

NEW COLLEGE GUIDE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

2024



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(All pages have been hyperlinked for your convenience)

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WELCOME!

Hello! My name is Joshua Hess (he/him), and I'm a second-year Law and European Law student at New College. I was born in Pretoria, South Africa but have lived in various other countries including Scotland, Laos and Switzerland. I'm so excited to be your International and Overseas Officer this academic year!

This guide is here to help all of you get accustomed to New College and give tips on living overseas. For context, this guide will follow a chronological order based on what to do before and after you arrive in Oxford. I will also organise plenty of events to help promote college diversity and connect with others, such as celebrating large cultural events and organising ice cream trips to Gloucester Green for students craving a taste of home.

Feel free to get in touch with me if you have any concerns or event ideas! I can be reached through my college email: joshua.hess@new.ox.ac.uk, or you contact me through Instagram at [@hoshua_jess](https://www.instagram.com/hoshua_jess), Facebook Messenger at [Joshua Hess](https://www.facebook.com/hoshua.jess), or WhatsApp at [+44 7708593981](https://www.whatsapp.com/channel/002997708593981)

Enjoy the rest of this guide! - Josh



BEFORE ARRIVAL

STUDENT VISAS – STEP BY STEP

The earliest you can apply for a visa is **6 months before** you start your course. Make sure you have received your **Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) statement** from the college via email, as this will have your **CAS number**. Double check that all the details are correct before proceeding and remember to have all the other necessary documents ready for your online application to make the process easier.

Register and complete the online application form through this website:
<https://www.gov.uk/student-visa/apply>

- Choose the correct visa type (**Tier 4 (General) Student Visa**)
- Upload these documents to your visa form:
 - Original **Tuberculosis** test result certificate
 - **Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate** (if required)
 - **Parent's/Legal guardian consent letter** (for under 18s).
- Pay the **IHS immigration health surcharge** (approx. £300 a year for students)



After submitting your application, **book an appointment** online and **visit the application centre** in person to submit your documents.

- Upon reference, prepare and submit the following:
 - Financial documents
 - Consent letter
 - Birth certificate
 - Other certificates listed in CAS
- It is possible that you might be asked to attend an interview as part of the application process, so keep checking your emails and junk.

You may also need to partake in a **tuberculosis screening** for your visa application, depending on which country you live in. Please refer to the website for the list of countries and UK-approved clinics: (<https://www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa/countries-where-you-need-a-tb-test-to-enter-the-uk>). Make sure to call the clinic beforehand to make an appointment.

You should get a decision after about **15 working days**. The application centre may have an option for priority service in which you get your visa earlier (roughly 5 working days) for an additional fee.

All students (except European and Swiss students) must collect their **Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)** by a specified date from the **Post Office** (please refer to the "[Mailing Services](#)" section).

DOCUMENTS NEEDED FOR VISA APPLICATION

- Tuberculosis certificate
- Health Surcharge Reference Number
- CAS certificate
- ATAS certificate
- Proof that you meet the financial requirements
- Proof of parental/guardian relationship (for those under 18)

DOCUMENTS TO BRING TO TUBERCULOSIS SCREENING

- Original passport
- Two photocopies of the main page of your passport
- University's main address
 - New College, Holywell Street, Oxford, OX1 3BN
- Two passport-sized photos



VACCINATIONS

Getting certain vaccines before coming to Oxford is recommended, as it might take a while to do them in the UK. Some vaccines include Meningococcal ACWY, Meningitis B, HPV, measles, mumps, rubella, polio, and tuberculosis. Additionally, remember to bring all immunisation records for further use.

In terms of **COVID-19 vaccines**, it is **no longer a requirement** to be vaccinated to travel to the UK. However, it is recommended that you have **at least two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine** just as a safety precaution.

FLIGHTS

Try to book your flights **as early as possible** to ensure that you can get tickets at a cheaper price. The earlier you book, the better.

Students should arrive **one week before the official start of term** for Freshers' Week (and collections, for the other terms), which is what we call **0th Week**. **Email college** and **let them know which date you're arriving on** (admissions@new.ox.ac.uk).

On a similar note, the college requires all students to vacate their rooms on the **Saturday of 8th Week in the morning**.

It is important to note what you can and cannot bring through UK borders. Some of the restricted items are standard, such as drugs and offensive items, but goods such as meat and dairy products are also not allowed. It is worth researching about this before you begin packing; please see this website about import regulations for the UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/bringing-goods-into-uk-personal-use/banned-and-restricted-goods>

TRANSPORTATION

Most students get in and out of Oxford via coach or train. Below are pictures of the Queen's Lane (K5) bus stop, coach terminal, and the Oxford train station (see [Map](#)).



TO AND FROM AIRPORTS

The Airline Oxford, by the Oxford Bus Company, takes you directly to and from Heathrow and Gatwick Airport. Click this link for the rates of travel:

<https://www.theairlineoxford.co.uk/tickets/book-online/>

| Heathrow | Gatwick |
|---|---|
| Departs every 20 mins (peak) or 30 mins (off-peak) | Departs every hour |
| Approximately 1 hr 40mins ride | Approximately 2hrs 30mins ride |
| Arriving at Terminal 1, 2 or 3: Follow the signs and head over to the Central Bus Station, remember to check the notice board to see which bus stand to go to | Arriving at Gatwick North Terminal: Catch the coach from Lower Forecourt stands 4 and 5 |
| Arriving at Terminal 4: Take the free Heathrow Connect train service to 'Heathrow Central', where you can get to the Central Bus Station | Arriving at Gatwick South Terminal: Catch the coach from Lower Forecourt stands 1 and 2 |
| Arriving at Terminal 5: Take The Airline from Stop 10 next to the arrival area | |

Arriving at Oxford: Let the driver know you're getting off at Queen's Lane when boarding.

Leaving Oxford: Select stop K5 as your departure point.

OTHER TRANSPORT SERVICES

Coaches are one of the main forms of long-distance transport in Oxford. There is a coach terminal near Gloucester Green, a 12-minute walk away from college (see [Map](#)). The three main coach companies in Oxford are:

- Oxford Bus Company (<https://www.oxfordbus.co.uk/>)
- Stagecoach Oxfordshire (<https://www.stagecoachbus.com/about/oxfordshire>)
- Thames Travel (<https://www.thames-travel.co.uk/>)

(Extra tip: check this website from the Oxford Tube by Stagecoach for promotions and offers!:

<https://www.stagecoachbus.com/promos-and-offers/oxfordshire/oxford-tube>)

Trains are another great option for transport, as Oxford happens to be on a major UK railway. The Oxford Train Station is situated about 20 minutes from New College, next to the Saïd Business School on Botley Road (see [Map](#)).

You can choose to either purchase your ticket at the ticket office in the station, use the ticket machines to the right of the main help desk, or buy e-tickets online. A particularly popular service is a website called Trainline (<https://www.thetrainline.com/stations/oxford>).



AFTER ARRIVAL

MAILING SERVICES

The Royal Mail Post Office is located along St. Aldate's street, across the Oxford Town Hall and Christ Church College (see [Map](#)).

When collecting your BRP at the post office, please be aware that it might take a while, as many students will be in a similar position as you. Remember to **bring your passport and visa letter**, and give yourself **at least 45-60 minutes** time, since it will get very busy in Freshers' Week.

If you need something mailed to you, please use this following template:

Your Full Name
New College
Holywell Street
Oxford
OX1 3BN

Please note: your BRP **cannot**
be mailed to college



TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The next thing you should set up is your phone's SIM card. This is **very important**, as **many services require you to register using a UK mobile number**. The table below shows a few popular rolling 30-day data plans available in the UK and a quick comparison between them. Click on the titles for more information from the providers (websites are hyperlinked in their names):

| | VOXI | Giffgaff | Three |
|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Internet Data | 30GB | 35GB | 25GB |
| Monthly Cost | £10 | £15 | £14 |
| Minutes (UK) | Unlimited | Unlimited | Unlimited |
| Texts (UK) | Unlimited | Unlimited | Unlimited |

There are plenty of other options you can look into; the ones above are just the plans I myself or some of my international friends are using!

Remember to look out for/ask about: prepaid/pay-as-you-go, bill prices and payment, duration of contract, and amount of data included.



BANKING

The official University website has a page called “**Finances and Banks**” (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/international#content-tab--3>) dedicated to helping freshers open bank accounts in the UK. It contains information such as recommended banks, documents required, step-by-step guides, and more. Below is a list of banks and their respective websites (hyperlinked):

- [Barclays Bank](#)
- [HSBC](#)
- [Lloyds Bank](#)
- [Metro Bank](#)
- [NatWest](#)
- [Santander](#)

When opening your bank account, bring these following items to the branch:

- **Valid passport** with visa vignette sticker, and if applicable, your **BRP**
- **Signed and stamped enrolment certificate** from college
- A **bank statement from your home bank**, from the past 3 months (if you already have one)
- **UK mobile number**



MEDICAL SERVICES

The **general practitioners (GP)** are **EXTREMELY important**; they are doctors under the National Health Service (NHS) that provide general medical services and refer patients to hospitals for urgent and specialist treatment. They are the first place to go to for any medical illnesses.

The **New College GP is called “28 Northgate”** (<https://www.28beaumontstreet.co.uk/>) (the website domain says “28beaumont, but they haven’t changed it yet; don’t worry though, it’s the correct one!), and is located 10 minutes away, right next to The Covered Market on Market Street (see [Map](#)).

Please remember to **register with the GP before arriving in Oxford**. Visit this link (<http://www.campusdoctor.co.uk/oxford/>) and follow the instructions to register online. You must also conduct an **in-person visit on Monday afternoon of 1st Week**. Find more information in the Northgate Welcome Letter on the Fresher’s page, as well as during Freshers’ Week.

For non-life-threatening medical situations, call (111). This will place you on the phone with a medical staff that can provide you with relevant medical advice based on your circumstance.

For life-threatening emergencies, call (999).

The nearest hospital is the **John Radcliffe (JR) Hospital**, located near Headington. It is about a 10-minute taxi ride from New College, or a 30-minute bus ride from the Queen’s Lane stop.

Boots is one of the largest pharmacies in the UK; you can find many health and beauty products at these stores. Additionally, the GPs may provide you with prescriptions which require you to collect from Boots. You can find the nearest branch in the middle of Cornmarket Street (see [Map](#)).



LIFE IN OXFORD

FOOD

There are a variety of supermarkets you can shop from, such as Tesco, Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer (see [Map](#)). Below are a few tips to make your shopping trips as smooth as possible:

- You pack your own groceries (so just go to the self-checkout counters)
- Loose fruits and vegetables need to be weighed at the checkout
- Aubergines are eggplants and courgettes are zucchinis
- Bring your own bag(s) because plastic bags are not free (save the planet!)
- Loyalty cards are mostly free, so just sign up for them!

RESTAURANTS AND SPECIALTY STORES

Oxford has a wide selection of restaurants and specialty stores to cater to various cultures. Below is a list of recommendations from Oxford students (sorted alphabetically):

| Restaurants | Specialty Stores |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Buona Pinsa Bar (Italian)• Chutneys (Indian)• Dosa Park (South Indian)• Georgina's Cafe (Greek)• Kopitiam (Malaysian/Singaporean)• Little Four Seasons (Chinese)• Najar's (Mediterranean)• Ramen Kulture (Japanese)• Rick's Diner (American)• Rozana (Lebanese)• Sasi's Thai (Thai)• Shin (Japanese)• Shiraz (Persian)• Taste of China (Chinese)• Tse Noodle (Chinese)• Zhang Ji (Chinese)• Zheng (Malaysian/Singaporean) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GG Oriental Snack Shack (Chinese)• Lung Wah Chong (Chinese)• Seoul Plaza (Korean)• Tahmid Stores (Indian) |



HOUSEHOLD AND LIFESTYLE ITEMS

Oxford has a few options where you can buy household items for your stay:

- John Lewis
- Marks & Spencer
- Primark
- Anthropologie

Alternatively, you can also shop online using Amazon, which is super quick and efficient. Tesco and Sainsbury's will also have cutlery, crockery, and other household necessities, and you can find pretty good items from charity shops around Oxford!

GENERAL ADVICE

FRESHER'S FLU

Quite a few students tend to get sick upon arrival in the UK, whether it be COVID-19 or the common flu (I personally contracted COVID-19 in Freshers' Week!).

If possible, **bring paracetamol, ibuprofen, and any other medication from home**, as you may not have enough time to visit pharmacies immediately when you arrive.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETIES

There are many international societies in Oxford that host events throughout the year to create an inclusive environment and make everyone feel at home.

I've listed a few societies below (sorted alphabetically), as well the link to the official list of University-registered non-sports clubs, societies, and publications. If you're looking for a specific international society, feel free to contact me and I can help you find it!

- Oxford American Society (<https://www.facebook.com/oxfordamericansociety/>)
- Oxford Arab Society (<https://www.oxfordarabsociety.co.uk/>)
- Oxford Thai Society (<https://www.facebook.com/OxfordThaiSociety/>)
- Oxford University Asia Pacific Society (<https://www.ouaps.co.uk/>)
- Oxford University Chinese Society (<https://www.facebook.com/oucsfp/>)
- Oxford University French Society (<https://www.oufs.org/>)
- Oxford University Hong Kong Society (<https://www.ouhks.net/>)
- Oxford University Italian Society (<https://www.facebook.com/OxfordUniversityItalianSociety/>)
- Oxford University Japan Society (<https://www.facebook.com/OxfordUniversityJapanSociety/>)
- Oxford University Korea Society (<https://www.ouks.uk/>)
- Oxford University Malaysian and Singaporean Students' Association (<https://www.oumssa.org/>)

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/clubs/list>



VACATION STORAGE

New College provides **off-site storage** for the vacation. This means that **whatever you put into storage you will not have access to until the beginning of the next term**. International students will get **six cardboard boxes for free**, with these approximate dimensions: **60cm*40cm*45cm** (can fit one carry-on luggage and a bit more). You may also use any extra suitcases as well, so you will have plenty of storage space for the vac.

VACATION RESIDENCE

New College allows students to stay over the vac as vacation residence, provided that they have a **valid reason** to and that they pay the nightly rate (Approximately £25 per night as of 2023-2024). A vacation residence application form will be sent out near the end of each term.

If it's not conference season, you may be allowed to stay in your current room. If not, you may be assigned to a different room for the vac. It may also be possible that the college doesn't grant vac res, so do keep that in mind when booking flight tickets and places to stay!

MAP OF OXFORD



CHECKLIST

| Before Arrival | Other |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Passport (with visa vignette sticker)<input type="checkbox"/> ATAS certificate (if applicable)<input type="checkbox"/> CAS statement<input type="checkbox"/> Immunisation records<input type="checkbox"/> UCAS statement, acceptance letter<input type="checkbox"/> Education transcripts<input type="checkbox"/> Financial affidavit<input type="checkbox"/> Tuberculosis certificate<input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 vaccination certificates<input type="checkbox"/> Passport-sized photos<input type="checkbox"/> Flight ticket<input type="checkbox"/> Originals of all other documents used in visa application<input type="checkbox"/> Letter of consent (for under 18s) | <p>Clothing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Thermal wear<input type="checkbox"/> Clothes for nights out<input type="checkbox"/> Formal clothes and shoes<input type="checkbox"/> Sub fusc<input type="checkbox"/> Socks, shoes, underwear<input type="checkbox"/> Everyday clothing <p>Gadgets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Laptop, tablet, and accessories<input type="checkbox"/> Chargers, cables, adapters<input type="checkbox"/> USB drive, external hard disk<input type="checkbox"/> Headphones/Earphones |
| Upon Arrival | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Medicine (Prescriptions and general medication)<input type="checkbox"/> Glasses, contact lenses and solution<input type="checkbox"/> Padlocks<input type="checkbox"/> Toiletries (Shower items, toothbrush, toothpaste, sanitary products etc)<input type="checkbox"/> Comfort items from home<input type="checkbox"/> Snacks and food items from home<input type="checkbox"/> Traditional clothing |

FINAL REMARKS

If you made it this far, congratulations! You're now mostly caught up and ready to take on Oxford! Thank you so much for taking the time to read this guide; I know it's quite long, but I promise that each bit of information here is worth it! Again, if you have any questions whatsoever, please reach out via my socials and I'll be happy to help! Best of luck and see you in Oxford! :)

