



Oriel College

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



Freshers' Quick Guide 2026

THIS GUIDE

This quick guide contains most of the official information you will need when you first arrive at Oriel. It will get you started but you must also take time to read through the *Oriel College Student Handbook* which has a lot more detail on College procedures, rules and services. The JCR Freshers' Reps will also be able to help you adjust to life in College.

WELCOME FROM THE PROVOST

I am delighted to welcome you to Oriel College. As an Oriensis myself, I know what a wonderful institution this is and how your time here can help shape your future.

The physical surroundings of the College are beautiful, of course, but what really makes Oriel such an extraordinary place is you, our students. Every College has a personality. Perhaps ours is characterised by the combination of our long history and keen sense of tradition mixed with modern ideas and stimulating intellectual pursuits. We want all of our students to thrive here, and it is important that this is a place where, for the next three or more years, you feel at home; that you feel welcome, respected and challenged educationally.

Coming to Oriel as a first gen student was a life-changing experience for me and I truly hope that it will be for you too.

I'm very much looking forward to meeting you all.

Neil Mendoza



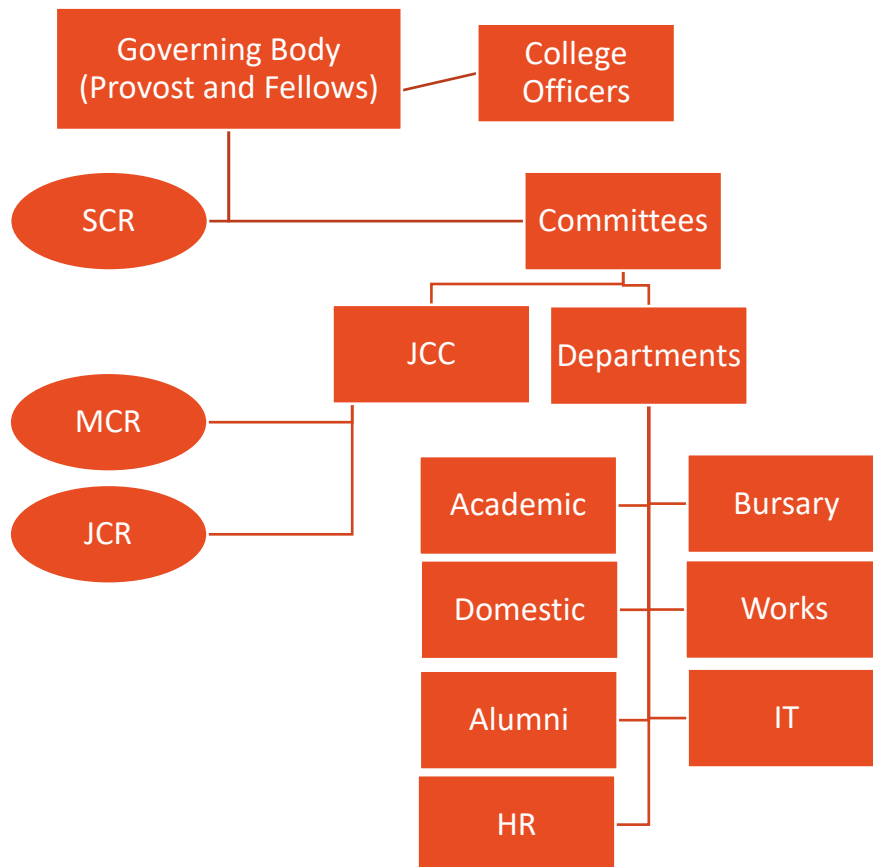
"I NEED HELP WITH..."

Here are some useful e-mail addresses of people you can ask for help about:

My offer/course before I arrive	admissions@oriel.ox.ac.uk
First aid/emergency General problems	The Lodge 01865 276555 porters.lodge@oriel.ox.ac.uk
Questions about my room or cleaning	accommodation.manager@oriel.ox.ac.uk
Something is broken	Maintenance request form on Oriel website
Computer/network issues	it-support@oriel.ox.ac.uk
Paying my fees/battels	sales@oriel.ox.ac.uk
Welfare needs	welfare@oriel.ox.ac.uk chaplain@oriel.ox.ac.uk nurse@oriel.ox.ac.uk
Disability support	academic.registrar@oriel.ox.ac.uk
Noisy neighbours, booking rooms	deans@oriel.ox.ac.uk
Needing financial help	studentfinancialsupport@oriel.ox.ac.uk
Academic questions	Contact your tutor
Lost Bod card	academic.assistant@oriel.ox.ac.uk

HOW DOES COLLEGE WORK?

How the College fits together can be perplexing. Basically there are three 'common rooms', both physical spaces and groups of people: the Senior Common Room (**SCR**) for Fellows, academics and department heads (see diagram below), the Middle Common Room (**MCR**) for graduate students, and the Junior Common Room (**JCR**) for undergraduates. There is a big staff team too. **Governing Body** (the Provost and 44 Fellows) are the trustees of the College. They include **College Officers** like the Treasurer, Senior Tutor and Senior Dean. They run the College through the various **Committees** where they liaise with heads of different **Departments**. One of these committees is Joint Consultative Committee (**JCC**) where members of all three common rooms meet to talk together about issues affecting all of us.



THE LODGE

The Lodge is the first port of call for anyone who visits Oriel. Sam Henry and his team of porters are on duty 24/7 keeping the College secure and doing their best to help with any questions you ask them. They are a mine of information not only about Oriel but also about the city.

You might want to ask about:

- Keys – the Lodge holds all keys and spares if you lose one.
- Post – check your pigeonhole every day and collect parcels promptly.
- Bikes – you must register your bike with the Lodge.
- Gyms – ask about booking an induction.

Fire alarm tests are carried out every Friday between 10am and 12 noon – if you hear an alarm at this time or the alarm goes on for less than 30 seconds, you do not need to evacuate. If you hear an alarm at any other time or the alarm sounds for more than 30 seconds, please leave the building immediately. Full fire evacuation drills are carried out termly. Please note, the drills will be early in the morning.

LIVING IN COLLEGE

All undergraduate freshers live in Third Quad or the Island Site alongside other students, Fellows and the Provost. We hope you will quickly feel at home in this special place that brings together recreation and study. Please respect the community you are a part of by looking after your room and shared spaces, and being considerate towards other members. During your time at Oriel you will get to know College staff very well. They will always treat you with respect, so please offer them the same respect in return.

Your bedroom

- a **student room checklist** will be put into your room at the beginning of term. Please fill it out, note all the little scuffs and problems with your room when you arrive.



- **nothing** on the walls, no nails, no blue/white tack – pin it on your noticeboard please.
- the bins (white for rubbish, blue for recycling) will be emptied once per week. If you don't want to be disturbed please leave your bin outside your door. If your bin is heavy or has food residue sloshing about at the bottom, please empty it yourself. The large recycling bins are behind 2nd Quad and at the bottom of Staircase 34.
- you may have a toaster and a kettle only in your room (no rice cookers, sandwich toasters, Foreman grills, etc.)
- don't iron on the carpet or you may be charged to replace the carpet in the whole room – please use an ironing board.

The scouts (cleaners) are important people who look after your room and look out for you as well. Scouts will sanitise common areas – doorknobs, light switches, stair rails etc. – twice a day. At the bottom of every staircase is a schedule that indicates which day the scout will attend to your room. Please accommodate them in their efforts to keep the College clean and safe.

Maintenance – If something in your room or a shared space needs to be fixed or replaced (e.g., light bulbs, a broken chair) please report it on the Maintenance request form at the bottom right corner of the Oriel home page.

Kitchens – Scouts will sanitise surfaces and empty bins in kitchens once a day. It is your responsibility to wash up and put away all items after use, and to clean thoroughly after use with disinfectant wipes which the College will supply.

Oriel is signed up to the UUK Accommodation Code of Practice (ACOP). It outlines everything students can expect from their accommodation as well as their responsibilities as tenants. There is a link to the Code on the Oriel website, or Google “the student accommodation code”.

EATING IN COLLEGE

One of the great experiences of being a student in Oxford is becoming part of that dining tradition and having great conversation over meals, as well as many memorable banquets for special occasions. There is a flexible booking system for meals. You will soon become familiar with the Butler, Asefay Aberaha, and his team.



Formal Dinner

- **What should I wear?** Gowns must be worn. Students must be smartly dressed (a jacket and tie or equivalent, smart shoes and gowns). At Formal Hall on Wednesdays and Sundays (Guest Nights) students should wear suits or equivalent dress. Members of College are responsible for the behaviour of their guests and for letting them know the dress code.
- **Arrive in good time.** If you arrive after High Table, your admission is at the discretion of the Butler.
- **Drinks** can be purchased in Hall beforehand. You need your Bod card.
- When High Table (the SCR and their guests) arrive everyone stands in silence until the College Grace has been said.
- Avoid using your phone. If you need to leave early, please do so discretely.
- At the end the senior Fellow will bang the gavel. All stand in silence for the closing Grace and until High Table has left.
- On Sundays students are invited to join the Provost and his guests at 6pm for Chapel and for pre-dinner drinks in the Provost's Lodgings afterwards.

Dietary requirements must be noted when you book a meal. Students with acute allergies should notify the College as soon as possible when they arrive. When booking a meal on the Meal Booking System, please use the 'Special Dietary Requirements' section to list any food allergies, intolerances or religious requirements. This part of the form should not be used to indicate food 'preferences'. The College may be unable to cater for you if you don't let the kitchen know in advance.

The Bar has a wide range of drinks at very reasonable prices. Please do not bring your own drinks to the Bar – this is strictly prohibited.

TUTORIALS

Dr John Huber is the Senior Tutor, and also a Fellow and Tutor in Engineering. He oversees all tuition in Oriel, which normally happens in small groups of two or three students. Your Main Organising Tutor(s) will keep an eye on your academic progress and will arrange various tutorials in your subject.



Although Freshers' Week is full of activities and inductions, you will find that you soon have work to do. Your tutors will explain what is expected when you meet them. It is important that you keep up with any assignments you are given, and you will need to set aside time to make a start on your studies.

You will have at least one tutorial per week. Attendance at tutorials is compulsory, and it is important that you prepare for them. Your tutor is there to monitor your progress, provide support and feedback and to help you achieve your full potential. Feel free to ask them questions if you are unsure about anything. You are expected to attend all classes prescribed by your tutors (whether organised by College or your department/faculty). If something prevents you from attending a tutorial, you must contact your tutor as soon as possible.

Before undertaking any extra-curricular activity or employment which is likely to be particularly time-consuming (e.g. officership in any University/College society, club or sports team, fully elected Officers of the JCR), students need to gain the formal permission of their tutors. Students should be aware that this is ultimately at the discretion of the College. This is because



your main role here is as students, and your academic life should take precedence over extra-curricular activities.

As students of Oriel you should aspire to academic excellence, something that cannot be achieved unless you exercise your freedom of thought and expression and respect that of others.

WELFARE AND DISCIPLINE

College takes the safety and wellbeing of all our members very seriously. We know that University life is very demanding and, for most students, this is your first experience of living away from home. We hope you will look out for each other as Oriel students. The JCR welfare reps and trained Peer Supporters are good people to chat to.

Oriel welfare operates on a principle of 'listen and refer'. Often it really does help simply to talk things through with someone experienced. Sometimes we will help you to access University-wide or external professional services.

The College's Welfare Team will be able to help you with any issues that come up, big or small. Approach any member of the team you feel comfortable talking to. They will be happy to listen and, if they can't help, they will find someone who can. They will always treat you with respect and discretion.



The Senior Dean is Dr [Dominic Alonzi](#). He oversees all disciplinary and welfare matters, and is also a Fellow and Tutor in Biochemistry. The [Junior Deans](#), Angelica Rossi-Hawkins and Will Hugh-Jones, are responsible for discipline and can help you if you need to book a room for a party or other event. Students are expected to inform themselves of and observe College rules. The [Welfare Deans](#), Paul Heller and Marta Bielinska, have no disciplinary role; they offer an empathetic listening ear and can help refer you to professional medical and counselling services.





You can speak to the Chaplain, Rev Dr [Rob Wainwright](#), in complete confidentiality. The Academic Registrar for Students, Mr [Joseph Cole](#), is able to help with disability advice and academic support. The College Nurse also has a surgery nearby if you feel unwell.



FEASTS AND TRADITIONS

Oriel is the fifth oldest college in Oxford, founded in 1326 by King Edward II and Adam de Brome. That makes us Oxford's oldest royal foundation. The King is still our Visitor to this day. The College's full name is 'The House of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Oxford, commonly known as Oriel College' because the College is dedicated to Mary and we took over a very big 12th century house called 'La Oriole'. Look out for these events to mark special occasions that continue traditions both old and new.

Freshers' Dinner (October) – a welcome feast for new students.

Matriculation (October) – students formally join the University at this ceremony in the Sheldonian Theatre. You wear 'sub fusc' (black or dark suit or skirt, white shirt or blouse, bow tie (traditionally white but can be black) or black ribbon), a gown and mortar board). You will need your gown for Formal Hall, Sunday Chapel, and full academic dress for exams.

Commemoration of Benefactors (October) – since the 14th century Oriel has remembered its debt to those who endowed and supported it. A Fellow speaks in Chapel about an interesting alumnus or benefactor.

All Saints' Gaudy (November) – a feast for scholars and those who achieved a First in their final exams.

Remembrance Day (11 November) – we gather at the war memorial to pay tribute to Orielenses who have died in war.

Christmas Formal (December) – Nine Lessons and Carols by candlelight in Chapel and an enormous feast with carols sung from the gallery by the Choir.

Candlemas Feast (February) – the major feast of the year in honour of the Virgin Mary to whom the College is dedicated. VIP guests join us from

other colleges and from our sister colleges: Clare College Cambridge and Trinity College Dublin.

Halfway Hall (February) – a celebration of getting half way through your degree.

The Pancake Race (February) – don gown and subfusc for a competitive team race around First Quad flipping a pancake at each corner.



The Annunciation (March) – we host the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors of the University for the annual University Sermon in honour of the Virgin Mary.

Torpids Dinner (March) – after the 'Torpids' regatta we celebrate Oriel's rowing prowess, often holding the title 'Head of the River'.

St George's Day Gaudy (April) – endowed by George Moody for second year students.

Eights Dinner (May) – the rowing dinner after the 'Summer Eights' regatta.

Schools Dinner (Trinity Term) – subject dinners for those sitting their Final exams.

NOTABLE ALUMNI

Oriel is both a place and a community of people. Here are some former members (in chronological order) who have gone before you and have contributed to the College.

Adam de Brome (d.1332) – our founder was an energetic and resourceful Chancery clerk, royal administrator and judge. He was also rector of St Mary's Church on the High Street and in 1324 he began to assemble a community of scholars in his rectory/vicarage with the support of King Edward II. It gained a royal charter as a college in 1326.



Queen Eleanor of Castille (1241-90) *left* – Oriel was the first college to admit a woman to its community in 1329 – unfortunately she was already dead. Eleanor was the aunt of James of Spain who gifted La Oriole to Adam's new college.

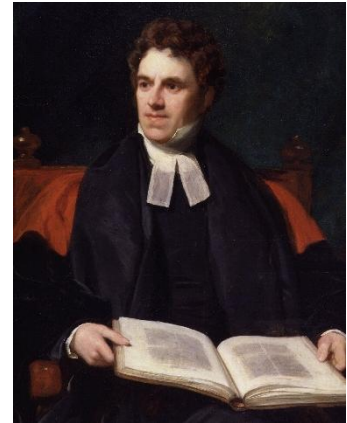


Walter Raleigh (1554-1618) *left* – borrowed a gown from a relation to matriculate in 1572. He left without a degree and became an explorer from Virginia to El Dorado. He is known for popularising tobacco in England and possibly laying his cloak over a puddle for Queen Elizabeth I.

Thomas Harriot (1560-1621) – a great polymath who observed the moon with his telescope before Galileo and invented a method of navigation.

Gilbert White (1720-93) – a natural scientist who kept a detailed diary about his garden for 40 years, often referred to as England's first ecologist. He is famous for his *Natural History of Selborne* which, although published in 1789, has never been out of print and is reported to be one of the most published books in the English language. He stood unsuccessfully to become Provost of Oriel in 1757.

Thomas Arnold (1795-1842) *right* – as headmaster he made Rugby School a model for educational reform and introduced prefects. He became a Fellow in 1815, advocated Broad Churchmanship, and appears in Oriens Thomas Hughes' novel *Tom Brown's School Days*.



St John Henry Newman (1801-90) *left* – elected as a Fellow in 1822, he became a leader of the Oxford Movement which argued for the protection of the Church from state control and sought to present Anglicanism as a *via media* between Catholicism and Evangelicalism. In 2019 he was canonised as a saint. You can visit his oratory upstairs in Oriel Chapel.

THE RHODES LEGACY AND E.D.I. AT ORIEL

Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902) was one of Oriel's major benefactors. His bequest funded the construction of a new building on the High Street in 1911. He separately established the Rhodes Scholarships. His activities in Africa, and the vision of empire that he represented, were controversial in his lifetime, and debate has continued throughout the intervening century in public opinion and academic historiography.

The College launched an independent Commission of Inquiry to examine the Rhodes legacy and memorials, along with other interrelated issues of equality, diversity and inclusion. The Commission undertook an extensive consultation during which they received over 1,000 submissions from members of the public and held a number of online public evidence sessions.

In the Commission's report, published in May 2021, a number of specific recommendations were made relating to the Rhodes memorials, as well as action that the College could take to enhance its work in the area of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

Further information on the decisions made by the College's Governing Body can be found on the College's website: <https://www.oriel.ox.ac.uk/news/decisions-made-by-the-college-following-the-completion-of-the-independent-commission-into-cecil-rhodes-and-related-issues/?highlight=commission>

Since May 2021, the College has been making progress towards achieving the actions it announced in response to the Commission's report.

Oriel is committed to equality for all its members, and this work is of great importance to the College.

The nature and coherence of Rhodes's thinking have been much debated and cannot easily be summarised. We invite students to inform themselves using these and other resources:

[A short biography](#) on the Oriel website

The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography [entry](#)

A [special report series](#) in The Poor Print, Oriel's student newspaper

Robert Rotberg, *The Founder: Cecil Rhodes and the Pursuit of Power* (Oxford: 1988)

John Flint, *Cecil Rhodes* (Boston, 1974)

[A paper](#) by William Beinart, Emeritus Professor of Race Relations

An article [here](#) by Nigel Biggar, Regius Professor of Ethics and Moral Philosophy

The Oxford Union [debate](#)

A QUICK TOUR AROUND COLLEGE

When you show friends and family around College it's useful to have one or two interesting things to tell them. Just make sure you keep off the grass! Take a [virtual tour](#) here.

Main Gate – on the gate are various insignia associated with the College. Spot the feathers of the Black Prince and the three lions of the English Crown.





First Quad – built on the site of a house called La Oriole, this was traditionally accommodation for Fellows. Above the Hall entrance are statues of the Virgin Mary and two kings, Edward II our founder and Charles I in whose reign the quad was rebuilt. The inscription over the door reads *Regnante Carolo*, 'in the reign

of Charles'. An 'oriel' window is a bay window (there are three of them in Front Quad) and means 'a little place of prayer'. The chalk marks on the walls commemorate Boat Club achievements.



Second Quad – this was once the College garden and orchard. The buildings were added in the 18th century and the two gaps are where a lane used to run between Oriel Street and Magpie Lane. The SCR was the first 'modern' SCR in Oxford and houses the Senior Library above. Students threw books from the windows during a fire in 1949.

Third Quad – this was the original site of Adam de Brome's college and remained a separate lodging called St Mary's Hall until it was absorbed in 1902. The building funded by Rhodes (pictured) opened in 1911. During World War I the female students from Somerville College were evacuated here.



This quad was traditionally accommodation for undergraduates and now houses the JCR. Students can sit on the lawn in Trinity Term.

The Island Site – contains our oldest building, Tackley's Inn, constructed in c.1295 which includes the best-preserved medieval cellar in town. There used to be a real tennis court here where Charles I played with Prince Rupert during the Civil War. The MCR looks out onto Oriel Square.





Oriel College

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