

ADMINISTRATION, WELFARE & SUPPORT

Health

Information about university COVID policies can be found [here](#)

The college doctors are Dr Leaver & Partners. They are found at:

Jericho Health Centre, Walton Street, Oxford, OX2 6NW (Tel: 01865 311234).

You will register with them during the Welfare morning of 0th Week. Appointments to see them can be made by telephone, visiting the Jericho Health Centre, or through the College Nurse, Kinneret Milgrom. The College Nurse Clinics are delivered remotely, every weekday during term time. Therefore, you will need to book an appointment to speak to Kinneret during her surgery hours over MS Teams by using [this link](#). She is the first person to approach if you are ill. You can reach her at college.nurse@bnc.ox.ac.uk.

Dentistry is available on the NHS but there is a scale of charges, and many people choose a private dentist. A popular NHS dental service used by students in Oxford is Studental.

For the most up to date health information, check out the [College's health information page](#).

College Administration

THE FINANCE BURSARY is contacted for:

- **Paying Batels** and addressing any queries about them.
- Help with **student funding/support issues**. Keep in mind that while you are expected to pay your Batels on time. If there are problems, get in touch with the finance bursary sooner rather than later.
- Enquiring about Student Support Funding or Grants available through the College or University.

THE DOMESTIC BURSAR can be contacted for:

- Sorting out any **problems with your college accommodation**.
- Asking about vacation residence.
- Requesting a **room for a guest** (email accommodation@bnc.ox.ac.uk)

THE COLLEGE OFFICE should be contacted for:

- Graduate Administrator cover is Eliza Flindall (eliza.flindall@bnc.ox.ac.uk)
- Enquiring anything about **examination entries**.
- Obtaining **proof of residence** and enrolment at Brasenose.
- Enquiring anything about graduation once it is booked.
- Asking any **general questions about college** (email: college.office@bnc.ox.ac.uk).

Support: In & Out of College

No problem should be suffered in silence. If you feel that you cannot approach a friend, supervisor, or tutor, never hesitate to see one of the following for support:

- The **HCR committee members** are here to help you with problems or questions you may encounter during your time here at BNC. Even if they cannot help you themselves, they can certainly point you in the right direction or get the information that you need. They are all very approachable and willing to help in any way possible, so don't hesitate to get in touch.
- Your **College Advisor** would be someone from BNC allocated to you (not your supervisor or subject tutor) who will treat your problem confidentially and refer you to someone else, if need be, or just provide a listening ear. It is important to note that these advisors are not just for 'serious' problems. They can help you with any queries (personal or work) and are always ready to have a chat.
- The current **Tutor for Graduates** is Professor Eamonn Gaffney and he is responsible for all graduates and will be more than happy for you to consult over academic, financial, or other problems.
- We have a **college counsellor**, Sebastian (on the website called 'Student Support Advisor'), who offers **free counselling sessions** in weeks 0-10. You can book a session with him at <https://it.brasenose.org/bookings/> (Found under Student Services -> Welfare -> Student Support Advisor)
- We also have a **University Counselling Service** which offers **free counselling sessions** and provides a range of great counsellors. They run through term time AND vacation time so have good provisions for graduate students. You can find out more about them here: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling>
- Our lovely **college nurse**, Kinneret, can help with both physical and mental health problems, including exam / thesis stress, so don't hesitate to book an appointment with her here: <https://it.brasenose.org/bookings/> (Found under Student Services -> Welfare -> College nurse). She is here weeks 0-9.
- Arnaud the **sub-dean** and Rev David Sheen the **Chaplain** are both here to support students and are available at short notice (so good to keep in mind if the counsellor or nurse has a waiting time). They are happy to chat about any issues you might be facing, including exam stress. You can find their emails here: <https://www.bnc.ox.ac.uk/current-students/welfare-support/welfare>
- **Andy Talbot**, our head porter, also looks after student welfare and is happy to chat to students about any issues they might be dealing with (he is also an ex police officer which has its uses!). His e-mail address is andrew.talbot@bnc.ox.ac.uk
- **Dr Leaver & Partners** in Jericho is our college GP - you can go to them for both physical and mental health issues, and they also have a **physio** who you can book a session with for free. More information here: <https://www.leaverandpartnersjericho.nhs.uk/>

- **HCR peer supporters** - we have trained peer supporters who are happy to have an informal friendly chat - Dana Vuckovic (online only), Jack Whitehead (rainbow peer supporter), Nijia Zhou, Robyn Haggis, and Xinmiao Hu. You can contact them directly or through the welfare email.
- **Junior Deans** - our junior deans, provide pastoral support to students and are available for a chat. You can find out more about them here: <https://www.bnc.ox.ac.uk/current-students/welfare-support/welfare>
- **Oxford Nightline** provides an opportunity for students to talk to someone in confidence - it is run for and by students, open 8pm-8am Monday-Sunday, 0th week to 9th week. You can call them on 01865 270 270 (you do **not** need to be in Oxford to use the service). More information at: <https://oxford.nightline.ac.uk/>

Racial/Ethnic Diversity

Brasenose is committed to continue supporting racial and ethnic minorities. Additionally, BNC supports university-wide initiatives, such as fundraising for scholarships for students of colour and reviewing Equality and Diversity training with students to ensure it is fit for purpose. Furthermore, BNC tries to actively engage with ethnic minorities by creating an open dialogue about the issues and problems faced.

Women in BNC

University-wide Women's Events/Campaigns are usually advertised on college notice boards and on the Notice Board in the HCR. Anyone wanting to get involved in the OUSU Women's Committee Meetings should contact the OUSU women's rep.

It is important to note that the College has a code of practice for dealing with cases of sexual harassment and takes such issues very seriously. Naturally, we hope that the procedure never has to be used, but if anything does go wrong, it can be dealt with properly. Any concerns can be brought up with the Women's Affairs Officer or the Chaplain, Revd David Sheen or Dr Anne Edwards, the Disabilities Officer and Harassment Officer for the BNC.

LGBTQ+

Oxford University Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Society, LBTSoc, is probably the largest in the country, with a wide range of events ranging from tea parties to speaker meetings to chocolate fondue parties! Events are generally well attended, and contacts can be found in the Oxford Handbook. Every fresher will be sent a mailing by the LBTSoc in the first few weeks. New environments can be lonely and intimidating but it need not be that way. The open-mindedness of BNC and Oxford in general, makes it a very good place to simply be you. Coming out is an important step and the first steps are often the most difficult. The HCR has Welfare Officer and E&D Officer as well as an LGBTQ+ Rep you can talk to, but if you would prefer an out of college contact, there is a full list in the Oxford Handbook (which you will receive when you arrive). At present our LGBTQ+ Rep position is vacant and if you would like to step up to the role, please approach Shoba or Matt.

OXFORD

Oxford Terms

MICHAELMAS: The first term, October to December.

HILARY: The second term, January to March.

TRINITY: The third term, April to June.

Every term is eight weeks long, with the weeks numbered so that you will see something announced as being (e.g.) on Tuesday of 3rd Week. Brand new week begins from Sunday and ends on Saturday. The week before 1st Week is known as 0th (nought) Week, and the week after 8th Week is 9th Week (*think number scale*). There are times when weeks are noted at -X week, they are simply weeks before 0th Week – the larger the negative number the further it is from 0th week. Here at Oxford, we pride ourselves in being different.

PRE ARRIVAL (International Students)

Here are some additional important tasks and tips for our incoming international freshers (*fun fact: International students make up almost half the population of students in the HCR*). Coming to the UK is exciting but it is natural to feel some nervousness. After all, you aren't just starting life at university but in a new country altogether. But you will find Oxford in particular and UK in general extremely diverse, multi-cultural, and friendly. To feel more integrated, attend college activities and events but you can also join international student-run societies and clubs.

The changes in weather and getting used to early and late sunsets during the year will be a new phenomenon for a number of you and if you experience changes in productivity and mood due to seasonal alterations, please reach out to counselling services and take the necessary supplements after consulting your GP.

We highly recommend checking the university website for any other queries related to international students at:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/international>

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/international-applicants/community>

As always, don't hesitate to reach out to our fellow international committee members at this email: hcr-freshers@bnc.ox.ac.uk if you need someone to point you in the right direction!

Immigration and visa

The immigration for international students at airports (it is a separate queue), particularly Heathrow can take up to two hours. Keep this buffer time in mind when booking transportation to Oxford.

Carry copies of all your documents including COVID vaccine certificate, mandatory health test results and if applicable invoices of any forex you are carrying.

Once you are in Oxford, ensure you are up to date with the Visa office emails. More information can be found here <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa>. Before taking on any sort of part-time work, please mandatorily consult your visa rules, department, and supervisor.

Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)

Collect your BOD Card from college and proceed to collect your biometric residence permit (BRP) at the earliest possible date from the Post Office at St. Aldate's. The queues are extremely long and take up to several hours so check the opening times and go at the earliest hour. Keep a scanned digital copy of your BRP with you once you get the BRP card. You do not need to carry passport and BRP when in Oxford but for trips outside town, carrying the BRP or at least a photocopy is a good idea.

Stuff to Bring

Most of the essential and basic items can be easily obtained from stores like TESCO, Sainsbury, Home bargains etc. Travel light with stuff that you need. If you are planning to bring food-based items, remember to check the full list of restricted food items on <https://www.gov.uk/bringing-food-into-great-britain>.

- Good pair of walking shoes/boots
- Waterproof jacket that protects you from both the rain and cold
- UK Converter/adapters for your devices (*if needed*)

UK SIM

If it is worth it, activate an international pack of up to 30 days of call time and data roaming on your current international SIM. This also ensures you have internet without relying on Wifi at airports and in buses. If not, UK SIMs cards are available for purchase at UK airports and stores across the country.

It's worth contemplating the purchase of a SIM card with a UK phone number during your time in the UK. This can help reduce expenses for phone calls and data usage within the UK. Additionally, having a UK phone number might be required for specific services, albeit on rare occasions.

You have the option to either utilize a 'pay-as-you-go' package or enter into a monthly contract. Phone companies often present favourable deals for international students. More information can be found [here](#).

Hot Tip for international students: Purchase a Post-Paid SIM Card upon arrival and set it up asap and then decide what your options are. Porting of numbers between service providers are easily done!

Bank Account & Payments within UK

Cards are preferred over cash in most places in the UK and although you are generally not required to open a UK bank account, unless certain conditions for scholarship payments apply, having one could prove beneficial in order to avoid high exchange rates. Numerous banks with branches in Oxford are available, and you can access further information about them on the [University's webpage](#).

To initiate the process of opening a UK bank account, you'll typically need to visit a branch (although a few banks allow online applications) and furnish them with documents such as a letter from the University/college affirming your status (obtainable from the College Office). Additional details about this procedure can be found [here](#), as well as on the respective bank websites.

However, it can take **up to a month to open an account**, possibly another month or so to get your physical card followed by your card PIN (its bonkers!) So always have a **standby resource ready** before you start. Hence, it is definitely worthwhile to setup a digital bank account like Revolut that allows you to interconvert currency and carry a physical card preloaded that you could use for contactless payments here while sorting out creation of a bank account. Thomas Cook is another alternative. They offer you the financial flexibility and peace of mind whilst the banks go through the high volume of applications during first weeks of term.

TRAVELLING TO OXFORD

The Airline bus service is the most reliable and cost-efficient mode of transport from Heathrow/Gatwick to Oxford. If you are arriving via bus, the stop you should be alighting at would be Gloucester Green. The other mode of arrival is via the train from London Paddington Station (Great Western Railway) or Marylebone (Chiltern Railway) to Oxford. Of late, there have been loads of train strikes so please check in advance if train strikes are happening and reroute yourself accordingly.

We highly advise everyone to arrive within the day so that there will be people around and about that will be around to help you, especially if it's your first time to Oxford.

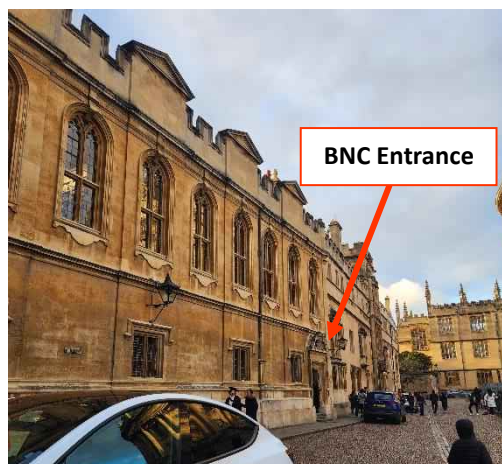
If it is unavoidable that you can only arrive late at night, please email college to ask if there is a possibility for the provision of a Welfare Taxi. Please note that this will be on a case-by-case basis and at the discretion of college. Other cab services in Oxford are 001, Royal Cabs and Free Now.

POST ARRIVAL

Checking in

Upon arrival to Oxford and settling down, your priority is to check in with college office and print a copy of proof of enrolment. If you are staying in college accommodation either at Hollybush or St Cross Annex, collect your started kit from the Porter's lodge (the little guard house looking office on the right as you enter Brasenose).

Entering Brasenose College is like entering the room of requirements in Harry Potter in the Order of the Phoenix. The large wooden door directly situated at High Street is inaccessible. Entrance to Brasenose lies at along St. Mary's Passage. Keep left and therein you will reach a large wooden door (with a lamp hanging above) across from the Radcliffe Camera. Push the large door (it is pretty heavy) and the entrance you seek shall be found.



Living Essentials

Medicines, toiletries, cosmetics: Boots and Superdrug

Stationery and electronics: WH Smith, Ryman, Hobbycraft

Bedding, cookware, tableware and study utilities:

- Affordable: Home Bargains, H&M Home, Primark and Dunelm
- Mid to Premium: John Lewis, Waitrose and M&S Home

Groceries:

- Affordable buys: Aldi's, ASDA, Home Bargains
- Easily accessible and affordable: Sainsbury's, CO-OP and Tesco
- Premium and specialty ingredients: M&S, Waitrose, Morrisons

Hot Tip: Having the membership cards and apps of these stores will give access to better discounts, student offers etc. Ask for student discounts at non-franchise stores as well and show your student ID/BOD card.

Gyms

Being a member of Brasenose College means you get gym membership at Iffley gym located on Iffley Road. This includes use of the gym facilities there but does not include use of the swimming pool. To activate your membership simply show up to the gym with your BOD card and they will look after you!

Other popular gyms in city centre are Buzz Gym and Pure Gym located close to the Westgate shopping centre, which often offer student deals.

Gown

A gown is an important part of full academic dress worn to the matriculation in addition to any in-person examinations (though we've heard of individuals wearing them for online exams too, no judgment). The gown is part of Oxford University's 'sub fusc' attire (details on sub fusc can be found at the [University's webpage](#)). Most students decide to purchase their gowns for the duration of their time here as there are plenty of occasions where you will definitely need a gown – especially attending formal dinners at colleges and at formal exchanges. We recommend labelling your gowns and do not leave them in the HCR common room unattended!



The most popular suppliers of Oxford gowns are listed below, and they do offer package deals during fresher's week for all incoming students!

- Walters (10 Turl Street): <https://www.walters-oxford.co.uk/>
- Shepherd & Woodward (109-113 High Street): <https://www.shepherdandwoodward.co.uk/>
- Ede & Ravenscroft (119 High Street): <https://www.edeandravenscroft.com/>

Hot Tip: Sign-up for a locker at the HCR and store your gowns there for convenience. That way you won't forget your gown when attending formal dinners at BNC!

Bike

One of the most common modes of transport in Oxford is cycling. The majority of people tend to buy second hand bicycles, and then sell them on when they leave the city as there is always demand. Suggestions for where to look for bicycles include:

- New bicycles: BrokenSpoke (close to Holly Bush Row – they offer also much cheaper option of a DIY workshop space where you can fix your bike supported by volunteer's bike mechanics), Reg Taylors, Walton Street Cycles, Cycle King
- 2nd hand bicycles: BYKE (previously Oxbikes, possible to buy a bike online, find it, and unlock it on your own on the very same day), Gumtree, Facebook Marketplace

For bike maintenance, the HCR has a bike pump for pumping tires. Any other repairs should be brought to a repair shop such as BrokenSpoke, Reg Taylors or any of the above listed.

Again, good locks (such as D locks) are absolutely essential, and you should always lock your bike or do not leave it unattended. The general rule is "cheap bike... expensive lock!".

Oxford Vibe

Here's your inside scoop on the city. Ready to dive into the Oxford buzz?

Oxford's Social Staples

- **Formal Exchanges:** Dive into another college for an evening, mingle with a different crowd, and savor some delightful food. It's an Oxford tradition you can't miss. We've got some exchanges lined up, but if you aim for the Formal Exchange Challenge (hitting all colleges for a formal), you'll want to network like a pro.
- **Club Meets:** From hard-hitting debate societies to offbeat clubs, there's a crew for everyone. The Freshers' Week Fair is your golden ticket to explore.
- **Wine & Tea Gatherings:** Classic Oxford. Relaxed convos over a cuppa or a glass. We've got events at Brasenose, but there's also a buffet of tea and wine appreciation societies around. Remember to check out the SU fair held on 0th Week for a whole range of societies to choose from.
- **Bops:** Certain colleges throw killer bops. Think epic tunes and a mix of drinks (including elderflower juice).
- **Second Desserts:** Wrapped up your formal? Head to the Old Library on select nights. Let's chat with wine, cheese (Brasenose's truffle manchego is to die for), and chocolates in hand.

Restaurants & Food

Cowley: Further down the Magdalene Bridge, Cowley is an area bustling with activity and is a great place to find cuisines from all over the world as well as convenience stores that stock specialty ingredients from Asia, southern Europe etc.

Gloucester Green Market: Check out the weekly farmer's market on Wednesdays for not only fresh, seasonal and affordable produce but also to avoid plastic-packaged fruits and veg. Thrice a week, you will find a vibrant open market and food stalls from across the globe.

George Street and **Cornmarket Street** for easily accessible and quick meals as well as restaurant dining.

Nearby Shops for Quick Grabs

- **Tesco** (Magdalen Street): Perfect for late-night munchies or grabbing a quick lunch.
- **Sainsbury's** (Magdalen Street or The Plain Roundabout): When Tesco's swamped, or you just fancy a change.
- **Marks & Spencer** (Queen St): For a variety of snacks, beverages and ready-to-go meals.

Cafes and Hangouts

Coffee & Tea Havens:

- **Italiano (Broad Street):** Small little café with a secret garden within its midst
- **Jericho Coffee Traders (High Street):** Your quick coffee break, right across from BNC
- **Love Coffe Co. (High Street):** Amazing Matcha, cakes and more
- **Knoops Hot Chocolate:** Chocolate Paradise for Serious Hot Chocolate lovers!
- **North Parade Road Cafes:** Quaint Road, quietly tucked away near St Antony's College boasting cafes like Barefoot and Vinny's.
- **The Missing Bean:** Top-tier, freshly roasted coffee.
- **The Rose:** Ideal for a classic afternoon tea vibe.
- **Vaults & Garden:** In the University Church, serving organic treats and brews.

Board Game Cafés:

- **Thirsty Meeples:** Dive into a sea of games while sipping on tasty non-alcoholic mixes.
- **The Cape of Good Hope:** Board game Mondays.
- **The HCR:** there is a selection of boardgames in the HCR for common use.

Literary Spaces:

- **Blackwell's:** Bookstore and event space in one.
- **Waterstones:** Multiple floors and a great view from the cafe.
- **Last Bookshop Jericho:** Affordable second-hand books & Vintage Collections
- **Bookstop Magdalene Street:** Affordable second-hand books & Vintage Collections

Greens and Gardens:

- **Port Meadow:** An expansive stretch perfect for walks and picnics.
- **Botanic Gardens:** For those tranquil, introspective moments.
- **University Parks:** A nice walk, with lots of sports fields.
- **Christ Church Meadows:** Lovely walk by the river, behind Christ Church college.
- **South Parks:** Open space, the ideal picnic spot.

Culture Corners:

- **Modern Art Oxford:** Contemporary art with regular events.
- **Ashmolean Museum:** Dive into art and history. Founded by a Brasenose alum.
- **Pitt Rivers & Natural History Museum:** A double-whammy of intriguing exhibits. From dinosaurs to flutes from around the world.
- **Museum of History of Science:** Explore the evolution of scientific wonders.
- **Uncomfortable Oxford Tours:** Spilling the unsaid truths about how Oxford University became what it is today.

Pubs

Oxford's pub scene is vast and diverse, and each establishment has its own charm and legacy. Exploring these can lead to the discovery of some hidden gems in the city! Get down and take your time exploring all the pubs in every nook and cranny of Oxford. Follow a guided map, cross out pubs of your list and attend pub quiz nights! Here are some BNC faves:

- **The Turf Tavern:** Nestled in a hidden alley, this historic establishment is renowned amongst students and boasts of patrons like cast of Harry Potter.
- **The Bear Inn:** One of Oxford's most ancient pubs, dating back to 1242, it is renowned for its expansive collection of ties and its warm ambiance.
- **The Lamb & Flag:** Located on St Giles, it was a regular spot for the literary group, "The Inklings".
- **The King's Arms:** Situated near the Bodleian Library, this pub is a bustling spot, frequented by both locals and tourists, and is celebrated for its unique charm and diverse range of beers.
- **The White Horse:** A snug, quintessential British pub, its fame is not just limited to its ales, but also its appearances on TV shows like "Inspector Morse".
- **The Head of the River:** With a vantage spot by the Thames, this pub is a popular choice, especially during the sunnier days, offering a picturesque view.
- **The Perch:** Located in Binsey, it's a scenic pub with sprawling gardens and is accessible via a delightful stroll through Port Meadow.
- **The Trout Inn:** Nestled in Wolvercote, this pub is known for its beautiful riverside setting and has made appearances on shows like "Inspector Morse" and in Philip Pullman's work.
- **The Chequers:** Centrally located, it boasts a rich range of ales and a history that dates back to the 1200s.
- **Gardeners Arms:** A completely vegetarian PUB, WHAT!!

BrazenoTips

Keep a keen eye on your weekly HCR newsletter handcrafted by your VP Secretary- they're your goldmine for events and happenings, on your way out of college, pause and sift through the college noticeboard on the right and lastly, BNC Intranet will be your go to for everything in the upcoming months!

Oxford's a sweet mix of the time-honored and the brand new. Relish the traditions, but don't shy away from creating some of your own memories.

While you're soaking in the vibes, remember to balance it out with some study sprints and self-care pauses.

Here's to making the most of your Oxford journey! *Ps. Aiming for the 🌟 is what we do on the side.*

USEFFUL INFORMATION

College Funds

Oxford is an expensive place to live. If you need financial assistance for your living or work situation, there are a variety of funds and grants that you can access through the college or the wider University. Remember, help is always available and you only need to ask for it.

ACCESS FUND: This is a University-wide fund; eligibility forms will be obtainable from the College Office in Michaelmas Term. Students must take out a loan before they can be eligible for Access Funds.

GRADUATE RESEARCH GRANTS: The College awards research grants to Graduate students for research-related expenses such as attendance at relevant conferences, research trips, and the purchase of books or equipment to support their research. A graduate on a **one-year course** has an allowance of **up to £150**, a graduate on a **two-year course** is allowed up to **£300**, and a **DPHil student** has an allowance of up to **£975** for the entirety of their degree. **2nd year BM students** can apply for up to **£200 in their first year** and up to **£150** in their **2nd year**, towards the costs of **medical equipment and books**, and may apply for up to **£450** toward the cost of their **clinical elective**.

COLLEGE GRANTS/STUDENT HARDSHIP FUND: The College Accountant is the College's Hardship Officer and can be contacted for advice in cases of unexpected financial difficulty.

ANNUAL FUND/TRAVEL GRANTS: These grants are awarded by the college to students who demonstrate a shortfall in funding for significant academic projects, most often for research projects. Regarding the annual fund, you will receive information from the Senior Tutor and applications are usually to be submitted at the beginning of each term.

SPORTS FUNDS: The Amalgamated Sports Fund and HCR Sports Fund cover some expenses incurred by students representing the college in sport competitions, such as competition entries, transport, kit, etc. During the year you will be informed by the HCR about the application procedures and the expenses you can claim back.

BRAZEN ARTS FUND: An art-orientated equivalent of the Sports Fund above - £5,000 available to support arts activities within college, or to help fund individual artistic activities outside college. Past grants have been made to support common room productions, cover speaker fees, and to help students with expenses incurred in taking a show to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival or performing in the OUDS tour of Japan. The fund is overseen by both the JCR and HCR Arts Reps, from whom more information is available about applying.

Glossary & Abbreviations

There are a lot of phrases intimately related to College and University life in Oxford that don't occur regularly (if at all!) outside of its influence. The list is endless and for sanity sake we've picked out a glossary of the key phrases and acronyms that will be most beneficial for you as freshers.

BNC The most common way to refer to Brasenose.

Batels. An invoice or your termly bill, including college and university fees, rent for college accommodation, and any other additional charges. Batels are issued at the beginning of each term. If you have any problems paying, it is wise to tell the Bursary, who are quite good about deferring payment. It is best to speak with the college accountant, if you have any problems with Batels and payments. Overdue payment of Batels without informing the Bursary is a finable offense.

Bod Card. The colloquial name for your university card. Technically, the card that gives you borrowing (and, in many cases, entry) privileges at the Bodleian Library and many departmental or college libraries around Oxford. It is also informally considered your main "student ID" from Oxford, because no other body issues such an identification. It carries a digitised photograph, in colour, which you provide on a form that is sent to the college before your arrival. Make sure not to staple over your head, or it will stay in the picture!

Bop. Oxford-speak for a disco, "rave" or raucous party. Bops have fancy dress themes such as 'World Domination,' 'Welcome to the Jungle' or 'Alice in Wonderland,' and people often go bold and loud with their themed costumes. Bops are known for cheap drinks, cheesy music, and questionable dancing. It's safe to say that there's a bop for every occasion, and every occasion seems to demand a bop!

Blurbs. A series of informal evening talks hosted by the HCR, in which a member of the HCR and SCR each present their research pitched to a general audience, so it is better to go to the topics which you know less about. Well worth going to, especially since there is an amazing High Table meal afterwards.

Dean and Junior Deans. They deal with discipline and general supervision of college social events. The Junior Deans are usually two graduates who make sure that College rules are enforced, especially after the Bar shuts at night.

Entz. Short for entertainment, i.e. bops, raves, quiz nights etc.

Exchange dinners. The HCR organises a few exchange dinners per term. Sign up for a fun night at formal in another college and chance to get to know new people!

Fob. This electronic key allows you access into college (after hours), the HCR, the college library, and the college accommodation (if you live there).

Formal hall. Formal 3 course dinners provided by colleges. Brasenose has formals on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays. These must be booked in advance, on Upay. Wear your gown over regular clothes to Brasenose formals. Non-college members shouldn't wear

gowns. Wine is not provided but if you want to bring your own, it must be bought in the college bar.

HCR The Hulme Common Room, Brasenose's Graduate Common room. Most colleges call their graduate common room the Middle Common Room (MCR) or Graduate Common Room (GCR), so don't get confused. The words "HCR," "SCR" and "JCR" can all be used to refer both to the people who belong to these common rooms and the rooms themselves.

ITL In the Lodge.

JCR The Junior Common Room, which is composed of both undergraduates and graduates. You will automatically be a member of the JCR. It is primarily run by and for undergraduates, however.

Matriculation. This is the procedure by which you formally become a member of the University. The Vice-Chancellor welcomes you to the University, says a few words in Latin, and that's that. You must wear Sub-Fusc for this.

Pidge. Your college post box, situated in the Porter's Lodge. You will share this with another person. Graduate pidges are on the left-hand side at the back of the lodge. Check the little square boxes with the correct initial if you are expecting a parcel, then you will need to sign for it.

Punts. Flat-bottomed boats propelled using a long pole. They seat five and the HCR usually has a scheme available for members to opt in to use the punts whenever they want. Punting is one of the highlights of summer in Oxford.

SCR. The Senior Common Room. All the tutors and dons are members.

Scouts. These are College staff who clean your room and empty your bin. If you do not want to be disturbed in the morning, leave your bin outside your door.

Second Desserts. This is commonly used misnomer in BNC used to describe the desserts provided by the HCR after formal hall (correctly, they are simply "desserts"). These occur after exchange dinners, graduate dinners, guest dinners and Blurbs. They include copious amounts of port, non-alcoholic drinks, chocolates, nuts, and a fine selection of cheeses.

Sub-Fusc. This is a traditional form of dress, worn for Matriculation, University exams, graduation and if you ever have to make a formal visit to the Proctors. Subfusc for men is a dark suit, white shirt, white bow tie and black shoes and socks. For women, you need dark skirt or trousers, white blouse, black tie, and black shoes and stockings. Finally, everyone wears their gown and carries their mortarboard, but women have the option of wearing cloth caps. Details of the type of gown can be found in the Blue Book.

Tute. Short for "tutorial" - an hour-long class with your tutor.

Upay. This is an electronic system whereby you can top up your bod card meal balance, and book college formal dinners. Sign up online when you get to Oxford and sign up for formals in advance, spaces go quickly!

Editor-in-Chief's Closing Note

Dearest Brasenose HCR Freshers,

I hope that this little handbook has done its job of introducing you to what can be expected upon pre/post arrival at Brasenose and Oxford. This non-exhaustive succinct guide was created with the sole purpose to help all of our incoming grad students settle down faster seamlessly. It is not too long ago that we all have been in the exact same position as you, so we completely understand how scary and anxious everything seems to be in the beginning. I know it feels parallel to what Harry felt going to Hogwarts for the first time. I promise you that you will be all settled in before Halloween! (Some of you might have already found spots to go haunted house hunting by then). We are always there to help each other in our HCR community, no question is a stupid question!

There is a Fresher's Group chat on WhatsApp for all freshies to get in touch with each other which you can join [here](#). This will be one of the two modes by which I will communicate information to you about events that we have lined up for Fresher's week (25th Sept – 8th Oct). The other will be your BNC email address. The Whatsapp chat is part of our new BNC HCR WhatsApp community channel, where we will have other HCR interest group chat as well as the main HCR group chat for the upcoming 23/24 academic year. Looking forward to meeting all of you and having a blast in this new academic year.

This handbook would have not been possible without the following amazing current and former HCR members: Krzysiek Riedl, Rachel Keane, Aditi Upmanyu and Christian Norton.

On behalf of everyone on the committee, I wish you all the very best as you embark on your new journey here in Brasenose and lastly, extending a warm welcome to the HCR family from all of our HCR members.

Mischief Managed 🐾,



Shoba Laxmi

HCR Vice-President Secretary
Fresher's & IT Rep Cover
Brasenose College



Welcome to our HCR Community