

Greetings from JCR International Officer

Dear incoming Orielensis,

I would like to congratulate you for securing a place at Oxford to pursue your study. This is a massive achievement that came from your continual efforts throughout your secondary education and everyone at Oriel College is looking forward to seeing you this fall.

The Junior Common Room (JCR) is the body of all undergraduate students at the college. My role in the JCR Committee as International Officer is to help your transition into college as an international student to be as smooth as possible.

As International Officer, I'm proud to continue organizing the International Parents Scheme. International parents are international students from the years above, who you can ask any questions about settling into Oxford as an international student and will help you become part of the international community at Oriel/Oxford. The international parents will soon contact you via email. I hope you will be able to organise an online session so that you will have a better idea of what life in Oxford will look like – and hopefully have a friendly face to talk to once you arrive.

I will also organize international welcoming sessions during or before the Fresher's Week.

Something that I really appreciate – and an appreciation I'm sure shared by most people at Oriel – is the great diversity in our cohort when it comes to cultural/national background. Such diversity of perspective is something that a collegiate university allows you to enjoy – whether it be through a brief conversation over the dinner table, or from profound conversations held late into the night in someone's room. So much character and value would be lost without this variety – and the student body is what really makes Oriel and Oxford world-class institutions. I'm looking forward to embracing students from all cultural backgrounds.

As an international student myself, I'm fully aware of some main concerns among the international community. I will do my best to strive for the community's rights and benefits. If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to email me at shiyuan.li@oriel.ox.ac.uk. You are also much welcomed to represent your voice in the weekly JCR meeting.

See you soon!

Oriel Love,
Shiyuan Li

Arriving in Oxford

From London Airports:

I would personally recommend international students to land at London Heathrow, given its size in number of flights and the ease in travelling to Oxford. Connected by the Airline coach service, the journey would take around 90 minutes. Buses depart every 30 minutes from Heathrow Terminal 5 and Heathrow Central Station, which is between Terminal 2 and 3. Student who lands at Terminal 4 would need to take a shuttle underground to Heathrow Central operated by the Elizabeth Line. It is also recommended to step on the coach at Heathrow Central even if the aircraft you take lands at Terminal 5, as you might find it difficult to distinguish the bus stop at Terminal 5, while you get clear instructions about which platform to go in the Central Station.

London Gatwick is slightly far away from Oxford. The bus journey, also operated by The Airline would take roughly 2.5 hours.

Tickets for The Airline can be purchased on the bus or online at <https://airline.oxfordbus.co.uk/>. Note that it is possible to buy a return ticket which will allow you to make your return journey within 3 months.

London Stansted airport is linked to Oxford by the National Express 757 coach service, running every 2h. Website: www.nationalexpress.co.uk.

Known as the worst airport in the country, Luton might not be the best place to start your adventure in UK. However, if this kind advice is not taken, it would be much appreciated if some more information, mainly on an awful experience can be added to this section.

Important Note: For all coach services, the nearest stop from Oriel College is Queen's Lane, which is only a 2-minute walk from the college. Especially during your first trip to Oxford, a 20-minute walk from Gloucester Green Station while carrying loads of luggage is not a wise choice.

From Birmingham Airport:

Birmingham airport, only an hour from Oxford by train, is an (often) less stressful alternative to the London airports. The airport is linked to a train station with an hourly service to Oxford Station.

By train:

Direct trains from London run from Paddington to Oxford every 30 minutes. The train station is to the west of Oxford, about 20 minute-walk from Oriel College. National Rail offer a 1/3 discount off rail travel for a year to 16-to 25-year-olds with a Young Persons Railcard, which costs £30. Applications are at the station or online at www.16-25railcard.co.uk. For timetable and to plan your trip see <http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/>. There are also train services to Oxford that departs from London Marylebone.

By car:

There is parking on the High Street after 6.30pm. Before this, you can access college via Merton Street off the east end of High Street. For advice on parking, contact the Porters Lodge on +441865 267555 for more detailed directions.

More information about getting to Oxford can be found on the University website: www.ox.ac.uk/visitors_friends/maps_and_directions/directions.html

Life at Oriel

Oriel College guarantees college accommodation for undergraduates for the entire duration of your course. Throughout your stay at college, your mailing address will be:

[Your Name]

Oriel College

Oriel Square

Oxford

Oxfordshire

OX14EW

Your post is delivered to your college pigeon-hole in the Porters' Lodge and parcels are held at the lodge for you to collect.

Oriel provides decent rooms, though it would be better if rent is slightly reduced. First year freshers will receive an online survey on their preference in the grades of the room. One will usually be allocated to a room that match his or her preference. In later years, the order of choosing rooms will be decided by a room ballot.

Food at Oriel is generally acceptable. During weekdays, the hall provides breakfast, lunch, informal and formal dinners every day. For weekends, there is brunch, informal and formal on Sunday. Brunch is also served on some Saturdays. Menu for the meals can be checked every prior Friday. Remember to book the meal online a day earlier if you intend to go.

Beside dining at hall, there are several kitchens in the college. The one in staircase 15 is the most popular one, check it out on Instagram @sc15kitchen. Other kitchens are opposite staircase 10, in staircase 14, and on the Island site respectively.

Other facilities provided by college:

Internet:

All rooms in college have free Ethernet access and Wi-Fi access is being developed around college too, available in almost all rooms. Ethernet cables can be bought for a couple of pounds from the lodge.

Printing:

The college has printers for student use. Wireless printing is in place, meaning you can print from anywhere in college using your university single sign-on. Use <https://print.oriel.ox.ac.uk> to send your documents to the printer.

Laundry:

The College laundry is located through an arch in second quad, opposite the College wall, with washing machines and tumble dryers, which are operated on a 'pay as you go' basis which can be paid for through an app.

Nurse:

The College Nurse is available five days a week and is based at Christ Church College (but very close to their Oriel Square entrance). The Nurse is students' first port of call for medical problems or queries and can also refer you to the GP's practice or another person. Her hours are posted on a notice in the Lodge and on Weblearn:

<https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/access/content/group/oriel/Students/Welfare/Medical/College%20Nurse>

A Swift Transition

National Societies:

There are many societies in Oxford promoting the different nationalities and cultures in the student body, which are a great way to meet new people, to promote your culture or to find out about another country's traditions. These societies will all be present at the OUSU (Oxford University Student Union) Freshers' Fair. Most nationalities have a society and some larger regions have one too.

Religious Societies and Chaplaincies:

For many of you, religious expression can be a part of your identity and something you've become accustomed to practising at home.

Oriel College has a chapel, which has Choral Evensong on a Sunday evening, and (Anglican) Holy Communion on Wednesdays, as well as a dedicated chaplain (chaplain@oriel.ox.ac.uk), Revd. Dr. Robert Wainwright.

However, for those of you from other religious backgrounds, there are many religious societies and chaplaincies available for you, which will hopefully let you feel at home. These are available on the university website: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/chaplaincy>. Furthermore, there are various churches and other places for worship in Oxford that are not associated with the university, which students frequently attend. The College Chapel also has a multi-faith prayer room and is a welcoming space for spiritual reflection and prayer for those of any faith.

Student Welfare:

Student Welfare Officers & Peer Supporters have all volunteered to help keep student welfare in mind. The junior deans are also a good contact point if you have any welfare concerns.

Also, the Chaplain, who is also a part of the welfare team (chaplain@oriel.ox.ac.uk) and Welfare deans (welfare@oriel.ox.ac.uk) are available for you as well.

There is also a racial concern form you can fill out should you experience any sort of racism while at Oriel ([Racial Concerns Form](#)).

JCR (Junior Common Room):

The JCR, Junior Common Room, works with College Staff to ensure that Oriel students get the most out of their time here. If you have a question or feedback on something that could be improved, feel free to contact one of the committee members or raise an issue in JCR meetings, which are open to all and happen every Sunday in the bar.

What you will need

Bedding:

Sheets, Pillowcase, Duvet Cover (and a towel). The college provides a duvet and pillow. Beds are single size (90x190 cm).

Subfusc:

The ‘uniform’ required for university exams throughout your degree, and which you will need for your matriculation, which will take place in the first couple of weeks of term. *Subfusc* is a dark suit with dark socks for men or a dark skirt with black tights or stockings or dark trousers with dark socks / hosiery for women, with a white shirt, along with special ‘Oxford’ accessories: a gown, mortarboard or soft cap, and white bow tie or black ribbon, all explained here: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/dress>.

This isn’t optional and you do get fined for not wearing it when you should be (don’t worry, this will be very clear!) and if you want to eat at ‘Formal Hall’ in Oriel (the latter, more formal, evening meal), you will need to wear a gown.

Subfusc is easily bought in Oxford, near Oriel, at Walters or Shepherd and Woodward, and these shops often do a ‘bundle’ of gown, mortarboard and tie/ribbon for about £35.

Websites: www.walters-oxford.co.uk, www.shepherdandwoodward.co.uk

Clothes:

Aside from the few occasions you must wear *subfusc*, there is no ‘uniform’ for classes in Oxford, so most students choose to keep it casual.

However, you are advised to keep a couple of more ‘dressy’ items handy: for men, jacket and tie and/or suits and for women, a smart outfit Formal Hall or for drinks events. (These events are fairly common – and often attended by your tutors, so whilst it may be a different cultural experience, this is all part of the Oxford life, as it were)

For more formal dinners and events you may want to partake in, the dress code will be ‘formal’, or sometimes ‘black tie’:

Formal: for men this means suit and normal tie; for women anything from a reasonably smart blouse and skirt/trousers to a dress.

Black tie: for men this is a dinner jacket and bow tie; for women any smart outfit.

If there is space in the luggage bringing a few select “novelty items” for bops (a type of party organised by the elected Entz) is a good idea though they can also be found in Primark.

There will also be a multicultural formal held once a term where you can dress in formal cultural/national dress if you wish to attend. If you have some, please feel free to bring your cultural/national dress to Oxford.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me by email:
shiyuan.li@oriel.ox.ac.uk. I'm looking forward to meeting you soon.