

Welcome to Oriel!

Hi freshers! Congratulations on your results and we look forward to meeting you and welcoming you all to Oriel soon. I'm Sam (she/her), your JCR (Junior Common Room) President. I'll save my whole introduction for when I meet you all in person soon, but here are some other amazing JCR Committee members with some advice:

A Message from Aryan

Hi! I'm Aryan (he/him), your Equalities and Access Officer. Oxford can be quite a daunting place. At Oriel we are dedicated to making Oxford as welcoming as possible. Before you arrive you'll be allocated a college "parent", a second-year normally from your subject who will act as your mentor throughout the year in all things Oriel. They should be in contact with you before you come to Oxford in October but if they haven't do not worry, you will meet them when you arrive in Oxford and will have plenty of time to grill them with every question you might have. College families are completely separate from more formal college welfare support (something you would be familiarised with in more detail during Freshers Week). College families are just an informal means by which any of your concerns can be addressed. I would advise engaging with the full breadth of welfare available at college during Fresher's when everyone is most available. Below is a link to provide us with more information about yourself in order to allocate you a college parent:

<https://forms.gle/Xc9Lib82QWJokSrj6>

As the Equalities and Access Officer, I will be spearheading a few events throughout the year. There will be a multicultural formal during term where people can dress in national/cultural dress so if you would like to, please bring some formal cultural/national dress with you to Oxford! There are also opportunities for students to receive training in how to encourage more students to apply to Oxford from their state schools through the IIDOL scheme (inspiring through identifying oriel ladder scheme). You are in the unique position to inspire people from your socioeconomic and academic background and can share your experiences on how you overcame any barriers.

At Oriel, diversity, in all of its forms, is valued, celebrated, and nurtured and we want everyone to feel welcome at Oriel. We were in your shoes this time last year and we all understand what it's like coming to university. I highly encourage you to ask any questions you might have about life at Oriel and Oxford – we're all here to help you enjoy your time at University. We are looking forward to meeting you in October.

A Message from Ben

Hello I'm Ben (he/him), the JCR Class Officer. Oriel, or Oxford in general may appear as a daunting place, especially to those from state educated and working class backgrounds. I'm here to ensure that Oriel remains welcoming to all, regardless of their socio-economic circumstances. To ensure that Oriel remains as welcoming as possible I have organised the 'class parents' scheme. This scheme is aimed at those who identify as being from either/ both a state educated or working class background.

'Class Parents' works similarly to the prior mentioned 'college parents' scheme, however, in this case you will be linked to a current student from a state educated background and similar region. This will provide someone who will be able to relate to and deal with any queries specific to incoming students from those backgrounds. Whether this scheme remains useful to you or not, I'd recommend any person from a state school background sign up to be a part of it. At the end of the day it's one less person to ask 'What's your name?', 'Where are you from?', 'Birmingham, oh I have a mate from Birmingham, have you met them?', 'No?',

‘What do you mean not everyone from Birmingham knows each other personally???’ come freshers week! (We’ve all been there)

The link to sign up is below:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1RYOecLTs9ZxmyC4b0PTcSSrtOmbvIzqvSoAr8X_xqvg/edit

A Message from Anwyll

Hi! I’m Anwyll (he/him). As LGBTQ+ Officer for Oriel JCR, it’s my job to support and help students who identify as LGBTQ+ or are questioning their sexuality and/or gender identity, as well as making sure that Oriel is a safe and welcoming place for all. As a member of the JCR, you will be allowed access to the gender expression fund which grants any students a reimbursement of up to £40 a year in the purchase of gender affirming items (binder, packer, binding/tucking tape etc.). I am also here to listen to anyone who has worries or concerns regarding their identity and will, of course, keep it 100% confidential.

On a more fun note, I can let you know what LGBTQ+ events are going on (Tuesdays, Drag & Disorderly) so you can feel more connected to the LGBTQ+ community at large, within Oxford. I’ll be hosting an LGBTQ+ drinks event in freshers’ week, where they’ll be both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks (made by yours truly, master of mixology). Please come along, I can’t wait to meet you all!

Some key things to note:

Arriving in Oxford

For the majority of people, we assume you will arrive by car due to all the belongings you will be bringing along and getting (forcing) parents/guardians/friends to help you carry to your new room. If this is the case, you will be designated a morning or afternoon arrival window (which will be sent to you later), and will come into Oriel Square, directly outside the entrance to college. It’s not very large, so there is a 45-minute time limit on parking to ensure that there is space available for those arriving (there will be loads of you arriving all on one day as you can imagine). Lots of us will be on hand to greet, direct, and help you move in; please ask us any questions during the process, we are very friendly! To get your parking permit, go into the Porter’s Lodge (helpers will be there to show you in) and ask one of the porters.

However, if arriving by car **you CANNOT drive along the High Street between King Edward Street and Merton Street during the day**. You will be fined as it is a bus gate. The easiest way to get round this if you are coming from Magdalen Bridge/Headington/Cowley direction into town is to go along the High Street and turn down Merton Street, which leads directly into Oriel Square. To access Oriel Square from the Westgate Shopping Centre/Botley end of town, you can drive along the High Street then turn down King Edward Street. Just be careful not to drive on the High Street between Merton Street and King Edward Street. While technically the bus gate is between Queen’s Lane and Cattedon Street (a slightly longer distance), generally these techniques have worked well.

Once your 45 minute parking in Oriel Square is up, you will need to move your vehicle to make space for others. There are a few spaces on King Edward Street and Merton Street, which are pay and display, and more around Oxford (for instance in the Westgate Shopping

Centre parking lot, which has worked well for me (Sam)). The Park & Ride service around Oxford also runs very often and efficiently.

If you are arriving by train, the station is a 15-20 minute walk, but there are also buses which run from the station to the High Street.

If you have any other queries about arrival, please email one of us!

What to bring

Alongside the essentials, here are some things we suggest and recommend bringing with you if you wish:

- You will be given a duvet, pillow, and mattress topper, but some choose to bring their own. You will need to bring your own bedding; we recommend 2 sets. You will also have a desk lamp in your room, and one near/on your bedside table.
- The scouts will clean your room once a week and empty the bins regularly, but we recommend bringing some anti-bacterial wipes or some other cleaning products if you like to keep extra tidy - as candles and incense are not allowed, a reed diffuser can add a lovely touch, and keep things smelling clean, too.
- Laundry bin, detergent, stain remover. The college uses the circuit laundry system for washing machine facilities (like many other university accommodation) which uses an app (or card you are able to top up with cash) that you can sort when you get here.
- You are allowed to keep a toaster, kettle, and mini fridge in your room (all electronics will be PAT tested). While you don't need these as they are available in the kitchens, they are quite handy. There is a small annual fee for keeping a fridge in your room, but it's worth it, and it can stay in your room during the vacs, unlike the rest of your belongings.
- Towels, bathmat, toiletry storage caddy/organiser, hand soap, and sometimes extra toilet roll can be handy
- Try and keep kitchenware minimal as, unless you're an avid chef, you're unlikely to use it all. Basic seasonings are also helpful, but can easily be bought when you arrive in Oxford.
- Don't forget sub-fusc! This is the formal wear which is obligatory for matriculation and exams. Here's a link to the details of what you will need from the university: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/dress>. You can buy it at Shepherd and Woodward right next to college, and can also order from there in advance. There are other shops across Oxford which also sell it (Walters of Oxford, Ede and Ravenscroft). Shepherd and Woodward sell the gown for £34.99, or a gown, headwear, and neckwear package for £39.99. The prices are much the same across the shops. You can also buy them second hand, just make sure it's the right gown (undergraduate ones are shorter than postgraduate), for instance on facebook marketplace.
 - We recommend, if possible, to get this before your move-in date, as lines can be long in the first week to get them in person from the shops, but most get it once they arrive.
- Decorations for your room - you will have a pin board, but cannot add any fixtures/blu-tack to the walls beyond the board (not even command hooks). Pictures from home, fairy lights, posters, blankets etc all help to make your room feel much more homely, just remember pins for the board.
- First aid bits, painkillers, cold care – there's a high chance (unfortunately) you will get the famous Freshers' Flu and it's not the most fun, so best to prepare in advance.

- Other: extension cords, hangers, maybe an iron, mugs and glasses, a KeepCup or other reusable coffee container (you can buy these round Oxford – they're the only thing allowed if you want to take any drink other than water into a library), water bottle, kitchen roll, tupperware, swimwear (especially if you want to row), clothes horse/dryer, portable charger, board games, plants, speaker, bottle opener, passport photos (for clubs and societies) and important docs, formal wear, clubbing trainers if that's your kind of thing, face masks (just in case!), scissors, blankets, fancy dress (bops have themes and you will need to dress up more than you may expect, but there are also a couple of charity shops nearby for last minute costumes!).

Useful (we think) tips:

- Freshers' Week is very hectic and social and can be overwhelming, but we are doing our best to ensure that there are a range of activities (both involving alcohol and not, you don't need to feel any pressure to drink if it's not your thing!), but don't feel obligated to attend every single thing. Although a lot of effort has gone into planning, and we would love to have as many of you there as possible, make sure to take a quiet night for yourself if you need.
- Moving in can be very emotional and scary for some people, and this is completely normal. Let one of the helpers know if you need help adjusting to the new environment, and make sure you take the time you need to let yourself settle in. Not attending every single event in Freshers' Week will not prevent you from making friends.
- During the first few days of Freshers' Week, you will generally be allowed to eat in hall without having booked in advance, but it is good to get into the habit of booking ahead, and during Freshers it is a great way of meeting and chatting to people. You will get more info about the meal booking process later.
- Try and throw yourself into Freshers' Week – it can be exhausting, but you will meet so many new people and start to figure out who your friends might be. Not everyone meets their closest friends during the week, so don't stress if you don't feel like you've found your group yet – most people are eager to just get out there and chat to as many people as possible, so it can feel chaotic! The events are designed to let you meet people and see the various things Oxford has to offer, and one of the best things about Oriel is the small(ish) year groups, meaning you will chat to most of your peers within the week.
- Do approach your tutors (via email) if you are unsure about what is expected of you in terms of work. They really are here to help and are lovely people who don't expect you to know what you're doing early on!

If you want to keep in touch or keep track of things going on the student-run side of things, make sure to join the Oriel JCR Facebook group, and follow us on Instagram @oriel_jcr

Other than that, if you have any questions or queries, you can email one of us!

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