

the
unofficial
freshers' guide
2024

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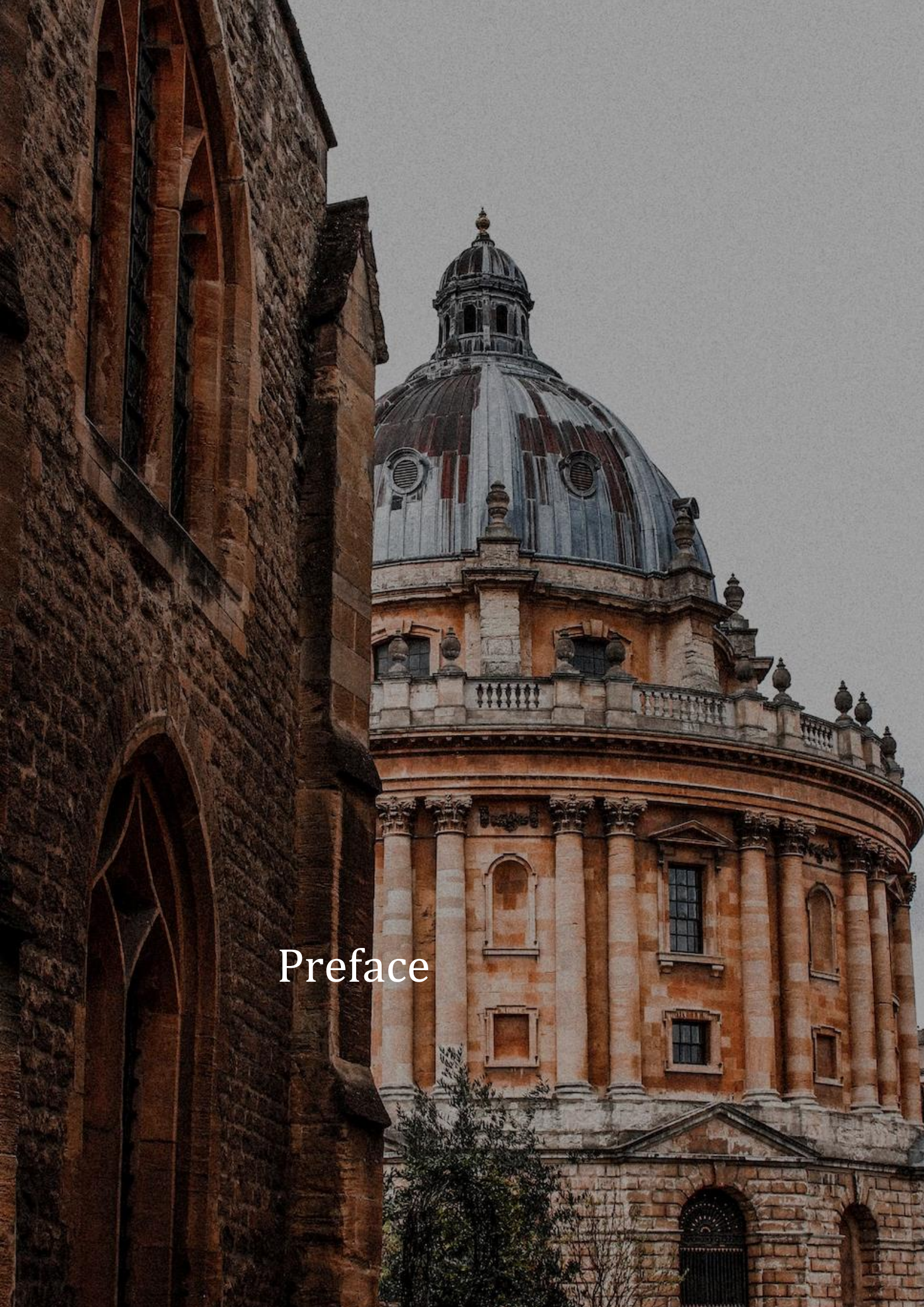
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Preface

Welcome from your Freshers' Week chairs

Bradley Croucher (JCR Vice-President, Freshers' Week Co-Chair)

Hey! I'm Brad, a third-year Experimental Psychology student and the Vice-President of the St John's College JCR. Because of this, it's my role to coordinate and run your Freshers' Week, with the help of the two other co-chairs, Louisa & Laurence (see below).



We're incredibly excited to see a new cohort immerse themselves into university life; our job is to make this transition for you all as seamless as possible. Freshers Week is your opportunity to get to know the college and find some familiar faces before the academic work kicks in.

Your Freshers' Week will be what you make it. While your first week here will not define your Oxford life, you do only get one – my advice would be to spend it as well as you can. There will be a variety of activities put on during the week to cater to as many tastes as possible. Make the most of these – get to know some other freshers and, importantly, step out of your comfort zone. Try some events you might not always consider, go eat in hall, try your hand with some of the college sports teams.

Even if you've never considered yourself particularly sporty, there's almost definitely sports here that you haven't tried before. Giving these a taste with our college teams is a fantastic way to meet new people and get involved without the rigorous training schedule of university teams. Keep an eye out for the sports teams, and all of the other societies on offer, at John's at our own Freshers' Fair.

Put simply: you'll regret the activities you *didn't* do, not everything you did try – if you feel up to it, dive in head-first.

Anyway, we can't wait to welcome you in October. If you have any concerns, questions or anything else at all, any of the Freshers' Committee or Helpers will be able to answer your queries during Freshers' Week. They are there specifically to help you, and were freshers themselves only a year or two ago; when we say there is no question too small or trivial, that is because we had all those same questions not that long ago.

If you have any questions in the meantime, please feel free to contact me via email at jcr-vice-president@sjc.ox.ac.uk (or bradley.croucher@sjc.ox.ac.uk), or on Facebook. Facebook tends to be the centre of events at Oxford and St John's. Oftentimes students don't get Facebook from the beginning and miss out on events and announcements. I cannot recommend enough downloading it now if you haven't already, and then join the [Freshers' group](#)

See you in October!

Laurence Cooke (Freshers' Week Co-Chair)

Hey everyone, I'm Laurence - a 2nd year Philosophy and French student from Coventry - and I'm excited to be one of the co-chairs of freshers' week here at John's! My job is to help everybody feel at home here so if you have any questions at all (the more convoluted the better) do get in touch by email (laurence.cooke@sjc.ox.ac.uk), Facebook, or Instagram. Welcome to St John's!



Louisa Kotzee (Freshers' Week Co-Chair)

Hi everyone! I'm Louisa, a 3rd year Experimental Psychology student and one of your fresher's week co-chairs. I am super excited to meet you all and help you settle into St John's. If you have questions about anything at all, feel free to drop me an email (louisa.kotzee@sjc.ox.ac.uk) or contact me on Facebook. See you soon!

We'll be working alongside a wider committee and a group of helpers to put together the best freshers' week all of you could possibly have, and we'll all be around to help with absolutely anything once you get into Oxford.

So, we hope you have a wonderful week here at St John's and are looking forward to welcoming you all to our community!

Lots of love,

Brad, Louisa & Laurence x

The JCR

'JCR' is short for **Junior Common Room**, which has three meanings. Firstly, it is a **room** in Tommy White, which serves as a social space for you to hang out and relax in. Secondly, it refers to the **undergraduate body** at St John's: every student who is studying for an undergraduate degree. Finally, it's the **Committee** elected by the JCR members which puts on a variety of events throughout the year, and realises the policies set forth by the JCR's **fortnightly meetings**.

The JCR's activities are overseen by a **committee** headed by the JCR President. Each officer has a major area of responsibility, representing students to the College and the wider University. Officers' terms run for one calendar year, with elections held at the **end of Michaelmas term**. Of the current committee, many were first years when elected, so make sure to go to the first meeting at the end of freshers' week to get involved.

There are also loads of smaller '**rep**' **roles** which range from supporting international students to looking after the JCR Art or DVD collections, or being the always-on-call Bike Rep. There are other opportunities to get involved, for example by becoming a **Peer Supporter** (trained students you can talk to about any issues you might be having) or **Student Ambassador** (take part in vital access and outreach work, e.g., working at interviews and open days, or talking to visiting school groups).

The best way to participate is to come to **JCR meetings** (with free drinks and pizza!), four times per term. JCR meetings are your opportunity to raise issues that matter to you, whether that be hiring a bouncy castle as a revision antidote, or debating the JCR's response to government decisions on higher education funding! They also allocate **JCR funds** to benefit JCR members and make termly donations to charities. There is a well-endowed budget, so if you have an idea, please bring it forward!

The second JCR Meeting of each term (usually Sunday of 3rd week) is the **Charities Meeting** where you can bring a motion which gives up to £300 from our Charities Budget to a charity of your choice. The **Financial Motion budget** is £5,000 allocated for JCR members to request towards non-charitable causes they believe deserve financial support. This year they have funded several plays with this money. If you have such a cause, get in touch with either the Treasurer or Secretary, to help you draft a Financial Motion to be discussed at a JCR Meeting.

Find out more about the JCR roles, and the current committee [here](#). You can also find the names of the current committee members in [Useful contacts - JCR Roles](#).



Your Arrival

Before arrival

Here are a few things we recommend before your arrival to ensure a smooth transition into College life.

- Important documents
 - The College has a list of [documents](#) to read, and some need actions such as registering for the university. Some things need to be sent in by the beginning of September, so we recommend reading everything in good time. Be sure to check your emails regularly.
 - You can access University information [here](#).

- First steps of joining the College community
 - Many things in Oxford happen on Facebook, such as JCR events and group chats, so we recommend **getting a Facebook profile**.
 - **Join the [Facebook Freshers' Page](#)** (or search for 'SJC Freshers 2024') This is where you'll find important updates from the Freshers' Week Committee and other College members.
 - Accept friend requests from your college parents when they send you a request. Read about this in [College Families](#).
 - If you have any questions, feel free to ask your College parents or on the group chat!

Finally, enjoy the rest of your summer and get excited!

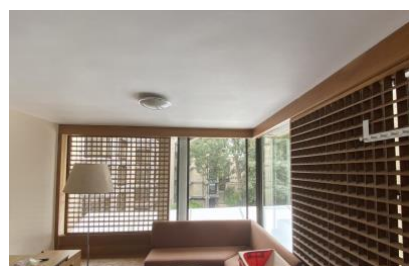
What to bring?

A scary part of coming to Oxford is the packing. Unless you know that you will always get a lift, try not to bring too much. There is limited storage available for the holidays, especially useful for international students, but be sure to get in early if you want to use this.

TOP TIP: write a packing list and add to it gradually as you think of things over a few days. Here's a checklist of our recommendations to get you started:

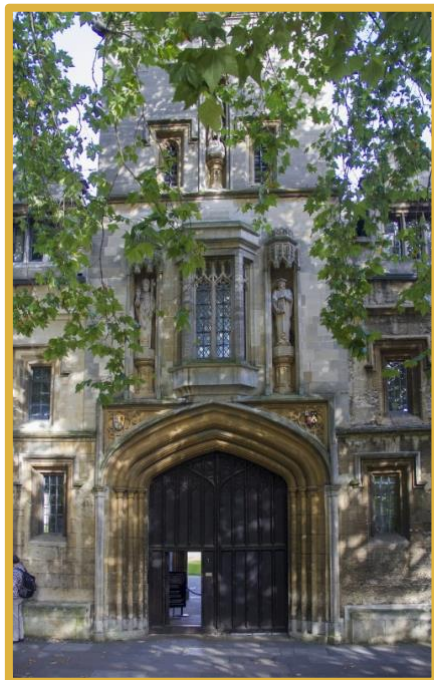
- **Clothes and Toiletries.** Pretty essential in all honesty.
- **Laptop** (essential) and **charger** and other electronic gadgets (camera, speakers etc.).
- **Photos, posters, etc.** just to make your room a little homier. There are notice boards in every room but don't forget notice-board pins and Blu-tack so that you can put photos and posters up. You may be able to get some posters (and plants) from the Oxford Union sale taking place in Freshers' Week!
- **Home comforts.** Whether it's a teddy bear, a plant or anything else, it'll help you to settle into your life at Oxford and help make your room super cosy.
- **Trainers and sports kit.** John's has two gyms which are free to use and loads of good sports teams/clubs, so whatever your level, you can get involved.
- **Stationery.** Sturdy folders, pens, pencils, rubbers, highlighters, lots of paper etc. Note: coloured pens and pencils are useful, especially if it's just for making a bop costume!
- **Cooking stuff.** Not everyone wants to eat every meal in Hall, so you might find a use for a pan, some plates, bowls and cutlery. Keep in mind that kitchens in college will be a lot smaller than those at home, so don't bring every utensil you own. A box to store this in might be useful too.
- **Formal clothing.** Oxford truly does fancy like nowhere else, and you can bet there will be a few events across term where you will have to dress up! For example, there are 2 guest dinners every term which have a black tie dress code.

Note that you don't need to bring bedding/duvet/pillow as college provides it! (but some people bring an extra pillow)



An example of one of the larger first-year rooms in Tommy White Quad.

Getting to St John's



Main entrance from St Giles

St John's is centrally located in Oxford city, at roughly 15 minutes' walk from the **Oxford train station** and 10 minutes' walk from the **Gloucester Green coach station**. The main entrance is on the east side of St Giles in the city centre, and inside you'll find the **Porters' Lodge** on your right.

The [University website](#) provides advice on travelling to the city centre, including from various London airports (if you're coming from Heathrow, the Airline is a decent choice). After that, the College should be within a short walking distance away. On arrival, our friendly student helpers or the porters will be happy to show you the way around College!

First day tips

The day of your arrival is probably the most daunting. Most people know no one, and that means you're all in the same boat. Here are our top tips for getting through the first day!

1. **Bring biscuits and tea.** This is the perfect way to say hello and get to know your staircase neighbours and you can never really have too many biscuits.
2. Consider **decorating your walls** when you get here. It's a great way to feel more comfortable and can also act as another conversation starter.
3. If you feel up to it, **knock on neighbours' doors**. It only needs $\frac{1}{2}$ of you to knock and the other $\frac{1}{2}$ to answer the door to get conversations going!
4. **Be aware of other people's boundaries.** It's important to be wary that people may have different boundaries and preferences.
5. **Talk to as many people as possible.** Treat the first few weeks as friend speed dating. You may strike gold and find your best friends really quickly, or be able to rule out people as incompatible to you. Either way, it's a win-win. Don't stress about making life-long friendships, these normally form when the buzz of freshers has died down.

6. **Be open minded.** You will meet lots of different people, especially during your first week. You never know what someone is like beneath the fresher's nerves.
7. Be prepared to **share if you feel nervous.** If you bring up something you're worried about there definitely will be other people who will say they feel the same. Going through it together is definitely better than alone!
8. If you have any questions, **ask** them. You can ask any of the helpers or members of staff. Everyone will be happy to help; all students have been a fresher once!
9. **Don't do anything you're not comfortable doing.** If you are feeling at all uncomfortable either just speak up, or go talk to someone else.
10. **Act like your authentic self.** It's not helpful to act like someone else as the people you meet will be seeing you through thick and thin. Start as you mean to go on!

Map of College

You can find a virtual tour of the College [here!](#) There are also some nice pictures of the College buildings on the [College website](#).



Connecting to the Internet

There is **eduroam** Wi-Fi connection available in most College and University buildings, and as a student you'll have access to the connection (you'll be automatically connected to eduroam in most other UK universities as well!). The University and the College have step-by-step guides on how to configure your eduroam connection:

- [College IT](#), including information on [activating single sign-on \(SSO\) and connecting to eduroam](#)
- The University page on [connecting to eduroam](#)

Alternatively, you can connect to Oxford Wireless LAN (OWL), which is visible as “**OWL**” on the list of Wi-Fi connections on your device (and supposedly gives a faster connection). To access the Internet via OWL however, you'll need to be connected to the **University VPN**. The University VPN can also be useful to access some sites when you are outside Oxford, such as the College intranet and some library resources, so it's recommended to have it set up regardless. More information can be found on the University's IT Services' pages on [VPN](#) and [OWL](#).

In addition, you can also connect to the Internet via an **ethernet cable connection** in your room – all rooms should have an ethernet port. This probably gives the fastest and most reliable connection option. For the first time, you'll need to follow some on-screen instructions to get connected (you'll also need your SSO). If you don't have an ethernet cable, you can try requesting one from the College IT Office (it-support@sjc.ox.ac.uk)!



Life in Oxford

Rooms around College

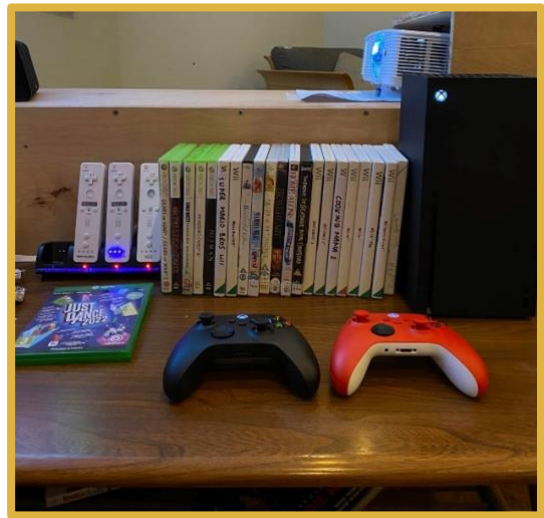
There are some social spaces around the College that are great for some casual fun with friends. Many of them have just been refurbished over the summer as well! Most of the rooms require your Salto fob to get in.

The JCR

The Junior Common Room (JCR) is at the entrance to TW3, on the right. Inside there's a **printer** (see [Printing](#)) and some couches to do work or fall asleep on. The JCR room looks into **the marquee** – many JCR events (like TW Tea and Friday night Karaoke) are hosted there!

TV Room

The TV Room is also at the entrance to TW3, opposite the JCR. It has a **Sky TV box**, **Wii** and **Xbox Series X**, a stack of video games, as well as a huge projector screen. Spectacles here include Mario Kart tournaments and watching Eurovision finals.



The games in the TV Room!

DVD Room

The DVD Room is the hardest to find: opposite TW8, there's a door marked 'Junior Common Room' and the DVD Room is inside and on the left. It has a **PS4**, a shiny new **TV**, another **Xbox 360**, and a new Virtual Reality headset (which may have gone missing). There's also a generous collection of **movie DVDs**. The place to go for FIFA tournaments and movie nights.

Games Room

The Games Room is at the very bottom of TW4, below the bar. It has a **pool table**, **table football**, and an impressive **jukebox**.

Guest Rooms

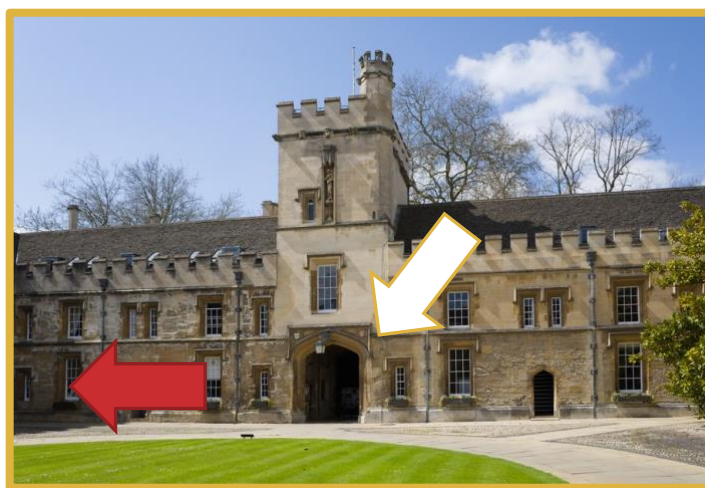
There are guest rooms for your parents or visiting relatives, and they can be booked at the Porter's Lodge.

College life

In your first couple of weeks in Oxford, you may be familiarising yourself with the everyday aspects of living in College. Here are a few elements of College life to get you up to speed!

Porters

Our lovely team of college porters are based in the Porters' Lodge ("plodge"), at the main entrance of college. Their job is to keep everything in order, and—importantly—to keep you safe. They are first-aid-trained, on-duty 24/7, and your go-to guys in an emergency. If you ever have any housekeeping issues (lost keys, packages that need collecting, or any general queries), they are your first point of contact.



*The Front Quad. White arrow: porters' lodge;
red arrow: direction of post room*

Post

There is a post-box in the Plodge for any items that need posting. Any letters you receive will be placed in your pigeon-hole ("pidge") by the porters; the "pidge room" can be accessed in the passageway from Front Quad to Dolphin Quad, and is adjacent to the plodge. Larger items may be stored by the porters until you come to collect them; if this is the case, you will receive an email from them informing you of the arrival of your parcel.

Scouts

Scouts is the word for cleaners in Oxford. They take out your bins Monday to Friday, occasionally vacuum and clean your sink, and deliver clean sheets every other week. They are often the first face you see in the morning and a lovely person to chat to on your lazier mornings.

Keys

You will be given the keys to your room on your first day at college, and you hand them over to the porters at the end of each term (but you get to keep the fob). Try where possible to keep hold of them – replacements are pricey! Though, if you manage to relocate them within 24 hours of having received a spare from the porters, you won't be charged. Some rooms have doors that lock themselves – if you ever accidentally lock yourself out of your room, go to the plodge and the porters will lend you a spare key.

The main gate to college is normally closed at 23:00, but opens with your Salto fob. You can also use the late gate, which is a turnstile in Tommy White Quad, right next to the Lamb and Flag passage. Use your fob to open the gate. If you've lost your keys, just go to the main gate of college and ring the bell: a porter will speak to you on the intercom, and you should be able to get back in.

Laundry

There are 4 laundry rooms, each with 2 or 3 washing machines and tumble dryers, as well as ironing facilities. The laundry rooms are in: the basement of North Quad staircase 4, the basement of Middleton Hall, in Garden Quad behind the MCR, and by the gym in Kendrew Quad.

Some of them use laundry cards (which can be purchased and topped up from the laundry rooms) and others have card machines. There are full instructions on each machine detailing how to add money to your account. It might be worth thinking about some sort of laundry container (a basket, or any big bag) when packing for the term ahead.

Printing

Yes, there's free printing! There are printers in the JCR lounge and the library basement. Law students also have access to printing in the Holdsworth Law Library. College provides free black-and-white printing, and colour printing at 10p per side, which will be charged on your next battel. You can submit print jobs by logging in to <https://caxton2.sjc.ox.ac.uk/> with your Single Sign-On (SSO), and release print jobs at the printers with your University card (Bod card). Detailed instructions can be found [here](#).

Smoking areas

Smoking is not permitted in any of the college buildings. The designated smoking areas are :

- Outside the MCR (behind TW8)
- Kendrew Quad (benches area by the entrance to the cafe)

Living as an overseas student

Visa

Most importantly, make sure you hold a valid UK visa which lasts the duration of your entire course. More information can be found on the UK government's website and the University's [website](#) on student visas.

EU and Brexit

Oxford has made a [page](#) for FAQs regarding the EU with lots of information and resources.

Finance

It is advisable to open a UK **bank account** once you reach the UK. Battels have to be paid quite early on in term and it is easier from a UK bank account. You can either arrange for an appointment before you arrive or try walking into one in Oxford (though they do get booked out far in advance for the first few weeks). You should also make sure to have **access to money** for your first weeks here, either as cash or through your bank cards.

Find out more about finance in Oxford in [Finances](#). The University also have guidance for banking through their [Welcome Service](#) and [information for new students](#).

Phone

It may be helpful to have a UK **SIM card** to call other numbers in Oxford without paying overseas rates. SIM cards can be ordered online and delivered to you for free; you might also find them in stores such as Sainsbury's. (The reception for O2 is awful in College, and EE has the best reception around Oxford.)

Vacation residence & storage

You get a number (14 for your first two years, 40 for the next one/two, although this may change) of 'free' vacation residence (vac res) days every year - you can use these to come to college a bit earlier in Hilary/Trinity, or stay a bit later after term. Note that you can't use them at the end of Trinity!

In a scheme that started in the last few academic years, international students can apply for an "**Extended License**" from the College, so that you can stay in College accommodation over the Christmas and Easter vacations at a 50% discount, without the need to apply for vacation residence (however, you'll be charged for all nights whether or not you actually stay in College). This may be helpful for you, especially if it's difficult/expensive for you to return home over the shorter vacations.

The College also offers **vacation storage** for students, that are open during the 0th, 1st and 8th, 9th week of each term (the combined storage capacity is quite large - Kendrew is

especially generous – but they can get quite busy close to the vacs!). The only exception is that they cannot be used over the long summer vacation; you must take all of your belongings home with you.

More information (including where the storage are) can be found in the [Domestic Arrangements document](#), under “Vacation Periods”.

College families

Before you arrive, you will be sent the names of your 2 or 3 *college parents*. These are usually second years, and there will normally be one who reads your subject. We strongly recommend **adding your parents on Facebook** so they can make a family group chat. This way, you can say hello to your *college siblings* (other first years) as well, and ask any questions you don't want to ask on the freshers' chat.

Your parents will likely meet with you for a family dinner in the first few weeks of term, so make sure to tell them if you have any dietary requirements. If you don't know who your parents are a few weeks after results day, then please message the welfare officers (see [Useful contacts - JCR Roles](#)) so they can find them for you.

Throughout the first year, you'll have the choice to get *college engaged* – a weird and wonderful Oxford tradition. This is a platonic relationship which allows you to become a college parent in your second year. There's no need to rush into it: the vast majority won't get engaged in the first few weeks, and you don't want to be stuck with the wrong partner!

In Trinity term (third term) there is a marriage ceremony where fiancés get all dressed up, with a group vow recital, certificates and a whole lot of fun.

Food

St John's subsidises food fairly generously compared to most colleges, so for some people Hall and Kendrew Café are the go-to places for their meals. If you prefer to cook for yourself, there are also (small) kitchens in all first-year accommodation.

Hall & Kendrew Café

Hall is the Oxford name for the dining room which serves both **formal** and **informal hall**. They serve breakfast, lunch and dinner on most days during term time and beyond, and the Sunday brunch is typically very popular. Eating in hall is a perfect opportunity to socialise with fellow students and catch up with your friends.



The dining hall

In addition, lunch is also served in **Kendrew café** 12:00–13:30 during weekdays. They also provide pizzas and paninis from 14:30-17:30 and coffee, cakes, crisps and chocolate/snack bars are on offer throughout the working day. A coffee machine and vending machine are also in operation there 24/7.

	Hall	Kendrew café
Breakfast	8.00 – 9.30am	9am – 5.30pm (Lunch: 12.00 – 1.30pm)
Lunch	12.00 – 1.30pm	
Dinner	5.30 – 6.30pm	



The Kendrew Café

Formal dinners in Hall need to be booked in advance through the [online meal-booking system](#), but informal dinners and lunch, breakfast and brunch don't require booking. Signing on for formal dinner closes at 2pm the day before.

Dietary requirements

There will always be a vegan/vegetarian and a non-vegetarian option at dinner, and at least two of the latter at lunch. The Catering Office is fully accommodating of all special dietary requirements, so long as you communicate with the staff. The catering team will publish the detailed menus in advance on the [College intranet](#), so you can plan ahead.

Paying for meals

Except for formal halls (detailed in [Formal hall & guest dinners](#)), all meals are paid per-item (with each meal costing roughly £3, depending on what you get); there is a price list posted outside each dining area. If you pay with your bod card you get a discount, but you can also pay by card if you've forgotten it (but if you show it and haven't topped up you can pay the discounted rate on card). You can top up your Bod card on the [online meal-booking system](#).

Cooking for yourself

If you wish to cook for yourself, there are facilities at hand to do so. Every room in first year has access to two **hobs**, a **kettle** and a **toaster** in a kitchen generally shared by 4 people, and each room has a mini fridge. A few kitchens also have a microwave. There is a big **Tesco Express** just 2 minutes away from the College entrance, so getting groceries is quite easy!

Formal hall & guest dinners

The 'Harry Potter-esque' Oxford experience. Rather than going to normal (informal) hall, you may sometimes want to throw on your academic gown, go to **formal hall** and enjoy a three-course meal with your friends. You are expected to wear your **academic gown** for formal hall, though it matters little what you have on underneath. **Guests** can also be booked in for formal hall, so it is definitely worth considering if you have friends or family over and would like to give them a nice Oxford-style experience.

Formal starts from 19:00 sharp, usually ending around 20:30. It consists of three courses all consumed for the bargain price of £4.91 for SJC students. Wine can also be purchased during these meals. Formal halls can be booked through the [online meal-booking system](#).

Guest dinners are an even fancier option, where you can ballot for a meal which is run (generally) twice per term in hall, for only ~£30 per person. On top of the four-course meal, a pre- and post-drinks reception is also included at these black-tie events. Students mingle with their peers and with friends and family alike, and most attendees follow up the night with some Karaoke put on by welfare, which happens most Fridays.

Entertainments [Entz]

Follow on instagram @sjc.entz to hear first about upcoming entz!

BOPs

A few times a term, themed parties will be put on in the basement of the Kendrew building. These fun evenings allow you to dance the evening away with your friends in college (plus a few guests you can invite). Yannick runs a bar by the entrance all night with a reduced menu, and occasionally there are guest DJs.

Non-bop/non-alcoholic Entz

Entz also puts on pub quizzes and occasionally rents out bars in Oxford. These will all be advertised on the JCR facebook! The welfare officers also often run events which are generally less boozy, including bingo nights and movie screenings.

Just like every other city, there are events that will never include drinking. One of our favourites is going to the famous **G&D's ice cream shop** and visiting **Gloucester Green Market** (a food market open Wednesday-Saturday).

Every University has a 'drinking culture'. However, at John's we ensure that everyone can act how they want without external pressure. The workload at Oxford means that no one can afford to get drunk every night and you certainly won't be alone if you choose not to drink alcohol at an event - just go ask Yannick for one of his mean mocktails!

Freshers' Week for Non-Drinkers

It's very important to us on the Freshers' Week Committee that Freshers' Week is for everyone. That includes those who choose not to drink. Our non-alcoholic entz reps and the rest of the committee have therefore put on a range of events as alternatives (or in addition) to the more drunken ones (see your timetable!).

The College Bar

With a much more relaxed vibe than other colleges, the college bar has a host of unique cocktails invented by our barman Yannick, at a very cheap price of £2.60 a pint, around £3 for a weaker cocktail or £4 for a stronger one. They also sell spirit mixers for the less adventurous and soft drinks for the non-drinkers. They also have a few snacks on offer!

Clubs

The Oxford clubbing scene has a small but generally lively cluster of clubs:

- **Bridge** is the club of choice on a Thursday, with 2 dancefloors, including the legendary cheese floor which blasts all your favourite throwbacks.
- **Plush** is an LGBTQ+ bar and club, open Tuesday to Saturday, providing a fun venue for people of all identities and orientations who want to party. It is most popular on a Tuesday

- **Bullington** is a club in Cowley (20-25 minute walk from college) that hosts themed nights, DJs and some Oxford bands. With house and techno nights every so often (check on Fixr), it's definitely becoming more popular
- **The O2 Academy** is best known for indie friday nights (again check Fixr) but also hosts concerts and club nights!

Bars: OXO (you will visit in freshers week), Tap Social Movement (a bit further out), Varsity and Hanks are also good for a less intense experience than a club!

Pubs

You are unlikely to encounter many cities with a greater density of pubs. It's not up to us to tell you which are the best (it's all a matter of opinion, after all), but here are just a few within a couple of minutes' walk of College, among others:

- The **Lamb and Flag** (located on-site, although sadly no longer college-run, reportedly where Lord of The Rings was written)
- The **King's Arms** (adjacent to Wadham College, on Holywell Street – a students' favourite)
- **Turf Tavern** (antiquated but popular, with extensive outdoor seating for the summer months)
- The **Bear Inn** (on Alfred Street – founded in 1242...)
- **Swan and Castle** and **The Four Candles** are the two Wetherspoons in central Oxford

It is worth noting that pints in Oxford can, in some instances, be upwards of £5. You might be better off sticking to the college bar! (It is rumoured that in deepest, darkest Cowley, there is a [Wether]Spoons with a pint that only costs £1.79!! Good luck finding it.)

Sport

There is a wealth of sports options to choose from when coming to Oxford. Whether you are a seasoned athlete looking to earn a '**Blue**' (University level team award) or want a more relaxed leisure activity, University and College sports societies and facilities cater for all abilities and commitment levels.

College sport is a great way to stay fit and healthy, socialise (when asked, always say yes to a crew-date!) but College sport also keeps up the all-important inter-collegiate rivalry.

You can sign up for college sports at the John's Freshers' Fair in Freshers' Week. Don't worry if you miss out on joining a given club during the week as the various captains will be more than happy to have you join at any point in the year. All abilities are welcome in every club!

College Sports Facilities

On site, there are

- two air-conditioned gyms
- an "erg" room (with rowing machines)
- the Games Room with a pool table and dart board
- an outdoor table-tennis table and a table tennis room
- two squash courts
- a croquet lawn (in St Giles House garden)

The "**Fortress**" (College sports ground) on Woodstock Road has:

- Netball/tennis courts
- A football/rugby pitch
- A cricket pitch
- A Croquet Lawn
- The Clubhouse

The **College Boat House** is on Boat House Island on the Isis, about fifteen minutes away from college. It has a mixed array of eights, fours, pairs, and singles, including several *empachers* and *stämpflis*. If you start rowing, you'll soon find out what these are for!

You'll need to **sign up** before you use the College gyms. You can find out about this on the '[Gym Facilities](#)' section on the College intranet.



The New Gym in college

More information on the College sports facilities can be found under the '[Sport](#)' and '[Sports Ground](#)' sections on the College intranet. It's recommended to **book in advance** for some facilities, such as the squash and tennis courts, and you can find the booking instructions on these pages.

University Sports Facilities

The Iffley Road Sports Complex is the University's main sports facility. It includes a climbing wall, swimming pool, athletics track and other facilities, racket sports and handball courts, power-lifting room, tank room, astroturf pitch, and range for the Oxford University Pistol Club!

College Sports Teams

Sport is a large part of college life here at St John's and all college sports are represented at the annual (free!) **College Sports Dinner**. All sports are free to play. The next page has a list of College sports and their respective team captains.



Name	Captain
Badminton	Christopher Liu Melanie Henin
Basketball	
	Bradley Croucher (Captain of Boats) Louisa Kotzee (Women's)
Boat Club	Cora Taylor (Women's) Jack Moss (Men's) Rachel Woods (Coxes)
Cricket	Lucas McConnell
Dancesport	Malina Constantinescu
JCR Men's Football	Tom Henderson
Women's Football	Melissa Morley
Hockey	Cameron Deol
Lacrosse	
Mixed Netball	Laura Brownlow Emily Gurney
Women's Netball	Mia Hewitt Katie Skilling
Powerlifting	William James
Rounders	Katie Skilling
Men's Rugby	Owen Casstles
Mixed Touch Rugby	
Women's Rugby	
Running	Bailey Jones Emily Howes
Self Defence	

Squash

Table Tennis

Tennis Rohan Joshi

Ultimate Frisbee Alexander Mylet

Yoga Yuchen (Jen) Jiang

However, no 'Sport' section in an Oxford guide would be complete without mentioning **rowing**. St John's Boat Club does a fantastic job of training up all the novices from scratch. The Rowing Club offers erg sessions, land fitness training and most mornings you'll find a John's crew sitting at breakfast already having rowed several kilometres! Each term has a **rowing regatta**, with the first term's regatta being limited to novices only, and is always tremendous fun.

University Sports

University wide there is a vast range of sports, from water polo to pentathlon, fencing to sailing. If you want to try something new, University is definitely the place to do it!

The highlight of the University teams' fixture is the annual **Varsity match**: Oxford versus Cambridge! This is always a strongly-fought, competitive and highly-spirited battle, and acts as a good climax to each team's respective seasons. Don't be surprised when you hear the phrase "Shoe the Tabs!" yelled at the opposition!

Representing Oxford University in your chosen team provides the opportunity to earn a '**Blue**', a highly prestigious recognition of your sporting achievements from the University. St John's also provides a '**Blue's Grant**' to help cover the cost of University kit/other expenses relating to your sport. Playing for and training with a 'Blues' team is a great way of meeting people from other colleges.

Most University teams have '**development squads**', which enable you to train with the main squad, even if you are not quite of University standard just yet. Essentially, whatever your level, the combination of University and St John's College teams cater for all. Even if you've never done any sport at all, we strongly urge you to consider trying something, even if it's just a means to meet new people!

Music

St John's has a brilliant reputation for music, with our students participating in all genres and forms of music across the University.

The biggest John's music group is the **chapel choir**. They perform two services a week, with choral Evensong on Sundays and Wednesdays. The choir is composed of undergraduate and graduate students and is selected by audition at the beginning of the academic year. The choir have also made a number of recordings and occasionally go on tours and give concerts in various venues across Oxford. Choir members are paid a small amount per service and extra for services outside term-time. If you demonstrate good sight reading ability and natural musicality, students have the opportunity to become choral scholars, elected internally. If you'd like to audition for the choir, please email choir.director@sjc.ox.ac.uk. Sign-up sheets and more information will be available at our Freshers Fair in Freshers' week.



The college chapel with choir

If you don't think the chapel choir is for you, but still love singing, there are numerous other college choirs across Oxford of varying standard, as well as **Oxford University Chorus**, the largest choir in the University. OUChorus is non-auditioned and puts on large choral-orchestral works each term.

The student music scene in Oxford is one of the largest in the country, and is run by the **Oxford University Music Society (OUMS)**. OUMS runs nine ensembles, including four symphony orchestras, string, wind and jazz orchestras, a brass band and OUChorus. Auditions for these are held at the end of Freshers' Week at the Music Faculty (south of Christ Church). If you're an instrumentalist interested in joining an ensemble, please contact president@oums.org or see the various stalls at the Oxford SU Freshers' Fair on Thursday of Freshers' Week. You can also join the 'Musicians of Oxford' facebook group which regularly advertises a wide range of bands and orchestras in Oxford!

There are **music practice-rooms** in college, which each have pianos. The Kawai Room houses a Kawai (surprise, surprise) grand piano. These are situated at the far end of both Garden Quad and Kendrew Quad, near the events room, and are openly accessible to all members of College using their SALTO fob. The key for the grand piano can be obtained from the porter's lodge.

For more information on music in St John's, look out for the music society which should soon be being revived!

Finances

While Oxford can be an expensive city to live in, with college subsidisation and good budgeting, no one should ever have to stop studying because of a lack of funds. Money is available to help students in financial difficulties due to unforeseen circumstances.

Grants and financial aid

St John's, in conjunction with the University as a whole and Government Access schemes, offers several types of financial aid. More information can be found [here](#) on the college website.

We're very lucky that St John's offers a wide range of grants and bursaries, including the **Academic Grant** (for purchase of academic-related items) and the **Special Grant** (to cover research-related expenditure), both of which anyone can apply for. There is also the **Hardship Grant**, which can be applied for under special circumstances.

Follow [this link](#) for more details about specific grants and their requirements.

Battels

Battels are the college bills given at the beginning of each term. It covers rent, scout costs and some other extra items. These should be paid as soon as possible, so that you don't incur any late charges.

Here is what a Trinity 2020/21 battels invoice looked like for a typical room. Rent varies with the grade of your room, but not substantially. You can find the rents and charges for 2023/24 in the [Domestic Arrangements Document](#) (under "Rents and Charges"), but note that there will be a slight increase each year.

	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
22/02/2021	BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD	1,778.80
07/05/2021	Pymnt.Recd	-1,778.80
07/05/2021	Accommodation Charge TT21	1,068.08
07/05/2021	Vac Res Easter 2021	325.80
07/05/2021	General Facilities TT21	226.00
07/05/2021	Vac Grant Easter 2021	-22.05

An example of battels invoice for Trinity 2021

Welfare and support

Starting university can often seem a little daunting, but plenty of services are available throughout your time at Oxford to offer support. You will receive a more comprehensive Welfare Guide during Freshers' Week, along with an introductory talk, but here is a brief overview of who can help.

JCR welfare officers & welfare events

The Welfare Officers are **Ellie Wilson, Zoe Gordon, and Benjamin Bull**, who are all peer-support trained. They organise various welfare events in college throughout the year, in addition to regularly distributing free sexual health products to the JCR members and pidding chocolates and compliments. An example of welfare events run throughout the term include:

- **Tommy White (TW) Teas:** fortnightly afternoon teas in the JCR with free food provided for everyone
- **Welfare, Men's and Women's Lunches:** fortnightly free lunches for everyone (welfare) and anyone identifying as men or women respectively

The [JCR Welfare instagram page](#) (@sjc_welfare) is regularly updated with all of the welfare events going on.



TW Tea!

Feel free to contact your welfare officers via jcr-welfare@sjc.ox.ac.uk with any (welfare) concerns you may be experiencing, even if this is before you arrive.

Additional Contacts

The **Head of Student Wellbeing** is a great point of contact for any welfare concerns, and the **Junior Deans** also provide support to the JCR. The Junior Deans' office hours are 18:00 - 19:00 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and can be contacted via junior.dean@sjc.ox.ac.uk. Hanne Clark, the Head of Student Wellbeing, can be contacted at student.wellbeing@sjc.ox.ac.uk, or online/in-person meetings can be booked [here](#).

Peer supporters

The JCR Peer Supporters are fellow students who have undertaken over 30 hours of training, and are happy to have a confidential chat about anything that may be worrying you, abiding by a special Code of Practice. They can all be contacted via their email of the format firstname.surname@sjc.ox.ac.uk, or on Facebook – they will quickly become familiar faces once you arrive here.

Our current peer supporters are listed below:

Bailey Jones (MCR)
Benjamin Bull
Bradley Croucher
Eleanor Wilson
Ella Piron
Grace Dunn
Jonny Yang (MCR)
Jonas Krusic
Katherine Wang (MCR)
Rachel Woods (MCR)
Sorcha Finan (MCR)
Zoe Gordon
Zoe Reed (MCR)

College Psychologist

The College has its own psychologist, **Dr Denise Barulis**, who sees students on Thursdays (weeks 0 to 9 inclusive) at 15 St Giles (Room D). You can contact her via email at denise.barulis@sjc.ox.ac.uk.

Other services

The **Welfare Officers** and peer supporters are there to support you in gaining extra help from other services if you feel you'd rather go to a service which is not based within college.

Nightline operates 08:00-20:00, providing confidential, non-judgemental advice, support and information over the phone (01865 270270) or you can go to them directly at their office in Wellington Square.

For more serious or long-term issues you can contact the **Oxford University Counselling Service** for help (counselling@admin.ox.ac.uk, 01865 270300). ***You should never feel that you have nobody to talk to.*** Always remember that friends and tutors are there for you, and will be willing to listen and offer you counsel should you have any problems. The **Oxford SU Student Advice Service** also offers a free advice, information and advocacy service (advice@ousu.ox.ac.uk, 01865 288461). There are also a number of campaigns and support groups around, such as Mind Your Head (raising awareness of mental health issues) and Student Minds' eating disorders support, which also offer student support.

Health

Below is some information about medical care while you are in Oxford, as well as some general health advice. More information can be found on the College webpage on [health and welfare for current students](#). The contact details listed here are also summarised in [Useful contacts](#).

College nurse

Our College Nurse is **Kinneret Milgrom** (nurse@sjc.ox.ac.uk / 01865 277369). The hours are listed below (only during term-time), and the Nurse's office is by the entrance to North Quad 5. You can book an appointment (in-person or online) [here](#) (only accessible from within College's network, or if connected to the university [VPN system](#)).

Monday: between 13.00 – 15.00
Tuesday: between 15.00 - 18.00
Wednesday: between 10.00 – 13.00
Friday: between 9.30 – 11.30

The Nurse can also visit you in your room if you feel too ill; if this is the case, you can ask your friends to contact the Nurse, or ring the Porters' Lodge.

College doctors

All St John's students are required to be registered with an Oxford GP Practice. The one College recommends is the surgery at **19 Beaumont Street**, a couple of hundred metres walk from the lodge. It is a normal GP's practice and you should simply ring if you wish for an appointment (01865 240501), or the College Nurse can arrange an appointment for you. You'll receive the paperwork to register as a patient before you arrive in Oxford.

When you return home at the end of each term, you can re-register as a temporary patient with your local GP when at home. It is very important for you to be registered with Beaumont Street (or any other Oxford practice if you prefer), as many unforeseeable things can occur when away from home, and these surgeries are experienced in writing sick notes that will be accepted by the University for exams, etc.

The Oxford Emergency Medical Service (**OXEMS**) provides an out of hours service from 18:00 to 08:00. If you ring the Beaumont Street Practice out of hours, you will be given the number to call.

College dentist

See [Medical care](#) in [Useful contacts](#).

Prescription costs

Don't stress too much about the cost of prescriptions; full information about financial aid and eligibility for it can be found online, via the NHS or government websites; in particular, check out **Prescription prepayment certificates (PPCs)**.

If you require any further information about prescription costs, then don't hesitate to contact the JCR Disabilities Officer.

Immunisations

The College advises on a list of immunisations for students, ideally before arriving in Oxford, including against **COVID-19, mumps and meningitis**. It is also possible to arrange for some immunisations through your GP after arriving in Oxford. More information can be found in [this document](#) published by the College, including information on how certain immunisations may be arranged.

Sexual health

Oxford's sexual health clinic is located at **Churchill Hospital** (01865 231231). See [here](#) for more information. The College Nurse and JCR Welfare officers can provide information on Contraception and Sexual Health Facilities within Oxford.

The Welfare Officers and the Women's Officer can provide condoms, lube, dental dams, pregnancy tests, and attack alarms all free of charge, in person or via pigeonhole if requested. All requests are completely confidential. The JCR can also reimburse students for buying the morning after pill, STI tests and treatments, or any of the above, if you hand in the receipt.

OSARC (Oxford Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre) can be contacted on 01865 726 29524.



Appendix

Jargon buster

B

Battels: College bill paid at the start of term. See [Battels](#).

Black Tie: dress code for a lot of college events, and for most balls. Normally either cocktail dress or dinner jacket, dress shirt and black bow tie.

Blue: award for sporting prowess. See [University Sports](#).

Bod: Bodleian Library; the University's central library.

Bod Card: University Card, and the main form of student ID. Required to get into libraries and certain university buildings. Also used to buy food from Hall, Kendrew cafe and drinks from the bar.

BOP: abbr. big organised party. In-college party, a good chance to socialise and dance the night away. See [Entertainments \(alcoholic & non-alcoholic\)](#).

Balls: White or black tie events that go into the next morning and have food stalls, music acts and usually has alcohol included. John's has one every 3 years and the next one is in 2026!

Buttery: Room at one end of the dining hall to buy wine at formals.

C

Collections: In-college tests which are scheduled for the end of the 0th week before term starts (not for the first term). Presidential Collections refer to reports given by your tutor to a senior member of College with you present. This is done at the end of some terms. Don't worry, they're not that scary.

Commem ball: abbr. Commemoration Ball. 5 colleges, including us, have a bigger ball once in a degree (once every three years).

Crew-Date: Sports team's word for a social event. Usually in the iconic crew-date restaurants, bring your own wine bottle and involves sconcing and pennyng. Not for everyone but can be a lot of fun.

Cuppers: Official inter-collegiate competition.

D

Deans: There are two Junior Deans. They deal with room bookings, welfare and small disciplinary matters. There is one Senior Dean who deals with more serious welfare and disciplinary matters.

E

Eights: a rowing competition in Trinity term.

Entz: abbr. entertainments, or entertainment officers (members of the JCR responsible for organising entertainments and BOPs).

F

Formal Hall: See [Formal hall & guest dinners](#).

Finals: Exams in your final year.

G

Gown: Harry Potter-esque robes worn for matriculation, formal hall, exams and a few other occasions.

H

Hall: Dining room in College where meals are eaten.

Hilary Term: Second term of an academic year.

J

JCR: Junior Common Room. See [The JCR](#). Also refers to the physical space in Tommy White.

M

Matriculation: The ceremony by which you become a member of the University and are officially allowed to wear your gown, and takes place in the Sheldonian Theatre.

May Day: On the 1st of May, at dawn, Magdalen choir sing from the top of Magdalen Tower and our choir sing later. It is traditional to stay up all night until dawn and have a pint before hall breakfast.

MCR: Middle Common Room, all postgraduates are members and they have a nice room near Garden Quad.

Michaelmas Term: First term of an academic year.

N

Noughth Week/0th Week: the week before the start of full term. Oxford doesn't work by dates but by which week number it is, e.g., 4th week. Most people arrive on Thursday of 0th week but freshers arrive on the Sunday in Michaelmas for a full week of mingling!

O

Oxford SU: Oxford University Student Union. Most useful for their welfare provisions.

Oxford Union: Debating society which also hosts speakers.

P

Porters: College residents who run the Plodge. See [Porters](#).

Pidge: your personal pigeon hole found in the 'Pidge room' where letters and parcels are delivered. See [Post](#).

Port Meadow: Large meadow on the banks of the Thames. Great for picnics and a swim in good weather.

Prelims: Exams done at the end of First Year that don't count towards your full degree.

President: Head of the College. Ours is Professor Dame Sue Black who started last year!

Punting: messing about on the river in a boat, propelled by a long pole. Go on matriculation with some food and drinks, or in Trinity term when the weather is good.

Q

Quads: square units of buildings which make up the College. We have: Canterbury, Front, North, Tommy White, Garden, Dolphin and Kendrew.

S

Sconcing: drinking game a bit like 'Never have I ever', but runs on the format of 'I sponce anyone who has ever x, y, z'.

Scouts: Another name for cleaners, see [Scouts](#).

SOLO: The University's online library search engine (aka your new best friend).

Sub Fusc: Gowns and formal clothing worn for exams (see <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/dress>)

T

Torpid: Inter college rowing event in Hilary Term.

Tute: abbr. tutorial. A major form of teaching in Oxford.

TW: Tommy White, the quad or building (basically the same thing).

Trinity Term: Third (and last) term of an academic year.

V

Vac: The holidays (though you're not meant to call them this as they're for 'working').

Vac Res: Being given special dispensation to stay at college during the vacation (popular in 0th week).

Varsity: Either the joint ski trip with Cambridge at the beginning of the Christmas vac or any Oxford vs Cambridge sporting event.

W

White Tie: Full evening wear, sometimes worn for balls. White bowties, waistcoats and tails, or a full length ball gown.

Useful contacts

Medical care

More details can be found [here](#).

College Nurse

Kinneret Milgrom nurse@sjc.ox.ac.uk

North Quad 5, Room 1

01865 277369

Hours: see [College Nurse](#)

College Doctor

Dr Richard Silvester

19 Beaumont Street

01865 240501

Internal

JCR Roles

Executive committee

Person(s) Holding	Position	JCR Emails
Elizabeth Heywood	President	jcr-president@sjc.ox.ac.uk
Bradley Croucher	Vice-President	jcr-vice-president@sjc.ox.ac.uk
Laurence Cooke	Secretary	jcr-secretary@sjc.ox.ac.uk
Yusuke Atsuta	Treasurer	jcr-treasurer@sjc.ox.ac.uk

Officers

Name	Position	JCR Emails
Christopher Liu	Academic Affairs	jcr-acaffairs@sjc.ox.ac.uk
Laurence Raran	Access & Admissions	jcr-access@sjc.ox.ac.uk
Freya Thomas	Arts Officer	jcr-artrep@sjc.ox.ac.uk
Ali Cilleruelo Pascual	Eternal Affairs	jcr-discounts@sjc.ox.ac.uk
Alice Simmerson	Domestic	jcr-domsec@sjc.ox.ac.uk
Lara Young		
Oliver Eastham	Entz	jcr-entz@sjc.ox.ac.uk
Ruby Breakwell (outgoing)		
Laurence Cooke (outgoing)	Environment and Ethics	jcr-env-ethics@sjc.ox.ac.uk
Trisha Purnaiya	Equality and Diversity	jcr-equality@sjc.ox.ac.uk
Zohaib Bhatti	IT Officer	jcr-it@sjc.ox.ac.uk
Arj Puvanachandra	Sports Officer	jcr-sports@sjc.ox.ac.uk
Eleanor Wilson	Welfare	jcr-welfare@sjc.ox.ac.uk
Zoe Gordon		
Benjamin Bull		
Harshitha Shankar	Women's Officer	jcr-women@sjc.ox.ac.uk
Jan Hübel	Returning Officer	jcr-returning@sjc.ox.ac.uk

Others

Junior Deans junior.dean@sjc.ox.ac.uk
College Psychologist (Denise Barulis) denise.barulis@sjc.ox.ac.uk
Chaplain (Revd. Elizabeth MacFarlane) - 01865 277351
Porter's Lodge - 01865 277300

External

The University Counselling Service

Address: 11 Wellington Square
Number: 01865 270300
Email: counselling@admin.ox.ac.uk

Nightline - 01865 270270
The Samaritans - 01865 722122 / 08457 909090
LGBTQ+ Switchboard - 020 7837 7324
OUSU Student Advice - 01865 288461
Thames Valley (Oxford) Police - 01865 266000
OU Security (emergency) - 01865 289999
OU Security (all other calls) - 01865 272944

Credits

Editors: Bradley Croucher, Laurence Cooke & Lousia Kotzee.

The contents in this document are largely based on the previous freshers' guides between 2020 and 2022, whose contributors include Zara Hussain, Shaina Sangha, Zoe Reed, Ronan Foley, Alfie Deere-Hall, Allesandro Giacometto, Carys Owen, and Zhe Ren Ooi.

Photos used are by Nikita Ti, Ugur Akdemir and Noel Broda on Unsplash, from the [College website](#), the [JCR website](#), or from the St John's College JCR Facebook group.