Welcome from the Master

Every college is part of Oxford University but every college is slightly different, with its own special character. Towards the end of their first term I ask the 1st-year undergraduates what has struck them most about Univ so far and the most common replies are ‘It’s incredibly friendly’, ‘I thought everybody else would be different but they are just like me’ and ‘You have to work really hard but I’m enjoying it’.

The College is informal and relaxed but academically serious. It expects students to be self-motivated and disciplined in their studies, unafraid to be stretched and challenged and open to new ideas. The weekly tutorial is the heart of Univ life. Learning is the outcome of a close relationship between tutor and student. Our Fellows get to know their own students very well, guide their academic progress and care about their personal well being.

A dedicated welfare team is at hand to give students discreet support should they need it. We are able to give our undergraduates far more individual attention than is possible in other universities.

Academic study is central to Univ life but not exclusively. There are ample opportunities to try out new activities. We encourage students to complement study with other challenges. Not least of the benefits is an ability to manage personal time and balance priorities. Sport, music and drama all flourish and in recent years the College has excelled in all three. Many Univ students are involved in politics, journalism and voluntary work – and go on to careers in these fields.

Univ is one of Oxford’s most ancient foundations but it is thoroughly modern in its approach. We have pioneered pre-entry mathematics courses for scientists, student reviews of teaching and, as part of our support for undergraduates from modest-income households, vacation grants and top-up bursaries.

Univ sometimes claims that we are ‘Oxford’s most loved college’. It is a boast with some substance. Among all the Oxford colleges, it has by far the highest proportion of former students who remain connected to the College. We like to think that this reflects the quality of their experience and their wish to hand it on to future generations.
‘Students at Univ have three things in common: a love of their subject, a strong record of academic achievement and the commitment to make a success of their chosen course. We are a college with academic ambition and support our students in fulfilling their potential. Our students are taught and guided in their work by our tutors who also engage in world-class research.’

The tutorial system is at the heart of undergraduate education at Oxford. Each week students work independently, reading and writing essays or preparing problem sheets. Tutorials are a chance to discuss and explore the ideas encountered in their preparation and delve into the topic with their tutors and fellow students. They usually take place in a tutor’s room with one or two other students and last for about an hour. The tutorial is a challenging teaching method but is also tailored to each student and offers an exhilarating learning experience. Tutorials are supplemented by a variety of classes and lectures and Univ tutors play a crucial role in guiding the academic development of their students.

At Univ we are committed to helping our students settle into their new academic environment. We provide a free of charge pre-term maths course. This course is offered to all first-year students to consolidate the maths skills they will require in their studies. We add over 1,000 new items each year, often within 24 hours of receiving a student’s request, and our two librarians are renowned for their helpfulness towards students. A generous book grant of £60 helps Univ students to buy key literature in their first term.

Our library is a valuable resource for our undergraduates. It is open 24 hours a day and has over 60,000 books, including multiple copies of key textbooks in many subjects. We also have collections of DVDs and CDs. Loan allocations are generous and books may be borrowed for an entire term or vacation. Admission to Univ is on academic merit only; students are selected by tutors on the basis of their educational record and their academic potential. We seek to attract the most talented students regardless of their background and welcome applications from students at schools and colleges with little or no history of sending candidates to Oxford.

‘My favourite part of the academic experience at Univ is definitely the tutorials. Every single one is different and you leave your tutor’s office with many things to think about, as you go off to eat in Hall, or meet up with friends.’
‘My Univ bursary freed my mind of any concerns over financial matters during my time here and also helped my Mum to not have to worry over me at all. I felt I could take part in any activities that friends were taking part in, and never felt left out. In summary: it gave peace of mind and freedom to enjoy my time at Univ.’

Univ is committed to ensuring that students who come here can focus on their academic studies and enjoy College life without worrying about making the financial sums add up.

Eligible students benefit from an extremely generous financial support package. We are committed to supporting students from low and middle income families through our Univ Old Members’ Trust Bursary Scheme. There are many other sources of financial support available at Univ. All students who find themselves in unexpected hardship can apply to the Univ Student Support Fund. Awards are frequently made to students in the form of grants or interest-free loans. Univ can also contribute to non-academic activities.

For example, the Blues fund is allocated to students who compete in any sport at University level which may involve extra costs for equipment, transport or training.

The Academic Opportunities Fund provides grants to students to undertake extra research, travel or to do internships in the vacations. Finally, we have a number of Travel Scholarships available to assist students in funding fieldwork and other trips linked to their studies.

Univ takes pride in ensuring that the college is a caring community. We aim to be the best college in Oxford when it comes to supporting our students through any difficulties they may encounter. This begins in the very first week at Univ when we offer a balanced ‘Welcome Week’ for all new students.

Students are free to enjoy their first days at university with social events and orientation activities as they settle into a new environment.

We have a dedicated team of staff to ensure students can access help whenever they might need it. Univ students also help each other. We have a strong network of student welfare officers and peer supporters.

More information will be available in due course at: www.univ.ox.ac.uk/finance
LOCATION AND FACILITIES

Our central location means that we are nestled amongst libraries, shops, museums, theatres and restaurants. The beautiful old buildings that make up Univ have been fully modernised for 21st century needs, and despite our city centre surroundings we have several peaceful courtyards and gardens with grass and trees.

Nowadays Univ has around 370 undergraduates and approximately 200 graduate students, from around 50 countries. Univ students can have College-owned or managed accommodation for the duration of their studies but can choose to live out if they wish. The College has approximately 300 rooms on main Colleges site for both Undergraduates and Graduate students. There are also over 100 rooms elsewhere in the city, including at our annexe in North Oxford. Most rooms have shared showers and bathrooms but some have en suite bathrooms, and each room is fully networked for computer use. Our accommodation is both high quality and affordable.

We have a smart and modern canteen-style Buttery which serves three meals a day during the week and a brunch and an evening meal at weekends. All meals are optional and there are some limited self-catering facilities in pantries across the College. The food selection at Univ is varied and students can always find something to suit their tastes amongst the many hot and cold options available.

THE HISTORY OF UNIV

University College is the oldest college in Oxford and was founded in 1249 by William of Durham. Our full name is ‘The Master and Fellows of the College of the Great Hall of the University of Oxford’ but we are often called Univ.

Most of our buildings were constructed in the 17th century. In the 18th century, the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley studied at Univ, but was expelled for writing seditious pamphlets. Visitors to the College can view the grand memorial to him.

Univ has been home to two British prime-ministers: Clement Attlee and Harold Wilson. Other alumni include President Bill Clinton; Professor Stephen Hawking; C. S. Lewis, author of the Narnia books; the Poet Laureate Andrew Motion, the novelist and Nobel Prize winner Sir V. S. Naipaul; and Prince Felix Yusupov, the assassin of Rasputin.
Why not come to one of our Open Days?
More information available at:
www.univ.ox.ac.uk/opendays

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For general admissions information please visit:
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Please do contact us with any further questions by emailing: admissions@univ.ox.ac.uk

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