

HCR Freshers Guide 2025/2026



Hulme Common Room
Brasenose College
Radcliffe Square, OX14AJ
<https://www.bnc.ox.ac.uk/>

Brasenostrials Guide

INTRODUCTION	1
The Hulme Common Room (HCR)	2
HCR Committee	2
HCR General Meetings (GM)	5
GRADUATE ACCOMMODATION	5
Location	5
Domestic Facilities	6
Rules & Regulations	8
COLLEGE LIFE	9
Meals & UPay	9
On-Site Activities & Facilities	10
Useful College Contact Details	11
ADMINISTRATION, WELFARE & SUPPORT	12
Health	12
College Administration	12
Support: In & Out of College	13
Racial/Ethnic Diversity	14
Women in BNC	14
LGBTQ+	14
GENERAL OXFORD INFORMATION	15
PRE-ARRIVAL (International Students)	15
TRAVELLING TO OXFORD	17
POST ARRIVAL	18
Checking in	18
Living Essentials	18
Gyms	18
Gowns	19
Bike	19
OXFORD VIBEZ	20
Oxford's Social Staples	20
Restaurants & Food	20
Nearby Shops for Quick Grabs	20
Cafes and Hangouts	21
Pubs	22
Brasenose Tips	22
USEFUL INFORMATION	23
College Funds	23
Glossary & Abbreviations	24

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Brasenose College, affectionately known as BNC, 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 is perfectly normal, and there will be others who share similar sentiments to you. You will meet senior graduate students around BNC and in Oxford who are all 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 fantastic 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.



(Keep an eye on the [Freshers' Week timetables](#) to keep up to date with the schedule of activities as we prepare to welcome you!)

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](#) (this will be used only until October to easily access all of the information that will be useful to you as you prepare to arrive, after that everything can continue to be found on the BNC Intranet) In addition, the Blue Book (College Information and Regulations) available on the [HCR website](#) and [BNC Intranet](#) (accessed with your SSO) contains important regulations about being a member of Brasenose College. We recommend that all incoming students browse through it prior to arrival. The 25/26 version will be uploaded once available.

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 the place where graduate students gather, and the phrase is commonly used in reference to the entire BNC graduate student body. The definition of “graduate” is vague, however. If you are studying for a higher degree, a second B.A., are a mature student, a “junior year abroad” 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. 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 the HCR Term Card, where all of the social events in the HCR will be posted)! *(You will receive an invitation to add the term card to your Outlook calendar towards the beginning of the term, and it will be available on the BNC Intranet as well.)*

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 organise 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: Thyra Altunin

Hi everyone! My name is Thyra and I am a third-year DPhil in Classics studying the poetic music of the ancient world. I am your HCR President this year and I am here to support our vibrant graduate community at Brasenose in every way I can—whether that means advocating for your needs, helping you settle in, or just being a friendly face around college. I'm really excited to get to know each of you, and to work with the HCR Committee to make this year welcoming, inclusive, and full of good memories. Please don't hesitate to reach out—whether you have questions, ideas, or just want to grab a coffee!

Treasurer (Vice-President): Mario Marcos Losada

Hey everyone! I'm Mario and I'll be starting my second year of my DPhil in maths. As the HCR treasurer I manage the budget to make sure we have as many amazing events and initiatives as possible. Whether you would like the HCR to buy something in particular, have any questions about anything or simply fancy a chat, do come say hi!! Can't wait to meet you all!!



E&D Officer: Ayisha Khalid

Hello! I'm Ayisha, a second year DPhil student in epidemiology. As your E&D Officer, I am to make college a safe, welcoming, and inclusive space that celebrates the diversity of all its students. Very happy to hear any concerns or ideas. Welcome to Brasenose!!



Welfare Officer: Kexin Xu

Hi, I am Kexin (pronounced Keh-Shin) and I am a third-year DPhil student in Computational Biology at the Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine at the John Radcliffe Hospital. I have been a trained Peer Supporter for one year and I am here to provide you with welfare support, organize welfare events, or just for a chat. In my spare time, I like to do cycling, badminton, squash, tennis, cooking, and watch movies.

Welfare Officer: Josephine Douglas

Hello everyone!! My name is Josephine and I'm a second year DPhil student in Molecular and Cellular Medicine from Northern Ireland. In my spare time you can find me hunting down Oxford's best sweet treats, getting cozy with a good film or book, or playing guitar! As one of your Welfare Officers and HCR Peer Supporters I'm here to help with anything (seriously, nothing is too big or too small), whether you have a concern, an idea for improving welfare, or you'd just like to have a chat. I also organize events and initiatives to support wellbeing and help you destress including welfare teas, crafts, and even alpacas! Looking forward to welcoming you all to Brasenose!!



Social Secretary: Jordan Kramer

Hi! My name is Jordan Kramer, and I'm starting my third year as a DPhil in immunology! I'm also the BNC social secretary, so I'm responsible for the various chaotic events happening around college, from paintball and poker night to our formal exchanges! Feel free to reach out if you want to plan or set up an event— I love new ideas and maximum adventure.

Social Secretary: Sanskar Ranglani

Hi! I am Sanskar, a DPhil student in Pharmacology and your social secretary! I enjoy organizing events that bring the HCR community together and look forward to seeing new brasenostriils finding the same energy and environment in the HCR that I first encountered upon my arrival at Brasenose.



Wine and Cheese Representative: Sam Bealing

Hello, my name is Sam and I am a 5th year Medical student from Manchester! I have enjoyed being the Wine and Cheese Rep, especially as I worked in a cheese & wine deli during my undergraduate vacations. I organize two Wine & Cheese events a term... which are free events where you can try cool and unique cheeses and wines. I look forward to seeing you in Michaelmas and to hear your ideal cheese boards!

Arts Officer: Sophie Cardin

Sophie is an incoming first year DPhil student in Politics writing and thinking about utopia, diaspora, and the history of Yiddish political thought. She likes old books and good bread. Sophie enjoys writing poetry, doing pottery, and people-watching.



Library Representative: Martin Lindner

Hey Everybody! I'm Martin, I'm a third year DPhil student in German Literature. As the Library Rep, you can approach me about any questions regarding our beautiful college library. If you have any concerns about noise, book recommendations or any other feedback – I will be more than happy to answer them and represent your voice in the library committee. Looking forward to meeting you all very soon!

We are always looking for enthusiastic individuals with a passion to serve the HCR community. Check out the HCR website for [vacant positions](#) (scroll to the bottom of the page) and feel free to approach Thyra, Mario, or anyone else on the committee to know more about those positions.

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 President or 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 ACCOMMODATION

Location

Brasenose graduate students who live in College accommodation typically live in one of two locations: St Cross Annexe or Hollybush Row (HBR). For 25/26 we also have some graduate students living at James Mellon Hall (JMH), which is an Oriel College graduate annexe.

A word of warning: DO NOT give St. Cross, Hollybush Row or JMH 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 St. Cross, Hollybush Row or JMH 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 1JH

For those of you living in **Hollybush Row**, **please note that you are responsible for tidying your rooms and kitchens** that you share. Feel free to contact our BNC accommodation manager (accommodation@bnc.ox.ac.uk) to request cleaning cloths, rubbish/recycling bags, or if you run into any problems regarding this.

Students living in James Mellon Hall will be sent separate accommodation information about their arrangements. Please get in touch with the Accommodation Manager if you have any questions and aren't sure who to contact.

Domestic Facilities

1. Laundry

St. Cross: Washers and dryers are available in an adjacent outbuilding 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 – please bring your own iron (there is an iron with the ironing board, but it can be temperamental)

Hollybush Row: There are two washers and dryers available on the top floor (4th level), which use 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.

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 unlabeled 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 in the HCR and the BNC Library. In addition, there

is a printer in St. Cross Annexe (Staircase 1, 2nd floor) These can be accessed through the printing portal: <https://print.bnc.ox.ac.uk/> and incur a standard charge which is added to your batels payment at the end of term. More info can be found on the [intranet](#) (accessed via SSO).

Bicycles

Brasenose College and the two graduate accommodations are centrally located, so most places are accessible on foot. There are bike racks at the St. Cross Annexe, Hollybush Row and around BNC (within BNC, 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. You should also 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 24/25 Blue Book can be accessed easily via the [HCR website](#) as well as [the College intranet](#). The 25/26 version will be made available in due course. 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. (But if you do, there's a doorbell at the main gate on the main site and you can ask the Porters to let you in!)
- Any gathering of more than 10 people in a college room requires permission from the Dean and the notification of the Porters. Failure to obtain this can result in substantial fines. [The online form is available on the intranet.](#)
- 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.

Please ensure that you keep your current address and phone number (particularly if you are living out) and emergency contact details up to date via [Student Self Service](#).

COLLEGE LIFE

Meals & UPay

Breakfast is available in halls from **8:00 to 9:00 am Monday - Friday** and is replaced with **Brunch** from **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 meal options, 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 start at **7:15 pm on Tuesdays and Fridays, and 7:30 pm 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 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 it's grad dinner), so it's first-come, first-served – 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 them. 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 of are our College libraries, computing office, sports and music facilities, and the active College chapel.

- **THE PORTERS LODGE**

Open 24 hours a day, this is a very busy part of the College and is 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.

- **BOOKABLE SPACES**

You can book rooms for events, functions, soirees, and anything else using the Decanal Booking form, which is available on the intranet [here](#). Non-alcoholic events need three 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 a specific time. More information about BNC libraries can be found [here](#).

Useful College Contact Details

- **Academic-related:** Contact our College Officers (**Dr Bronwen**) at college.office@bnc.ox.ac.uk for all things academic-related, eg signing and approving student status, bod card replacement, academic administration, etc.
- **Accommodation:** Our Accommodation Manager is your first port of call for anything related to your room, from answering questions and sorting out any issues or requests. You can easily contact them via email: accommodation@bnc.ox.ac.uk, or you can [submit a maintenance request directly](#). 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 the BNC IT department by emailing it.support@bnc.ox.ac.uk. Support hours information available [here](#).
- **Bar, Kitchen and UPay:** Email the **Buttery** (buttery@bnc.ox.ac.uk) and they may be able to help.
- **Non-urgent security issues:** drop the lodge at porter@bnc.ox.ac.uk or Andy Talbot (Head of Security) andrew.talbot@bnc.ox.ac.uk an 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 the **HCR Domestic Officer** at hcr-domestic@bnc.ox.ac.uk (email the **HCR President** when there is no HCR Domestic Officer in office at hcr-president@bnc.ox.ac.uk)

ADMINISTRATION, WELFARE & SUPPORT

Health

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

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

You should complete registration with the GP before you arrive. You can do this online here: <https://www.campusdoctor.co.uk/oxford/>. If you have any questions about changing GP (or are already registered with an Oxford GP, please get in touch with the College Office (college.office@bnc.ox.ac.uk)

Appointments to see a GP can be made by telephone, visiting the Jericho Health Centre, or through the College Nurse, Kinneret Milgrom. More information on how to book an appointment can be found [here](#).

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 COLLEGE OFFICE should be contacted for:

- The Graduate Administrator is Bronwen Tomkinson (college.office@bnc.ox.ac.uk)
- Any queries about examination entries or extensions.
- Obtaining proof of residence and enrolment at Brasenose.
- Any queries about booking your graduation ceremony
- Enquiring about Student Support Funding or Grants available through the College or University.

Asking any general questions about College and life as a Graduate student – they normally know where to direct you, even if they don't have the answer directly.

THE FINANCE BURSARY is contacted for:

- **Paying Batels** and addressing any queries about them.
- Help with **student funding/support issues**. Keep in mind that you are expected to pay your Batels on time. If there are problems, get in touch with the Finance Bursary sooner rather than later (financial.support@bnc.ox.ac.uk)

THE DOMESTIC BURSAR can be contacted for:

- Sorting out any **problems with your college accommodation**. You can also submit a maintenance request directly to the Workshop team [here](#).
- Asking about vacation residence.

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 (all of this information is also in the HCR Welfare Provisions guide that was sent out in the same email as this handbook):

- 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** will 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. He will be more than happy for you to consult over academic, financial, or other problems.
- We have a **College Counsellor**, Sebastian, who offers **free counselling sessions** in term time. Further information can be found on the intranet [here](#)
- 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 (weeks 0 – 9). Further information [here](#).
- 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 email 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.
- **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 continuing to support 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 BNC.

LGBTQ+

Oxford University Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Society, LBGBTSoc, 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 LBGBTSoc in the first few weeks. New environments can be lonely and intimidating, but they 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 Officers, 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).

GENERAL OXFORD INFORMATION

Oxford Terms

MICHAELMAS: The first term—October 12 to December 7, 2025.

HILARY: The second term—January 18 to March 14, 2026.

TRINITY: The third term—April 26 to June 20, 2026.

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.

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 the UK in general extremely diverse, multicultural, 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-president@bnc.ox.ac.uk if you need someone to point you in the right direction!

Immigration and visas

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, 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.

Visas

Visas will now all be e-Visas. When you enrol at the College Office, you will be asked to generate a 'share code' in order to prove your immigration status if you are an international student. You can generate this code at this website here: <https://www.gov.uk/evisa/view-evisa-get-share-code-prove-immigration-status>

Please check with Oxford's VISA office if you have any questions (student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk)

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 the 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 SIM 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 utilise 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](#).

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 stamped enrolment certificate from the University/College affirming your status (obtainable from Student [Self Service](#) once you have enrolled, and then stamped by 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. So always have a **standby resource ready** before you start. Hence, it is definitely worthwhile to set up 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 the 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 the 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 alight at is 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 who will be around to help you, especially if it's your first time in Oxford.

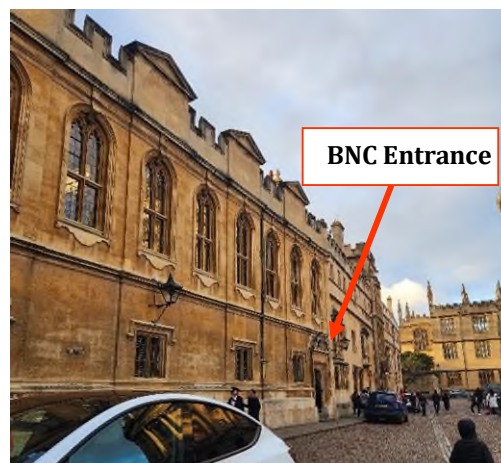
If it is unavoidable that you can only arrive late at night, please email College to ask if there is a possibility for the provision of a Welfare Taxi. Please note that this will be on a case-by-case basis and at the discretion of College. Other cab services in Oxford are 001, Royal Cabs and Free Now.

POST ARRIVAL

Checking in

Upon arrival in Oxford and settling down, your priority is to complete enrolment in the College office and print a copy of proof of enrolment. If you are staying in college accommodation, either at Hollybush or St Cross Annexe, collect your fob from the Porter's lodge (the door on the right as you enter Brasenose).*

Entering Brasenose College for the first time can be a bit counterintuitive. The large wooden door situated directly on High Street (where Google Maps will take you if you put in Brasenose College) is inaccessible. Entrance to Brasenose lies along St. Mary's Passage (Put in 1 Radcliffe Sq, Oxford, OX14AH



<https://maps.app.goo.gl/JHvy5JCPrkVxpzr9> for the correct entrance in the Radcliffe Square). It will be a large wooden door on the left, directly opposite the Radcliffe Camera. Push the large door (it is pretty heavy), and you will find the entrance to our beautiful college!

*Graduates living at JMH will be sent separate arrival information by email.

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

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 not leaving them in the HCR common room unattended! If you are running late to an event in College where you absolutely need a gown and you have forgotten it, the lodge has some gowns that are available to borrow. (Please make sure to return them when you are finished!)

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/>

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 also offer a much cheaper option of a DIY workshop space where you can fix your bike, supported by volunteer bike mechanics), Reg Taylors, Walton Street Cycles, Cycle King.
- 2nd hand bicycles: OxBykes (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!". You also must have front and rear bike lights fitted so you are not breaching highway safety rules.

OXFORD VIBEZ

Here's your inside scoop on the city!

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, and chocolates in hand.

Restaurants & Food

- **Cowley:** Further down the Magdalen 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 Coffee Co. (High Street):** Amazing Coffee, Chai Latte's, 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. (Possibly one of the most iconic café's in Oxford!)

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 board games in the HCR for common use.

Literary Spaces:

- **Blackwell's:** Bookstore, café, and event space in one.
- **Last Bookshop Jericho:** Affordable second-hand books & Vintage Collections
- **Bookstop Magdalen 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 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.

Brasenose Tips

Keep a keen eye on your emails from College and occasionally from the President, as 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, the [BNC Intranet](#) will be your go-to for everything!

Oxford is a sweet mix of both the time-honoured 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.

USEFUL 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.

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 £225, a graduate on a two-year course is allowed up to £450, and a DPhil student has an allowance of up to £975 for the entirety of their degree (not per year). 2nd year BM students can apply for up to £300 in their first year and up to £250 in their 2nd year, towards the costs of medical equipment and books, and may apply for up to £1,000 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 (financial.support@bnc.ox.ac.uk)

STUDENT SUPPORT FUNDING

Each term, the College runs a round of Student Support Funding applications. For academic activities, graduates are expected to use their Graduate Research Allowance first. Once this has been used, graduates can apply for SSF funding for expenses such as conference attendance, book purchases, fieldwork costs. The fund can also be used to cover 50% of the cost of Language courses taken via the University's Language Centre. Information will be sent out in 0th week of each term, so keep an eye on your emails!

Travel grant applications will run in Hilary Term each year – adverts go out by email so keep an eye on these then too.

There are also specific funds for sport and arts related activities, which run each term. Further information will be circulated by email by the College Office in 0th week of every term.

Glossary & Abbreviations

There are a lot of phrases intimately related to College and University life in Oxford that don't occur regularly outside of its influence. The list is endless, and for sanity's 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 can then discuss your options. It is best to speak with the Financial Director 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 entry (and, in many cases, borrowing) 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 via the Graduate Admissions portal once your place is fully confirmed. 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 can help with welfare issues etc,

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

Exchange dinners. The HCR organizes 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 in term time. 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.

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 Fellows 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 a 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 is either a dark suit, white shirt, white bow tie and black shoes and socks, or dark skirt or trousers, white blouse, black tie, and black shoes and tights. 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!