MEET
THE
Porters

Oxford Colleges have special reception areas called the 'Lodge', and in the Lodge you'll find the College Porters. We'll let the students tell you what that's all about...

Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make the Alternative Prospects happen. Big thanks to all the Oxbridge students who generously contributed their photos and time.

Thank you to the tutors who kindly participated in our interviews.

The publication is also available in digital format on our website.

Designed by Andy Waddell & printed by The Guardian Print Centre.

How would you describe the role of the porters?

The porters provide a friendly face to greet us 24/7 and act as the first point of call if you have any issues whilst living in college.

Katie, Chemistry

The porters are some of the friendliest and most helpful people in college.

Cecilia, Philosophy and Psychology

They look after the college, your past, and Percy - the tortoise!

Lottie, History

Officially, they are the college “gatekeepers”. In practice, their role ranges more widely than that – they look after tortoises and students who’ve locked themselves out of their rooms.

Tom, PPE

The porters are there 24/7 so that you always have someone to go to should you have any queries or concerns. They’re lovely people, and it really is a comfort to know that there’s always someone you can go to if you need a bit of help.

Rebecca, Experimental Psychology

The porters have always known exactly where to point me whenever I’ve had a technical issue or issue with living facilities, and any time I’ve needed someone to listen to a terrible joke I’ve made. They were also amazing at Pokemon Go…

Rapira, Maths and Computer Science

I’ve been locked out my room countless times and the first time I was terrified - I had to go and ask for a key, so I thought that they were going to hate me! But they were nothing but helpful, even though I was in a dressing gown (I got locked out on the way to the shower!

Katie, Classics
**Food**

Oxford Colleges have ‘catered’ accommodation, which means that they cook all the meals students need in a week and everyone can eat together in Hall. Eating in Hall is not compulsory, but you’ll probably find you want to most of the time as it’s a great chance to catch up with friends, the food is delicious and the portions are very generous!

Breakfast, lunch and dinner are served on weekdays, our famous “brunch” at weekends. Options range from sandwiches, soups and a salad bar, to hot options including at least one very good quality vegetarian option. Snacks such as drinks, cookies, crisps, fruit and yoghurt are also available and even ice creams which are a life saviour in summer.

Having College cook (and wash up) saves students a lot of time and effort so they can focus on studying and having fun. At Univ College buy food on a “pay-as-you-go” basis, which means you’re free to eat in town or prepare your own meal when you want to.

As well as having meals cooked for you every day, you can use the fridge in your room to keep drinks and snacks, so if you want to have a lie-in and miss breakfast, you can always have it in your room. There are also several kitchens dotted about the college which are open to undergraduates to use (we have a few keen bakers who like to make the most of the oven!)

For the vast majority of meals, you choose your own food from a huge range of options in the College’s lovely butterfly. However, 3 times a week you have the option to go to Formal Hall, which is a second sitting held later than normal dinner, where you get dressed up and are served at the table. Students like going to formal hall when it is someone’s birthday, as it’s much cheaper than going to a restaurant – it’s also a popular thing to take friends and family to when they visit.

Let’s see what Univ’s students have to say…

Hall food is varied, with our favourites returning now and again (the sweet potato fries are SO GOOD!), and the portions are really well sized so you’ll never go hungry.

Cecilia, Philosophy and Psychology

Univ work on a pay-as-you-go basis which is incredibly useful, as it means that if you aren’t feeling the menu or decide to go out with your friends at the last minute then it is flexible enough to do this. Also as a vegetarian, I find that there is usually a decent option and that the portions are always sufficient.

Megan, English

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**Life at Univ**

**Location**

Look at a map of Oxford, and you will see that University College is the place to be! We’re an easy distance from all the important libraries, the centre of town, and the best shops, pubs, clubs, cinemas and venues in Oxford. We are a two minute walk from the serene and beautiful Christ Church Meadow. Best of all, Univ is next door to some of the lecture halls!

**Facilities**

Univ manages to combine reasonable rents with some great facilities and opportunities on offer. Firstly, every student is signed up for free membership at the Iffley Road gym and swimming pool, a great consideration if you want to keep fit whilst at uni. There is also a squash court and small gym in college, and we are proud owners of the sexiest boathouse on the river. Our butty (that’s what we call the canteen) offers lots of choice including soups, a salad bar and hot meals.

**The ICR**

All undergraduates studying in an Oxford college are automatically affiliated to the ‘Junior Common Room’ (JCR), which is the slightly confusing name for both an actual room and the name of the communal meetings that help oversee life in college. The Univ common room was recently rebuilt to cater for disabled access, and is home to a range of comfy armchairs and sofas, as well as some desks, so it serves as an alternative study space to one of our libraries. Newspapers are delivered regularly, and there’s a TV, DVD player and Xbox. There’s even a small kitchen next door which enables you to prepare a cuppa!

The JCR meetings, which unsurprisingly take place in this room, are an optional and genuinely convivial open forum for people to discuss ideas and direct changes they’d like to see, both in and outside Univ. Every year a number of students, many who have written in this prospectus, nominate themselves for positions on the JCR committee, representing such concerns as Environment, Academic Affairs, Equal Opportunities, and most importantly - Food! They help to link student concerns to the college, and with JCR backing can see through important and beneficial changes to college life. Students are encouraged to engage constructively with the friendly and diverse nature of the college, and elections are currently held in a spirit of good humour. There’s even free pizza!

**The People**

And what are the people at Univ like?

All Oxford Colleges claim to be the ‘friendly College’ but in Univ people really make an effort to know people within college.

Lottie, History

The most distinctive Univ quality is a willingness to get involved, to give anything a go however unprepared you might feel.

Kitty, PPE

Everyone knows each other and are always happy to help.

Eleanor, PPE

I find Univ particularly down to earth. Most students here seem to want to focus on enjoying their experience, both academic and social, while they’re here; we still think about the future, but it’s not all-consuming.

Tom, PPE

Univites are unapologetically friendly.

Maninder, Computer Science and Philosophy

I found it really easy to settle in and since joining Oxford I have made some of the best friends I could hope to have within the college setting. It’s always nice to come into Univ from High Street because suddenly the busy and loud outside world seems so far away behind our doors!

Rob, Law

Univites are open, welcoming people and I always feel like there is someone that I can talk to. We look out for each other and I have never felt alone. Obviously, we have unique characters, but the running theme with Univ students is a kindness and willingness to help.

Megan, English

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**Christine Lamb**

Foreign Correspondent for the Sunday Times.
Accommodation

For most people moving away to university, a key concern is accommodation.

UniEd has a fantastic reputation for the range and standard of facilities. We have a convenient location right on the High Street, with a second site in Chestnut Oxford. Where second-year students tend to live all together.

Range of rooms

Oxford is the oldest university in the English-speaking world, with the first of its colleges established in the 13th century. So as you'd expect, it's built some pretty amazing buildings during its long history! But don't be intimidated by how grand some of them look – they're very cozy inside, and the students make themselves right at home.

College is extremely convenient and it's nice to live in close proximity to friends. It's also lovely to live in such a beautiful, characterful building. Kelsey, Earth Sciences

Most colleges accommodate their undergraduates in a range of buildings – some hundreds of years old and some brand new. Although the age, shape and size of rooms at UniEd vary, all rooms come with great facilities that are the envy of other colleges. Wherever it is in College, your room will be well-decorated, and most include a sink and fridge, chair, and generous pinboards for sticking reading lists, photos and tickets for gigs! Most people share a shower and WC with four other people, but we have a number of en-suite rooms as well. The students enjoy the opportunity to live in quirky, historical and beautiful surroundings.

"The college rooms differ in size, but most of them are really nice! I was actually in what is apparently one of the smallest rooms for first year, but it was still lovely and felt more homely and cozy than some of the larger ones. A useful perk is that almost all of the rooms have a sink and a mirror, as well as a mini fridge." Leenah, Medicine

"It is rare that you find a room that doesn't have an amazing view – whether of the High Street or the College's various lawns and gardens." Max, History

How is First Year accommodation arranged?

Upon arriving in College for your first year, you will already have been assigned a room. All first-year students are guaranteed College accommodation, so you don’t have to worry about sorting any of that out. Some will be right in the heart of college, some overlooking Queen’s College on the High Street, some in the modern Pattrick or Goodhart buildings, but all are close to Main Quad.

Cost

Rent is reasonable, students are charged approximately £3,900 for 3 x 8 week terms. (If you’re feeling concerned about money, turn to page 24.) Although the shape, style and size of rooms vary, all accommodation at UniEd costs the same.

"The cost of accommodation at UniEd is very affordable! Everyone pays the same, meaning there is no room discrimination based on income, contributing to the college’s inclusivity." Katie, Chemistry

Making a home away from home

I decorate my room with...

Fairy lights, cushions, posters on my notice board, filling up bookshelves with the Harry Potter series.

Rupika, Maths and Computer Science

"Probably for too much! I decorate with pictures etc. to the extreme." Liz, History

"Anything that makes me smile in the door and think ‘yes this is my space’." Kitty, PPE
**Your FIRST WEEKS AT UNIV**

**COLLEGE PARENTS**

The college family system is one of the many welfare practices in place, as well as just a bit of fun. Before you arrive at Unis, you will be assigned at least two current Unis students from the year above you (or just finished their first year) who have volunteered to be ‘College Parents’. The College parents’ job is to help you settle in at Unis. Once you have had your exam results and your place at Unis has been confirmed, your college parents will write to you to introduce themselves and to give some tips and advice about coming to Oxford.

"It was really nice having someone at Unis waiting for me to arrive, ready to explain the ins and outs of college life."  
Cecilia, Philosophy and Psychology

"For me College parents means ‘family’ meals and generous gifts of chocolate in my pillow!"  
Katie, Chemistry

**WELCOME WEEK**

All incoming first years come up to College a week before they start their studies for a ‘Welcome Week’. It’s a chance to meet your tutors and get to know other students in your year before work gets fully started. You’ll have plenty to keep you busy: Freshers’ Fairs; various inductions to things like the library and the gym; meetings with your subject tutors; and a massive range of social activities put on for you by the JCR (current students). You may also have to do some preparatory work for the first week of Term.

"I found maths week challenging and fun. It was a great opportunity to have a look ahead as to what is coming up in my course and how the maths I learn at school can be applied to my degree."  
Sanskrithi, Medicine

**MATHS WEEK**

If you’re studying Biochemistry, Biomedical Sciences, Chemistry, Computer Science (and joint schools), Earth Sciences, Engineering, Mathematics (and joint schools), Medicine, or Physics at Unis, you’ll be invited to come to College a week before Welcome Week for a pre-term Maths course.

It might sound a bit daunting, but you’ll find it’s a big advantage when term starts and you’re already used to a lot of the material you will need later on. Even better, Maths Week is free: tuition, accommodation in college, and food are all provided for free.

Maths Week helps you to consolidate the maths skills needed for your subject, helping you to make a strong start to the work in your first term at Oxford. As well as revisiting key mathematical concepts that you may have covered in the past at school, you’ll be learning how to apply these concepts to your chosen subject at university level.

Maths Week can be a bit intense after the long summer break, but be assured it’s not all work and no play: the second-year students put on a series of social events for Maths Week participants during the week, making sure you have the opportunity to socialize into all aspects of College life.

**Jargon Buster Crossword**

**Across**

3. The ceremony by which you become a member of the University.
4. Bath the place you eat and the meal you eat.
7. Sit down meal served every evening (except Saturdays). Be warned - Unis has the longest queue of any Oxford college - read in Luris by a Scholar.
8. Each student has their own pigeon hole in the college meal room.
10. The Bod, enormous library in the middle of town. Has every book published in Great Britain, Ireland (well, almost). Founded by Sir Thomas Bodley about 400 years ago.
11. Intercollagepian sports; drama competitions are called this.
13. Summer term.
14. The head of the college.
16. The academic dress of Oxford. It’s not just for exams and formal hall. You get to wear a floppy gown and smart dress.

**Down**

1. Autumn term.
2. Entrance to the college.
3. The three month vacation in the summer.
4. A proper thanks before formal meals. Nice tradition but you don’t have to take part!
9. College bill. Includes rent on your room, plus an assessment of other costs such as food. Paid at the start of each term.
10. Place where you get food. Unis’ food is excellent and cheap – we’re especially famous for our branch on the west side where everything from waffles and fries to bacon rolls as salmon bagels are on offer.
11. The best college in Oxford (sorry, we couldn’t resist!)
15. The abbreviation that refers to our actual common room but also the student body in college.
17. Big Open Party: When they turn the lights off in the bar and play loud cheesy music, with people dressed in ‘interesting’ costumes. Very good fun.

**Oxford has some unique words for everyday things...**

Ahem, yeah, about those.

We only really wear them to sit our exams. What’s more interesting is the cornation flowers we wear. They have a special meaning here at the University as they signify how far through your exams you are. White is for the first exam, pink for those inbetween and red for your final exam. Friends and tutors supply you with the flowers as a supportive gesture as you head off to the exam hall!
Learning at Oxford

GETTING STUCK INTO YOUR COURSE

After Welcome Week, it’s time for your course to begin. How your week shapes up really depends on what course you’re doing. No matter what your subject, you’ll spend your first weeks getting to grips with a heavier workload than you’ve had previously, and getting used to taking full ownership of your studies. Don’t worry too much about this before you arrive though: it’s really down to time management.

After a couple of weeks of trying different things, you’ll soon settle into a routine that works for you, and enables you to have lots of enjoyable experiences as well as studying.

Arts & HUMANITIES

Typically an Oxford student studying a humanities subject seems to have an uncluttered timetable, but that doesn’t mean they have no work to do.

A lot of arts learning at Oxford is done independently, so time management is a good skill to pick up, but once you get the hang of it there is plenty of time to relax and get involved in societies.

You will usually be set one or two essays a week, and it’s up to you to look at the suggested books, go to the library and decide which ones look useful. It’s incredibly rewarding to be able to really study the things you find interesting and to discuss them with tutors and other students every week, in a setting where you are actually encouraged to put your opinion across - as long as you can back it up! The tutors are very enthusiastic about their subjects and at the cutting edge of research; you might even find their work on your reading list!

Sciences

The first thing you’ll notice about doing science at Oxford is that you seem to have much more on your timetable than an arts student.

True you will probably have 9am lectures, a couple of days a week, where you might be in labs all day and two or three tutorials a week, but for many scientists this means you can sometimes be done by 5pm (and you’ll be less likely to face the dreaded ‘essay-crisis’).

You will usually be set problem sheets, which are questions to be answered for tutorials; you discuss these in more tutorial with the tutor and other students as well as discussing the wider topic beyond each problem sheet.

The tutors are at the forefront of research and are really passionate about their subject. Rest assured, you’re being taught by some of the best minds out there. This is supplemented by lectures and more practical work in the University’s very well equipped labs in the Science Park Area (about 10 minutes’ walk from College). It’s a fantastic opportunity to get to grips with the theory and to test out the practical side too.

The thought of moving up to studying at University might be daunting. Here are some reflections from Unio’s students on how well they managed the transition from school.

What would you say are the main differences between school and university study?

“Especially since I study a humanities subject, 95% of my work is self-study, in a library. There is a lot less rigid structure than at school but that means you structure your own day. The deadlines mean there is still a fixed pattern to your week.”

Lottie History

“There is a lot more independent thinking at university. Answers aren’t just handed to you; you should be prepared to work to find things you might not know.”

Ropita, Maths and Computer Science

“I would say that university study is an inverse way of learning compared to school. At school, your teachers start by telling you the information and then you collate it for an assessment. At university, you are given an essay question; you research it and bring your thoughts to your tutor at the end of the week. The tutor is a discussion of the information you have found independently rather than a spoon feeding of information. The essay is a method of learning, not merely a method of assessing. I prefer this approach even though it was a shock to start with.”

Megan, English

“There’s almost nothing prescribed here – you can read and write what you want and not really have to worry about jumping through hoops.”

Tom, PPE

What about your relationship with your tutors?

“My tutors are very welcoming and will always be willing to answer questions or requests for specific reading lists. One of my tutors even brings tea and biscuits to our classes! The tutors will sometimes seem intimidating when they are intentionally pushing you, but this always results in better work in the long term.”

Megan, English

“The tutors are incredible and very interesting. So long as you are interested and participate in the tutorials they don’t really mind if you don’t understand and tend to do a really great job of explaining things.”

Aparajita, PPE

“They really care about our progress and welfare. I know that if I was ever having trouble completing work I could talk to them about it.”

Hannah, Ancient Near Eastern Studies

Preferred place to study?

Unio has two libraries so there’s plenty of choice of where to study with atmospheres to suit most tastes. Choose between the traditional old library, with plenty of cozy corners (and cushions!), the shiny new library (finished 2017), or one of the group study rooms. That’s if you don’t fancy one of the countless libraries across the university (there are over 100 in total), or wouldn’t prefer to work in your room, in a cafe, or outside on a warm day.

“I work mostly in libraries. I really like exploring all the different libraries around the whole of Oxford for a bit of a change of venue.”

Kitty, PPE

“Maybe I’m a traditionalist, but nothing beats the upstairs of the old library in Unio. It’s beautiful and inspiring and very Oxford-y. Plus, if you sit in the right seat there, the statues seem to look disapprovingly at you when you get distracted!”

Tom, PPE

“What is your favourite thing about learning at Oxford?

“The tutorial system allows you to ask experts questions that textbooks just don’t have the answers to.”

Moodle, Computer Science and Philosophy

“My favourite thing about learning at Oxford is the people you meet and the places you get to.”

Rebecca, Medicine
TUTORIALS

As well as doing lots of reading, attending lectures, classes and (depending on what course you do) labs, students have tutorials at least once a week. The tutorial system is what makes Oxford and Cambridge Universities really special, and is at the heart of the intensive style of learning that these two universities offer. Oxford students refer to their tutorials as ‘tutes’, and Cambridge calls tutorials ‘supervisions’, but the idea behind them is the same.

A tutorial is where you sit down with one of your tutors for about an hour, with one or two other people doing the same course (your tutorial ‘partners’), to talk about what you have been learning that week. It’s an amazing chance to ask your teaching questions, get lots of attention from your tutor and make sure you really understand the material and develop your learning.

Let’s hear what Unio students have to say about tutorials...

**How did you feel before your first tute? What was it like, and how did you feel afterwards?**

“Before my first tutorial I was so nervous and felt like I could never know enough, but it was nowhere near as scary as I thought it would be. My tutor was really friendly and was genuinely interested in what we had to say but also helped guide us to think about other things. I felt feeling way happier and like I had learnt a lot.”

Eleanor, PPE

Each tutorial is the culmination of all the self-driven study you have done in the previous week: reading, attending lectures and classes, reflecting on what you have learned, and writing essays or tackling problem sheets. The idea of doing all this work and then talking about it with experts can be daunting for new students, but you’ll soon get used to it and see it as a great opportunity to learn, and not as a test. You will get lots of feedback on (and sometimes a mark for) the work you prepare for tutorials, but it doesn’t “count” towards your degree - and you don’t get a mark for your performance in the tutorial either. That means you can be honest when you don’t understand something, and get the most from your tutorial experience.

**“It was a completely original experience. My tutor had a (brilliant) habit of letting me make a point, in (what I thought was) its entirety, and then saying “Go on, finish that thought.” It forced me to think further in a way that I’d never done before, which was very refreshing, but also pretty exhausting.”**

Tom, PPE

Tutes are an opportunity to have the full attention of an expert in the subject you are studying.

**What role do tutes play in your education at Oxford?**

“Tutorials consolidate and clarify the information I have explored independently, and often provide a different outlook or application. If I struggle with a question on a problem sheet, I can be sure to leave a tute understanding it.”

Katie, Chemistry

“Tutorials are the primary way in which we learn at Oxford and involve discussing the week’s work with another student and your tutor for around an hour. They offer the perfect opportunity to ask questions if there was anything you haven’t understood or need clarifying, and improve your self-confidence and ability to debate along the way.”

Rob, Law

“Tell me about your best ever tute”

“My favourite tutorial was my first ever tutorial! We met our tutor at the Natural History Museum and wandered around discussing the specimens he’d asked us to look at beforehand.”

Kelsey, Earth Sciences

“My favourite tutorial so far focused on perception and how we see the world. It involved a lot of confusion as me and my tutorial partner tried to get our heads around the subject matter, but it was just such a fascinating concept and I came out of the tutorial absolutely buzzing with ideas and passion for my subject.”

Rebecca, Experimental Psychology

“Your college tutors may hold classes for you in addition to tutorials like this one on Old English.”

Megan, English

“Tell me about your best ever tute”

“My favourite tutorial was definitely my hardest tutorial. My tutor kept pushing me in the tute asking ‘why?’ after almost every statement, but it was through this that I started to piece together my essay into something more cohesive and started to grasp the concepts. The next week my essay was vastly improved because of the changes I made to my essay writing in that I hour tutorial.”

Katie, Classics

**You’ll need to prepare a piece of work for each tutorial.**

In the intervals, tutorials are often held exploring what you have learnt in lectures that week.

You will have done plenty of self-driven study in preparation for each tutorial.
Oxford is a very exciting city with
loss of nooks and crannies to explore.
We asked Uni students to share their
favourite spots and secret places.
Here they are for your enjoyment...

1. The Eagle and Child
A lovely old pub, where JRR Tolkien
and CS Lewis liked to hang out.

2. The Covered Market
Filled with cute independent shops,
cafes and an amazing cake shop —
has a real ‘old-worldly’ feel.

3. Plush Lounge
Oxford’s LGBTQ+ club.

4. Punting
Pushing yourself along the river
with a pole. Better than it sounds.

5. Botanical Gardens
Free entry for university students —
bring your lunch on a nice day.

6. Pie Minister
Fresh handmade pie and mash.

7. Edosame
Amazing home cooked Japanese food.

8. Park End Nightclub
Oxford’s biggest nightclub with plenty of
student nights.

9. The Handle Bar Café
A bike shop and café in one!

10. The Alternative Tuck Shop
Perfect for hungry Uni students —
it’s on the way to the Science Park!

11. Freud
Former church transformed into
a cocktail bar — great music and
atmosphere.

12. Hardy’s Original Sweet Shop
A traditional sweet shop right
opposite Uni — perfect for when
you need a sugar rush.

13. The Mission Burrito Bar
The best quick eat in Oxford! Cheap
and tasty burritos to eat in or take away.

14. The House
Cocktail bar hiding down Blue Boar
St. Uni students get a discount!

15. Ice Rink
Only around fifteen minutes walk.

16. Moo-Moo’s
Milkshake and smoothie bar.

17. Pitt Rivers Museum
See the taxidermy heads!

18. Ultimate Picture Palace
First UK cinema to house sound.
(Leam St.)

19. Ahmed’s Kebab Van
There is one man we turn to in our
darkest hour. That man is Ahmed.

20. The Old Fire Station
Theatre and art exhibition hub with
a quiz.

21. University Parks
Great for walks/runs.
Tennis courts and beautiful trees.

22. Gloucester Green market
Traditional open air market with
a great atmosphere — and great
dumplings!

23. The Cellar
Best alternative club night - DnB,
Dubstep, Folk, Electro, Indie...

24. The Turf Tavern
A popular haunt of Uni students.

25. Olives
Just opposite Uni.
Amazing French & Italian deli food.

26. The King’s Arms
Popular student pub, affectionately
named the “KA”.

27. Jericho Tavern
Pub and music venue with lots
of small bands.

28. Phoenix Picture House
Tiny cinema with a bar and
showing obscure films.

29. Port Meadow
For walks amongst the cows.
(see Walton Well Rd.)

30. The Missing Bean
The best cup of coffee this side of
town? You decide.

31. Turl Street Kitchen
Independent local foodie spot with
volunteering hub upstairs.

32. God’s
One of three ice cream cafés in Oxford
by the same name. They get customers
to vote on new flavour ideas.

33. Jericho Coffee Traders
One of the many independent
coffee shops in Oxford. Beans
roasted in Oxford by a friendly
New Zealander.
Qualities you look for in applicants/students?
KM: Curiosity, skill, ambition, candor, diversity, and above all, work ethic.
NY: Enthusiasm for the subject, scientific curiosity, and an ability to think analytically.
TM: We look for many different qualities and good applicants; students often have different balances between them. Some of the key ones (apart from course work track record and predicted grades in appropriate subjects) include enthusiasm, motivation, and rigor. In Earth Sciences we use skills from maths and all the core sciences to understand how our own and other planets work, and the ability to make connections between subjects in this way is certainly something we look for.

What will you wear in interviews?
TM: My usual work attire is fairly casual especially when on field work! For interviews, I usually try to be a little smarter as I know many of the candidates will be – so not field gear or jeans but nothing too formal either.
NY: I’ll try to look somewhat presentable.
KM: Very likely jeans.

An ideal essay/problem sheet is...?
KM: There is no ideal essay, we can always improve. But an essay of high quality should always have a deep analytical dimension bridging theory and empirical facts in a systematic, structured and well-informed way.
NY: One that shows a genuine interest in the topic and an attempt to engage with the question to explain the student’s own perspective, concisely.
TM: I think it balances consolidating knowledge with developing clear presentation skills and making you think for yourself. All 3 of these elements should be there from day 1 but the balance between them evolves as you advance through the course. One of my favourite parts of the course here is the 4th year independent research project where the students get to undertake an original piece of scientific research and find out something new about the world. I have seen so many students catch the research bug during this and it really is wonderful to watch!

Subject/Specialty
Nick Young
Psychology and Neuroscience. I specialise in brain imaging studies of memory and attention.

Education
Jack Man School and then King’s School for my A-levels. I was actually an undergraduate here at Unio, and was happy to return here as a tutor 10 years after graduating.

Hobbies
I do battle with the slugs in my vegetable garden.

Karolina Milewicz

Subject/Specialty
Fam Jilblau and associate professor in International Relations. I specialize in International Political Economy and International Cooperation & Institutions. My current research project is on the unintended emergence of a ‘global constitution’. More generally, I am interested in patterns of international treaty-making in the context of power and hegemony.

Education
I grew up in Gdańsk (Poland) and Clausthal-Zellerfeld (Germany) where I completed high school. I then studied Political Science in Bremen (Germany) and Warwick (UK) and got my Master in Public Administration from Konstanz University (Germany). I studied for my PhD in International Relations at University of Bremen (Germany).

Hobbies
Cycling, enjoying the outdoors, cooking for and with friends.

Why should students apply to Unio ahead of other colleges?
TM: I advise students to come and visit Oxford before applying if at all possible as often people just get a gut feeling about which college is for them. Personally, I think that Unio has numerous strong selling points. In general I think that it is a very supportive college for students both in terms of the resources and environment that it provides. In physical sciences I think that maths week just before students formally start their degree is a great opportunity and something that my students really value in terms of easing their entry into university life both academically and socially. In terms of Earth Sciences, we have a truly vibrant community here in Unio spanning fellows, graduate students and undergraduates. We get together at events throughout the year both in college and within the department and I think that we all get a lot out of these interactions whatever career stage we’re at.

NY: Our students will give you a better answer to this question than me, but here are two obvious reasons why I think we beat the others.
1) Because Unio has extraordinarily dedicated tutors.
2) Because our students are a very engaged community of intellectual, hard work, and diverse social, educational and national backgrounds. Applicant students will find at Unio an environment where they will certainly feel welcomed and accepted.

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NY: Unio is a very progressive and forward-looking place that puts a lot of effort into thinking how we can do better. This makes it a great place in which to live and work – very stimulating and friendly.

TM: I advise students to come and visit Oxford before applying if at all possible as often people just get a gut feeling about which college is for them. Personally, I think that Unio has numerous strong selling points. In general I think that it is a very supportive college for students both in terms of the resources and environment that it provides. In physical sciences I think that maths week just before students formally start their degree is a great opportunity and something that my students really value in terms of easing their entry into university life both academically and socially. In terms of Earth Sciences, we have a truly vibrant community here in Unio spanning fellows, graduate students and undergraduates. We get together at events throughout the year both in college and within the department and I think that we all get a lot out of these interactions whatever career stage we’re at.

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Tamsin Nather

Subject/Specialty
I studied Natural Sciences specialising in Chemistry at the University of Cambridge and then History and Philosophy of Science for a year.

Education
After a year working abroad in Germany and Belgium I returned to Cambridge and did a PhD in oxicology in the Earth Sciences department.

Hobbies
I moved to Oxford in 2006 to take up a faculty position. Since then I have had 2 children and I don’t have a lot of free time but I try to get to the coast when I can and lose being in or on the sea whenever possible!

Finally... dream dinner guests?
KM: I am frequently having my dream dinners – with my friends (who are often my colleagues).
NY: I’ll pick three psychologists. There are some scientists who, when you’re reading their work, make the process seem so clear and simple. David Moor is one of those people: he transformed the way we think about how the brain processes information. David Rumelt, a cognitive psychologist, is another. The third, more personal, choice would be Alan Allport, who was the tutor at Oxford that inspired me most. At the dinner I’d just plan to sit, listen, and learn.
TM: Tricky one and probably too many to name! Pioneering female scientists like Ada Lovelace, Marie Curie and Dorothy Hodgkin would certainly be in there but having dinner with Shakespeare or Alexander the Great would keep me well stocked in conversation with the other Unio fellows at lunch for a while! Also I just finished “Dreams from My Father” and Barack Obama will be fascinating to meet also as well as Angela Merkel whose experiences of living through reunification and making the transition from being a research scientist into front line politics must have been extraordinary. I’d better stop now else I’ll go on forever!
It’s not all work and no play here at Oxford. There is so much on offer outside of study that finding time to fit it all in is the challenge! But to quote ex-UniSt Stephen Hawking, ‘Life would be tragic if it wasn’t fun.’

Societies
There are hundreds of university-wide student societies at Oxford. You can choose from ultimate Frisbee, a cappella singing, debating, comedy, even Quidditch! We could go on but you get the picture. If we don’t have the society you’re looking for then we can help you to set it up too.

Music
Unio has a high quality and fun choir. As well as weekly services in the chapel, they sing concerts, lead candlelit Christmas carol singing, and occasionally record albums and go on tour!

Nightlife
Oxford’s nightlife caters for all tastes, from clubs playing mainstream, cheese, R&B and more, to stylish bars and traditional pubs.

There are different student nights throughout the week, giving you a chance to meet people from other colleges as well. Unio is lucky enough to have a cozy bar open six evenings a week, fully equipped with table-football, pool table, darts, quiz machine, TV and cheap drinks. The bar plays host to all sorts of student-organised events, from open mic nights to quizzes and College-wide parties, usually called ‘bops’. Bops (parties involving fancy dress and cheesy tunes) take place three times a term and each bop has a different theme.

Volunteering
For those who want to help ensure that the most able people are getting into Oxford, we have the Ambassador scheme. This is one of Oxford’s most active college-based access schemes; students visit schools and invite them to Unio, to encourage talented pupils and apply regardless of background or their schooling.

Other fun stuff
There are also many quieter activities to take part in, from chilling in the JCR with a cup of tea, to movie nights, charity events and the occasional ‘Bake Off’ competition!

Oxfordding things
The summer also provides opportunities for other famously picturesque Oxford pastimes, such as punting on the River Cherwell and playing croquet.

Sports
With a large boathouse, tennis courts, indoor squash court, and football, rugby and cricket pitches, it’s not a surprise that Unio has been well-equipped for sporting success, consistently doing well in intercollegiate competitions, commonly known as ‘cuppers’.

Yet it isn’t all serious; most people enjoy a leisurely splash on the river or friendly kick about on the College squash court at some point. College sport is often just open to anyone who wants to turn up, and the emphasis is entirely on having fun and keeping fit rather than victory! (Although we are often victorious anyway!) All Unio students have free membership of the University gym and swimming pool.
Doing a degree at Oxford means a big workload, but it’s not all work and no play! There are loads of opportunities to get involved in fun stuff outside of your studies, with something to cater for every interest. Let’s hear from Unio students just a few of the many activities they get up to...

Dancesport
I’m a member of OUCS (Dancesport). We compete in competitions across the country and I’m especially passionate about our Beginner’s Team as it’s a great opportunity to learn new skills, meet new people and do things you never thought you could do! Kesley, Earth Sciences

Drums
I’m active in Oxford’s drum scene – it’s a great combination to get involved if you should choose to do so. You meet a lot of new friends. I enjoy drums very much. It’s very challenging. But it’s a very rewarding hobby – you meet a lot of new friends. The sounds you make are very pleasing to the ears. It’s a very rewarding hobby – you make a lot of new friends. It’s very challenging. So I enjoy drums very much. I enjoy drums very much. It’s very challenging. But it’s a very rewarding hobby – you meet a lot of new friends. Kesley, Earth Sciences

Oxford Sikh Society
The Oxford Sikh Society (OSK), or OOSK is a university-wide society that welcomes both Oxford and Newsham students to join and get involved in a range of activities. We have an annual conference with various distinguished speakers to discuss pertinent issues that are relevant to us as students as well as movie nights, dinners, format sports etc. It is an open space for Sikh students to hang out and share their experiences at Oxford.

Moni, Computer Science and Philosophy

Volunteering
In my spare time, I am involved with the Unio Volunteer Scheme – an outreach scheme organised by Unio which helps to improve access to higher education and Oxford for students from less privileged backgrounds. I have been involved with the scheme for four years now and I have really enjoyed it. I have had the opportunity to work with a variety of organisations and have been able to develop my skills and gain experience.

Rob, Law

Islamic Society
Oxford’s Islamic Society is one of the largest in Europe and is open to everyone regardless of their background. We aim to represent the diversity of the Muslim community and foster understanding. We hold a range of events throughout the year, including talks, dinners and other cultural events. We also work closely with other religious communities in Oxford. There is a lot to offer for everyone. Haroon, Chinese

Sikh Society and University
Star Trek Society
I am a member of the Oxford University Star Trek Society, a group of students who share a passion for science fiction and fantasy. Our members are of various backgrounds and nationalities, and we meet regularly to watch Star Trek episodes and discuss the stories and characters. There is a lot to learn and to share our experiences.

Tom, PPE

University Positive Investments
The birth of “University Positive Investments” coincided with my arrival at Unio, a campaign set up by a few graduates and third years. The aim was to encourage Unio to make sure that they invested socially – the Paradise Papers highlighted how important this was – and to do so, we learned more students, particularly students from the social sciences, about our investment. By raising awareness about what we do, we can encourage others to support our work.

George, Technical and Chemical Sciences

First Gen Society
I joined the “First Generation Society” in my first year and became secretary of the committee at the start of second year. We are a society for students who are among the first generation in their family to come to university. We are involved in outreach work, for example doing workshops in schools to encourage students from a first generation background to apply. We also support students like ourselves and help them to feel comfortable when they arrive at university. I love being a first generation student at Oxford and sometimes bad daunting that we do lots of socials and create a supportive community.

Nepan, English

Method
Not all at Unio is great (the best society for fun) mostly because someone can plan. You really don’t have to be very good. (You are good, that is great (laughs)) and if you aren’t it doesn’t matter, neither are we. It’s a great way to relax and make friends. We have matches every week and the Cuppers tournament once a year. Plus in recent years there’s been a Unio Mentors’ tournament which stayed in aid of a charity of our choosing. We also hold socials each term and get some really cool stuff. It’s a lot of fun and a great way to get out of the library. Ajar, PPE

Lacrosse
I captained the College Lacrosse team and joined with Easter College. It’s a great sport to play in college because nobody has ever really played before. It has been fun teaching people to play and be quite good at it and things that are different from other colleges, and get to know the city outside Unio. It’s a way to show how we are and to be much more involved in college (laughs) and showing the college that you are going to do this. Lottie, Equestrian

Rowing
I spend a lot of time rowing with the university – even though this is a bit time consuming, it’s really rewarding and fun. It’s a great way to meet friends from other colleges, and get to know the city outside Unio. It’s a way to show how we are and to be much more involved in college (laughs) and showing the college that you are going to do this. Rebecca, Medicine
Hello, my name is Neks and I am the current BME rep of the Uni’s JCR.
I do a variety of things, from organising dinners for students of colour to running a diversity workshop at Welcome Week. It’s also my job to make sure that transition for the BME freshmen is as smooth as it can be. I have really enjoyed working on the JCR committee, and in fact, I ran for the JCR president role (second year), so I’ll be very busy with that in my second year.

Sexuality

Whatever your concerns are when coming to Uni, sexuality shouldn’t be one of them. Whether you’re comfortably out or very secretly curious and unsure, both Uni and Oxford offer wonderful opportunities to be yourself in a supportive, non-judgemental atmosphere. There are multiple university-wide societies for LGBTQ students, which offer a great chance to get to know people from other colleges whether you’re going, out, or just feeling free to be your truth. There are LGBTQ pubs and ‘gay’ club nights on a weekly basis too. At Uni we also have an assistant student as our LGBTQ rep who is there if you have any concerns at all, and regularly puts on social events (usually including free pizza!) in college, as well as setting up socials with other Colleges too.

International students

As Uni we have lots of international students from all over the world who are an active part of the student body. You’ll find that this is a very welcoming place for people of different cultures. Uni has students from around 50 different countries. We have college ‘families’ as a friendly point of contact for any concerns as well as a brilliant Welfare Team and a designated International Students Rep; we are such a close community that you will always have someone to turn to, however small or large the problem! On college-wide level there are international film nights, international food themed formal halls, the list goes on.

Here at Uni we recognise that international students may have some extra requirements. As an international student, you are the proud owner of prized storage space over the vacations, which means that you never have to take stuff home or throw it away.

Being centrally located is an added bonus – Uni is right across from the High Street bus stop going to Heathrow, Gatwick and London. Think less painful haggling of taxis down tiny side roads to obscure colleges and the chance to sleep an extra 5 minutes whereas you’ve got 15 up to catch an early bus to the airport at the end of term. Bliss. With all these practical benefits and support, who can say that Uni isn’t the best place for an international student?

Community & Diversity

Student Support

Chances are most of your time here will be brilliant, you’ll get stuck into enjoying all that Oxford has to offer – academic and otherwise! But university isn’t necessarily plain sailing for everyone all of the time.

Welfare

Life at university can sometimes feel stressful, unexpected events can occur, and occasionally we all feel a bit worse than usual. This will not stop you getting the most out of being here though as help is on hand if ever you need it.

University College is a fantastically supportive community and many students quickly make friends to whom they can turn if they need to. Sometimes though, you might think that it’d be good to speak to someone different. That’s why we have two Welfare Officers. Fresh students who have been elected specifically to help the transition in university life easier and to be a support throughout your time at Oxford.

There’s also a team of trained student Peer Supporters. This student team is a brilliant link between you and College. Whether it be a quick chat over tea and doughnuts, or something more confidential, they are trained well, good listeners, and on your side. They run regular welfare events which are always well attended as they provide coping amounts of good food and tea to get you through the term, and it’s also a good chance to catch up with the rest of College!

Disabilities

Uni takes really seriously the different requirements of students with disabilities who apply and study here. Uni is made up largely of quite old buildings but we do our very best to ensure easy access whatever your needs. The College even added some state-of-the-art, disabled access bedrooms and kitchens when we renovated our newest accommodation block! Our new common room was also built specifically with accessibility in mind. Other needs are also catered for in College, such as extra time in exams for students with specific learning difficulties. There is also help available through the central University’s Disability Advisory Service.

Most people have a great time at Uni, and find that they don’t need to use these services at all – but they are there if you need them.

The student welfare reps and Peer Supporters can also help you decide what to contact (you need to approach the counsellors or other College and University staff dealing with welfare at College or University. There are official College staff responsible for Welfare, from the College Nurse, to people available for drop-in chats about anything from the smallest of concerns to the biggest of problems. There is no stigma attached to seeking welfare-based help at Uni: anyone is free to use the services completely confidentially.

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William Beveridge

The social reformer and author of the Beveridge Report which led to the formation of the Welfare State.

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Finance

Losing away from home for the first time presents many new challenges, not least of all managing your money.

As a fresher, the last thing you want to be doing is spending time worrying about your overdraft and wondering whether you’ll have enough money to see the term out. Don’t worry: we try to make sure that this is never a problem at Unio.

At Unio, we also have a generous range of bursaries and grant schemes to support the University’s.

A generous book grant of £200 helps you buy key literature for your course, while the college library can buy books otherwise unavailable to you. Extra finance required for fieldwork, or academic-related trips may be found through departmental grants or through one of the college’s special grants.

There are various funds which students can apply to (they find themselves in urgent financial difficulty, either in the form of an interest free loan or a grant. These are based purely on how much money a student has at their disposal.

Our Old Members’ Trust Bursary Scheme is one of the most prestigious college-based bursary schemes at the university. We will support students from low and middle income families in studying with us. More information will be available at www.unio.ac.uk/learn-at-unio/undergraduate-bursaries.

The University makes available numerous bursaries for students who come from low-income families, details of which are available at www.unio.ac.uk/funding.

There are also 7 additional funds to help students who find themselves in urgent financial difficulties.

We can also contribute to your non-academic activities.

The College also has a fund which provides grants to students who want to undertake extra research, research or do internships in the holidays. All they have to do is come up with a plan for something which will broaden their academic horizons over and above their studies. The College will choose to give money to the students with the best applicants!

The Blues Fund is allocated to students who compete in any sport at University level which may incur extra costs for equipment, transport or specialist training.

With so much help available, the expenses of life in Oxford shouldn’t be unmanageable, leaving you free to focus on your studies and get the most out of your time.

For the most up-to-date student funding information visit our dedicated website: http://fox.ac.uk/funding

Travel Scholarships

In my second year I spent two weeks on an excavation site near Naples, Italy.

During this time, I learnt an immense amount about archaeology and topography, both practically and in the classroom. My days were spent half on the dig-site, and half inside working on the pottery we found. On the dig-site I was taught how to accurately draw sections of the building that had been uncovered by the careful use of pencil and measuring tape and I also learnt how to use a trowel correctly.

While I was there we discovered many pieces of pottery, a brooch, and an area that had been used for child burials. Back inside the accommodation I learned how to make pieces of pottery for recording by practicing with ink and fountain pens and then coating the writing in nail varnish. I also learnt how to identify where the different pieces of pottery had come from according to the shape and wear, and how to determine what kind of item they had been part of originally. We also had the chance to see some pots and amphorae that had been fully restored through careful reconstruction.

While I was there I was also able to visit Pompeii, which was extremely exciting as I had never visited Pompei or Italy before. This was very helpful for my Classics studies, as I was able to see many of the paintings and items that are in my GCSE Contexts paper in real life. I was also able to visit the Villa Oplontis and to go into Naples for the evening. All of this was very enjoyable and helped further my interest in learning more about Ancient Rome.
Applying to Oxford

Applying to Oxford can seem like a daunting thing. Hear from our students as they look back at their experiences!

How did you feel applying to Oxford? Did you think you’d get in?
“I applied to Oxford out of pure curiosity! I didn’t think I’d get in, but I was interested to see how far I could go in the application process.”
Kelley, Earth Sciences

“I definitely did not think I would get into Oxford – very few people from my school had ever got in before me and I felt totally unprepared for the application process.”
Eleanor, PPE

“The application process happened so quickly, I was convinced that I’d flunked the interview and that the dream was over. Luckily I was wrong!”
Tom, PPE

“I never thought I’d get in in my wildest dreams. I was one of the very few people applying from my school and I just thought I wouldn’t stand a chance against people who had been to schools that churned out Oxford students.”
Haminder, Computer Science and Philosophy

I was nervous about whether I had a place or not, so I stayed over the weekend when I got my offer. I wish I’d relaxed a bit more during applications and I think it’s important to get as much perspective as you can about university. Somewhere that’s good for one person might not necessarily be the best place for you.”
Leana, Medicine

What was it like coming for interviews and staying in College?
“Interviews were a great chance to actually see whether Oxford was the fit for me. I got to stay over at UniHo and experience life in College for a few days. As daunting as it was, it was nice to socialise in the JC and speak to other students that were in the same position.”
Haminder, Computer Science and Philosophy

“Exploring the Christmas markets was a great way to calm my nerves before the interviews.”
Rebecca, Experimental Psychology

“It was one of the first times I really felt at home in an academic sense. When you love learning but your peers are often just not as interested in maths or history as you, it can be hard to fully enjoy school. To be around like-minded people (and to play Monopoly with them) was awesome. Getting a chance to visit and stay in an Oxford college was amazing too, I’d never had something like that before.”
Rapita, Maths and Computer Science

What helped you prepare for applying to Oxford?
“I had a lot of under reading, which was vital in writing my personal statement because I hadn’t studied my subject at school. I also attended the UNIQ summer school which was a fantastic experience and gave me lots of help with knowing how to approach the interview and personal statement, as well as showing me what it would be like to study at the university.”
Hannah, Ancient Near Eastern Studies

“In preparation, I made sure that I researched widely around the areas I knew I was interested in in my subject. This involved a lot of wider reading, but also finding public lectures at my local university to attend and talks from authors at bookshops or literary festivals. Oxford loves specificity and evidence for your passion, it is never enough to simply say you ‘like’ something, so I found this extra work very helpful when backing up more general statements in both my personal statement and my interviews.”
Megan, English

“Before applying I made sure to read newspapers more frequently in order to keep up to date with current affairs, but more importantly to become more familiar with formal articles and arguments which I engaged with and picked apart.”
Rob, Law

What advice would you give to your 16 year old self now you are here at Oxford?
“Don’t try and do too many things because you think that’s what you’re supposed to do. Enjoy the road ahead – read the things you really want to read.”
Tom, PPE

“I stopped myself from becoming overwhelmed by taking everything one step at a time – applications are stressful enough without biting off more than you can chew. After that was out of the way, I started practicing for the BMAT near the end of the summer of Year 12– preparation is key! I think an excellent way to prepare is to do as many questions as you can, especially under timed conditions.”
Leana, Medicine

“I would tell my 16 year old self to keep going, that it will all turn out OK in the end and that you are capable of so much more than you know”
Kelley, Earth Sciences

“You don’t need to know everything – Oxford is here to help you learn!”
Katie, Classics

University College Oxford’s website especially for school and 6th form students

Get ideas for reading around your subject with our Online Reading Bank of book reviews from current Oxford students.

Explore ways to stretch yourself academically beyond the school curriculum by checking out the Resources section – a gateway to lectures, podcasts, courses and more, all available for free online.

Unio Opportunity Programme

As a College Unio wants to have as diverse a group of students as possible. To show our commitment to this, we have recently launched a programme that admits 10 extra students each year, all from disadvantaged backgrounds in the UK.

What’s more, these students get a really useful course before they arrive, to enable them hit the ground running in their first year. That’s meant to help them develop confidence and experiment with university-style learning methods before starting the degree for real. We don’t have much room to discuss the ins and outs of this programme here – check out the College website for more details! Safe to say, we’re proud to be an inclusive College!

www.unio.ox.ac.uk/learn-at-unio/ opportunity-programme

Watch interviews with our tutors to find out about different subjects at Oxford – and what they’re looking for in students.

Get a feel for student life in Oxford by browsing our student’s photo albums in our Unio Life section – or let them take you on a ‘stop-motion’ tour of our College!
UNIV IS THE OLDEST COLLEGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.
Our story began in 1249 when William of Durham, a high-powered theology lecturer who had retired to County Durham, left in his will 310 Marks (a lot of money in those days) for the support of poor scholars. THE REST IS HISTORY!

Univ has its very own pet tortoise called Percy (hint: look at the top of the page!) He's currently limbering up for the annual tortoise race against other colleges.

Univ is amongst the largest colleges in terms of population: 380+ undergraduates and over 200 graduate students too!

The Master and Fellows of the College of the Great Hall of the University of Oxford (our full name, but we just call it Univ!)