

## Welcome to Oriel!

Hi freshers! Congratulations on your results and we can't wait to meet you all. I'm Amy (she/her), your JCR (Junior Common Room) President. Here are some JCR Committee members with some excellent advice for you:

### A Message from Layla

Hey everyone! I'm Layla (she/her), this year's Equalities and Access Officer! I'll be here to help with anything you feel you need to be comfortable and feel **welcome** at Oriel. Diversity and equality are key values at Oriel that we have built and continue to foster to the greatest extent- it is a core belief that we should establish a community where students always feel safe and **welcome**!

My role as Officer will include initiating events like multicultural/women's/LGBTQ+ formals, providing support to awareness events (such as for disabilities or consent), and carrying on fun, casual and relaxed events like multicultural takeaway nights or worldwide movie nights!

Freshers, please do remember to bring your very own cultural dress for our very exciting Multicultural formal hall which will take place in Michealmas Term Week 6, and is a great way to show your culture at Oxford with new friends! You can be dressed in whatever may be considered formal/fancy attire in your culture, so express yourselves

As we all know first-hand how intimidating being an oncoming student at Oxford can be, our system of "college families" can be a great way to help ease your worries outside of formal college restraints. This is essentially where you are assigned college "parents", also known as second year students studying the same / similar subjects, who will help guide and mentor you throughout the year in college matters and Oxford life in general informally.

Hopefully, you will have heard from them and gotten to know a little bit about who they are before arriving at Oxford, but they will also be on hand for whatever you may need help with and have questions about once you are here. Of course, though they are a casual, easy and great way to get information about Oriel and Oxford, they are only one facet of welfare support at Oriel, which you will learn more about once you arrive. To help you attain the best college parents for you, I've added a form which may narrow down the options and get you as similar a parent as possible!

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdSW11HUDLdkz-fm718lt25ojpVydZMWyTT62Lg33QKoYbA/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdSW11HUDLdkz-fm718lt25ojpVydZMWyTT62Lg33QKoYbA/viewform?usp=sf_link)

There may also be a class parents' scheme that is not directly linked with the college parents' scheme but is another way to build a wider informal college support/knowledge base if needed, so please do check that out if you'd like! I wish you all the best and look forward to meeting you in October :)

### A Message from Hunor

Hi, I'm Hunor (he/him), the Class Officer at the Oriel **JCR**. I represent students who are working-class, state educated, or first-generation university students, so do read this if you are part of any of these groups! I know coming to Oxford/Oriel can be daunting for anyone, especially if you come from a state school or working-class background. I'm here to make sure that everyone feels **welcome** and included in the **JCR**, regardless of where they come from or what their social background is. I will introduce myself again in fresher's week, but if you have any questions or concerns about class-related issues in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me and I will do my best to help!

I also want to promote the “Class Parents” scheme the JCR organises, which is similar to the general College Parents scheme, but you are paired with a second-year student of a similar background and location (where possible) so they can give you advice from a perspective that is more specific to students from comparable state school/class backgrounds. The scheme has been very popular in past years (including with me), so if you think you relate to any of these points please do sign up! It is a great way to get to know people in a similar situation to yourself, and I’m sure Class Parents would be more than happy to answer any questions you may have. I highly recommend taking part so if you are at all interested, please do consider signing up!

### **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 (binders, packers, binding/tucking tape etc.). As a trained peer supporter, 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. Last year, I organised Oriel’s first LGBTQ+ Formal which was attended by many, including a queer alumna who also gave a speech - it’d be great to make this an annual event! I’ll be hosting an LGBTQ+ drinks event in freshers’ week, where they’ll be both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. Please come along, I can’t wait to meet you all!

### **Some key things to note:**

#### **Arriving in Oxford**

We assume most of you will arrive by car and getting (forcing) parents/guardians/friends to help carry your stuff to your new room. If this is the case, drive to Oriel Square - directly outside college - during your designated morning or afternoon arrival window, which will be sent to you later. There is a 45-minute time limit on parking to ensure everyone has time to arrive. 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 here to help! 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 Cattle Street (a slightly longer distance), generally these techniques have worked well.

Once your parking slot time 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 in the past). 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.

### 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 nice 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 many find it 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.
- 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 like your own, 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, 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 but can be overwhelming. 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!). 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 difficult 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 year 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!

Please join the Oriel JCR Facebook group - we know Oxford's old-fashioned but Facebook really is useful. To find out more about us, follow us on Instagram @oriel\_jcr and @oriel.entz.

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

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