

Oriel College Alternative Prospectus

A prospectus designed and written by students for students.

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Intro

Welcome to Oriel College’s Alternative Prospectus! We hope you find this resource helpful and informative. Current students have worked hard to gather together all the key details you should know when looking around the various wonderful colleges at the University of Oxford.

Orielove!

Amy, Sam, Caitie, Georgia & the Oriel JCR

Facilities

Oriel, like many other colleges provides numerous facilities for students:

A 24 hour library, music room, common room, bar, chapel, squash court, sports ground, boat house, and 3 gyms across our accommodation.

In addition to all this, the common room sports a table tennis table, TV with HDMI connections for movie nights, as well as a Wii and PlayStation. We also have a communal iron and ironing board, airbed, bike pump, and camera that can be loaned from the JCR storage room, as well as numerous arts and crafts materials and outdoor equipment like picnic blankets, croquet set, and boules set that can be used on some of the college quads during the Trinity (summer) term.

But importantly, any student can request an item or improvement or addition to our facilities by submitting a motion at a weekly JCR meeting!

The Arts

There is so much to get involved with in the arts at Oriel! The JCR Arts Rep organises at least one arts-related event per term, and there are plenty of extracurriculars which allow students to either start or improve on an element of the arts which they enjoy

Writing

Within Oriel, we have our very own student-led magazine, 'The Poor Print' which publishes several issues throughout the term around a specific theme. Themes have ranged from 'Womanhood' to 'Century' to 'Lingering' and submissions often include opinion pieces, poetry, prose, and student artwork, so it's a great way of showcasing the creativity of our student body. It's also a more relaxed way to get involved in student journalism at Oxford.

Music

Music forms a big part of college life, and there is something for everyone. The college music room is a beautiful space which can be used for individual and group practise, as well as a place for small concerts. Moreover, a very large part of the music at Oriel is the Chapel Choir, who sing services several times a week, as well the carol concert. It's a great way to socialise - with free formals after services and a funded tour every summer - as well as sing a lot of fantastic repertoire.

Follow the choir on Instagram [@therealoccc](https://www.instagram.com/therealoccc) and sign up to auditions either at the SU Freshers Fair or by emailing the director of music (musicdirector@oriel.ox.ac.uk)

Finally, The Oriel College Music Society, recently reinstated after Covid, runs an orchestra, as well as putting on concerts and events each term.

Drama

The theatrical life at Oriel is similarly vibrant! Each year our students organise a garden play to be performed in Oriel's very own First Quad. Recent productions have included 'The Importance of Being Earnest', 'Twelfth Night', and 'A Midsummer Nights' Dream'.

What's more, Oriel JCR sets aside a large portion of its yearly budget to pledge to various other productions across Oxford that Oriel students are involved in.

Welfare

Oxford is an amazing place to be, but it doesn't come without its challenges. Arriving at University, especially one of such academic rigour can be daunting, but there is lots of support available. In Oriel, there is an extensive welfare team, led by the Deans and the Chaplain Rob Wainwright. For any concerns, whether it be to do with academics or personal life, the 'Welfare Deans' can be contacted. They are postgraduate students who are paid to help with any problems and are great people to talk to. The Chaplain Rob is also available to speak to about any welfare issues - to provide confidential advice and counsel to anyone, regardless of religious background or belief. If you are struggling with work, or mental health issues are affecting your work, do let your tutors know, as they understand how busy Oxford can get, as well as getting in touch with the Welfare Deans.

Within the JCR, there are also two 'Welfare Officers', who organise welfare events throughout term and have been peer-support trained so are also available to speak to about any issues you might be having! In particular, during Fifth Week of each term - famed for the onset of "Fifth Week Blues" it can often bring, the Welfare Reps organise a number of activities throughout the week in order to provide some relief or distraction, as this point in term can feel quite stressful.

The University also offers a comprehensive counselling service, with trained counsellors, who can be contacted for appointments or enquiries via counselling@admin.ox.ac.uk.

Remember that there is **always** someone you can talk to if you're struggling! Whether it be friends or the welfare support in Oriel/the University there are people around to help and you aren't alone :)

Accom

Oriel guarantees accommodation for the entirety of the students' degrees. Almost all first and second-years choose to live together in Oriel College (either Main Site or Island Site) - something that not all colleges offer and a fantastic way to build friendships between the two cohorts. Moreover, first-year students do not have the stress of securing roommates and a house as they settle into life at Oxford.

All rooms are graded A*-D based on their size, ensuite status and location. The grading affects the price which means that students can choose the room that best fits their budget. Second year students are given the opportunity to 'set' or 'flat' - sharing a private living room between two or three people - and after the first year, there is a ballot system in place to allocate accommodation.

Food and Drink

Food and Drink plays a big role at Oriel. Our students have easy access to kitchens right the way through their degrees which are fitted with ovens, fridges and toasters. Many students, however, choose to eat in Hall as the food is delicious and well-priced. Breakfast, Lunch, Informal Hall and Formal Hall are

every day except Saturday and brunches on Saturday and Sunday are an especially good time to catch up with everyone over a Full English and/or muffins, waffles and pancakes.

Formal Hall is a particularly special Oriel tradition - offered more often than at most colleges - and incredibly good value with an excellent three-course dinner for just under £9. Formal Hall is a fantastic time to put on a nice outfit and celebrate birthdays or events. Moreover, Head Butler Asefay and his team are friendly and approachable when it comes to any allergy and dietary requirements.

Oriel is similarly one of the only colleges to offer 'tuck' or a small shop where you can buy soft drinks, chocolate and crisps in the JCR. Each year appoints a 'Tuck Rep' who will buy these snacks every two weeks and requests for particular items can be made. The Tuck Rep also supplies a generous amount of tuck for JCR meetings on Sunday evenings so be sure to pop by for some free snacks!

Moreover, Oriel is on the High Street with fantastic options such as Chickpea or the Covered Market only a few minutes' walk away. Good sized supermarkets are equally convenient.

Sport

If you have heard about Oriel before, then you'll probably know about our rowing reputation. We have been Head of the River (the winners in a rowing race between Oxford colleges) more times than any other college. Rowing at Oriel is incredibly special and a wonderfully inclusive space as our coaches dedicate an incredible amount of their time to helping novices improve. Oriel is one of the only colleges to offer rowing for free, unlike other colleges which can charge around £70 for a termly membership. Rowing in Torpids (March) or Summer VIIIs (May) is unlike any other rowing race as boats are allowed to ram into each other and we strongly encourage you to get involved!

Of course, Oriel's focus on sport extends beyond rowing. Netball, football, rugby and running are all fantastic ways to get involved with the Oriel community. Sports at Oriel can be done in a serious or casual manner - there's a place for everyone. For those with a more competitive spirit, 'coppers' (an inter-collegiate sports competition) is a termly opportunity to represent Oriel! All sport teams have their own social secretaries who organise often weekly 'crew dates', a fun night with alcohol, restaurant food and a sports team from another college. This is a fantastic way not only to get to know people from Oriel (especially in older years) but also from other colleges. Sport at Oriel means more than just physical exercise - it's a genuinely supportive network.

Social Life

In College

Oriel's social life is more than just crew dates - it also means BOPs (Big Organised Parties), Oriel Fridays and our once-a-year Pancake-flipping race!

BOPs can be with only Oriel students (usually located in Oriel) or sometimes a mega-BOP where other colleges combine with Oriel to rent out all/part of a nightclub. BOPs have a theme, be it 'dress as your degree', 'dress as your type' or outfits based on blockbuster films (past and present) (e.g. Barbie, Shrek) or holidays (e.g. Halloween). The BOPs have fantastic music and often start with free shots - make sure you don't miss out on our college drink, Glennies!

It could not be a Friday without Oriel Fridays. Each Friday, Oriel organises a night of good tunes and even better dancing. We always finish by singing 'American Pie' so be sure to come along.

Out College

Whilst we firmly believe that in-college life is a lot more fun than out of college life, the rest of Oxford has still been in part the reason for some of our best memories. We mourn the tragic loss of our favourite nightclub, ATIK but are very grateful for the continued existence of the club with the best smoking area in town, Bridge. Out of college can also mean sneaking into other college bars...our favourites being Balliol and St Peter's. Their college drinks are famous for good reason.

Out of college life has to include university-wide societies which come with their own fantastic social events. Whether it's sport or your degree subject or your secret hobby, we highly recommend getting involved!

International

Daunted by the prospects of joining Oriel College as an international student? Fret not!

Oriel College has a thriving international College community - everyone will eventually settle into the College at their own pace. The JCR International Officer frequently organises special international student events throughout the year such as international themed dinners celebrating our diverse cultures from various corners around the globe. For this year, we are planning to connect with international students online and organise various events with other colleges to help you find a footing at Oxford.

There is also a university-wide orientation programme for international students at the beginning of Freshers' Week, discussing the practicalities of settling into a new home. Keep a lookout for the various themed events occurring throughout the year and we promise you a memorable time at Oriel College.

Equalities

Oriel is a super welcoming place, and we want to make sure that everyone feels that they belong. Because of the smaller student size, there is a real community feel to the college, in which everyone has equal access to opportunities and support.

On the JCR Committee, there are a range of roles in order to allow a diversity of representation, such as Class Officer, Wom*n's Officer, LGBTQ+ Officer, Disabilities and Mental Health, and Cultural and Ethnic Minorities, all of whom liaise with the college in order to ensure that Oriel is an equal and accessible place to be, as well as organising events throughout the year to promote this.

Myths and Traditions

Oxford, and especially Oriel, feature some rather strange and interesting traditions. While it may seem intimidating to enter a place with so much history and a mythical air, here are some quick descriptions so you're in the loop!

Matriculation is the ceremony at the start of a student's first year of their degree at Oxford, where they are sworn in as students of the university. The ceremony happens in the Sheldonian theatre and is accompanied by quite a bit of Latin and smart outfits, or academic 'sub fusc'.

Oxmas was born out of the fact that Oxford term dates are rather short, and students are all moved out of college usually by the time December comes around. Instead, November is celebrated as the Christmas month. The 24th/25th of November sees Oxmas formals take place, with the usual turkey, trimmings, and Christmas crackers. Oriel also organises a candy cane scheme, where students can send the traditional sweet treat with a message to other students.

Oriel similarly celebrates **Valentine's Day**, although on the correct date, through the 'Orielve' confessions Facebook page, and like Oxmas, the giving of roses with personal messages to fellow students.

A specifically Oriel tradition is the **annual pancake race** around first quad on Shrove Tuesday. On the historical 'pancake day', students get into groups, dress in sub fusc, grab a pancake and a frying pan, and compete in a relay, running a lap of the quad and flipping and catching the pancake on each corner. An incredibly bizarre activity, but insanely fun. Who wouldn't partake as a little study break?

May Day occurs, as one might guess, on the 1st May. It is a challenge for students to stay up all night on the last day of April in order to witness the Magdalen college choir singing to welcome in the summer at 6am in the morning. Clubs and shops are open all night and revelries ensue the next morning, including many groups of traditional Morris dancers.

Another first quad tradition is the **boat burning** that occurs after the summer eights rowing competition between the various colleges. If you win 'head of the river' you parade through the streets of Oxford, and at Oriel we have been known to carry a wooden boat and lay it in our first quad to be ceremoniously burned and sung around.

Carnations are a university-wide tradition that sweetens up the ordeal of exams just a bit. During your examinations, your college parents (students in the year above you, with either one or both doing your subject) will buy you three

carnations: red, pink, and white. You pin the white one to your sub fusc for your first exam, the pink for any in-between ones, and red for your last exam!

Jargon

When coming to Oxford, the last thing you might want after the huge adjustment that is moving to Uni is encountering a whole other set of vocab that seems to infect almost every sentence you'll hear. To get the lingo down a bit easier, here's a short list of some of the most common terms you'll hear thrown around:

Battels - College bill at the beginning of each term which includes rent for that term and previous term's food bill/other charges like printing or stash

Bod Card - officially stands for 'Bodleian Card', so the card that grants you access to the Bodleian library complex in Oxford, faculty buildings, and Oriel itself, including the staircase to your room! Very important, and costly to replace! (also your student ID!)

Collections - the in-college, unofficial exams we sit at the start of each term which covers what was learnt the previous term, thus 'collecting' your knowledge. They don't count towards your final degree grade, and are just helpful so you know where you are and what you need to work on.

JCR, MCR, SCR - the various 'common rooms' in college, all physical spaces, but also student or staff bodies of representation: Junior Common Room (undergrad), Middle Common Room (postgrad), and Senior Common Room (professors, Fellows) respectively.

Michaelmas, Hilary, Trinity - the unique names for the 3 terms, Autumn/Winter, Spring, and Summer respectively.

Porters - the amazing staff members that sit in the college lodge, and who can help you out with everything from sorting you out if you lose your Bod card, to organising post and parcels (each student gets their own 'pidge' or pigeon hole shelf in the lodge for mail)

Scout- Friendly housekeeping faces, make sure you open the door when they knock!

Sub Fusc - the fancy clothing you wear for official university ceremonies like matriculation and in-person examinations, and includes a gown, a white shirt, suit trousers/skirt, bow tie, tie, or ribbon to complete.

Stash - essentially college (or club or committee) merchandise, usually an item of clothing with a logo and/or your initials

Vac - short for vacation, the summer holiday is sometimes referred to as the 'long vac'

Charity

At the beginning of each academic year, the Oriel community has the opportunity to choose the causes that really matter to us. We all get the chance

to vote for 3 charities – one local to Oxford, one national, and one international. All the money we raise over the year will be distributed equally between these. Everyone who sports our beautiful Oriel merch, or 'stash', will have helped to raise money for our college charities. Every November, many members of our college take part in Movember, supporting the brilliant charity changing the face of men's health. Throughout the year, there are also multiple charity events, from bake sales to charity auctions.

In Oxford more generally, there are countless opportunities to contribute to the charitable work of the city. From getting dressed up and attending the 'Raise and Give' Oxford Ball, supporting student fundraising across the university, to giving a couple of hours of your time to charities such as Oxford Mutual Aid, packing food parcels for people facing food insecurity in our area. Getting involved with charities is such a valuable and rewarding use of our time, and at Oriel we are so proud of all of our contributions.