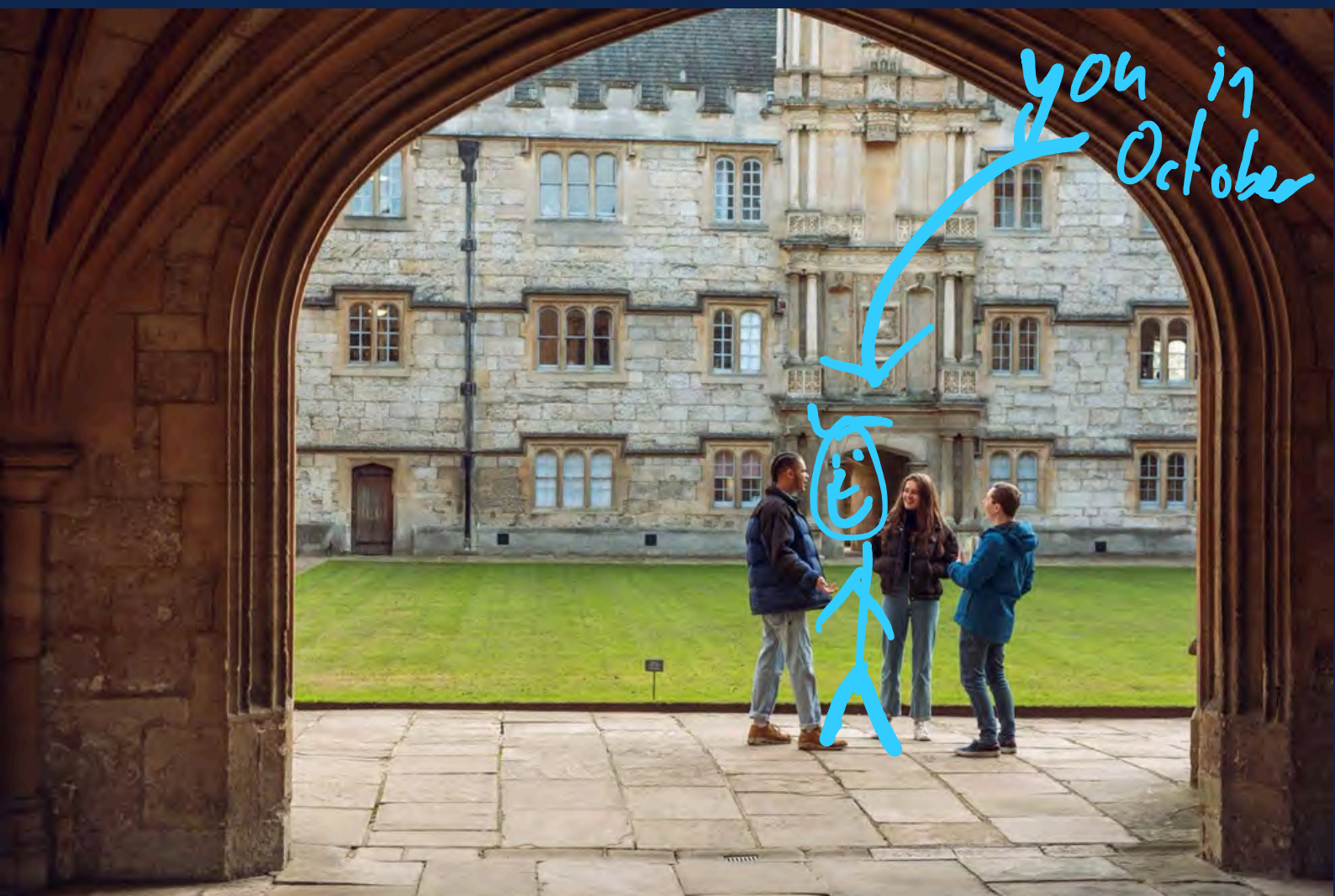


# DON'T PANIC



## Merton Freshers' Guide 2025/26



# INTRODUCTION

Hiya!

I'm Anisha a second year PPEist and your Access & Equal Opportunities Representative!<3

With the help of some of my fellow JCR members (and building off the work of previous JCR members and whose work makes up the bulk of this) we have tried to modernise this guide, so that what you have in front of you is a very useful introductory tool to help you take the first steps of your Oxford journey!

For any and all questions about the greatest college at Oxford, read on. You'll find information to help you get through your first week or two, as well as all sorts of important things about college life and the JCR. I hope this makes you feel more at ease and sets you up for the full Merton experience!

There is more information about our college socials available further on in this guide, but I would recommend you start by following us on Instagram!

For more social media shenanigans feel free to follow me on Instagram - **@mertonjcraccess** – and if you have any more questions feel free to get in touch with me or any of the other JCR Committee members.

***Anisha Mohammed***

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# LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH

[Merton College Instagram](#)

[Merton JCR Instagram](#)

[Merton JCR Access Instagram](#)

[Merton JCR Welfare Instagram](#)

[Merton JCR Entz Instagram](#)

[Merton JCR Facebook](#)

[Merton College Film Society Instagram](#)

[Merton College Music Society Instagram](#)

[Merton JCR 1980s Society](#)

[Merton JCR Sports Instagram](#)

[Merton College Netball Team](#)

[Merton Floats Instagram](#)

[Merton College Boat Club Instagram](#)

[Merton JCR Arts and Craft Rep Instagram](#)

[Merton Neave Society](#)

[Merton Poetry Society](#)

[Merton College Choir Instagram](#)







# Getting started

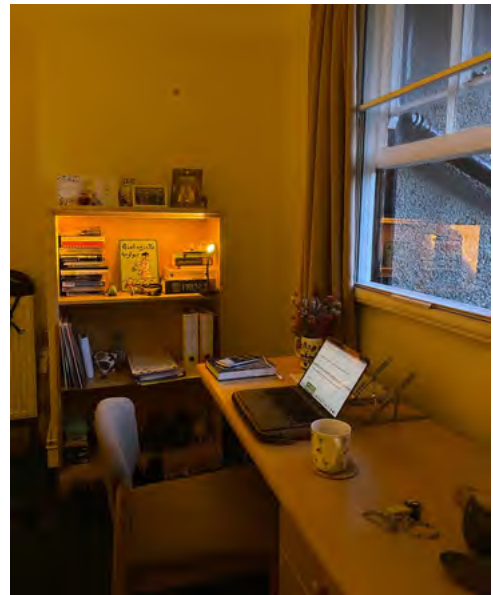


# WHAT TO BRING

The college provides you with a room for the year, but it's up to you to make it a home. Packing up essentially your entire life for eight weeks and lugging it halfway across the country (or further!) can be a slightly intimidating task. Probably better to bring too much, rather than not enough - most rooms have bare-looking shelves and floors that need filling and it's a great opportunity to express yourself. Oxford does have hundreds of shops though, so you can buy almost anything you need within a ten-minute walk of college. Also remember, everything does have to go back with you at some point!

## A few minor caveats

- No Blu-tac on the walls. Your room should have a picture rail or hooks (and if you'd like more hooks, you can always ask Maintenance via the Intranet's Service Desk); you can buy picture-hangers in stationery shops (e.g. Blackwells) or use command strips which can be bought in Ryman's
- Noisy or otherwise disruptive items (such as a keyboard or guitar amplifier) should be cleared with college first. Just send an email to the domestic bursar ([tim.lightfoot@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:tim.lightfoot@merton.ox.ac.uk)) - he won't bite!
- If you want a kettle in your room, it must be of the type that automatically switches off when done. Other electrical cooking items, such as toasters and microwaves, aren't allowed, due to fire regulations – we don't want college to burn down just yet. Don't worry, you should have access to a kitchen with these!
- No candles or open flames :((



Cosy lighting never goes amiss!



## **Books**

If you study one of the humanities you might have been sent a book list, and sciences may have recommended textbooks or reading as well. Obviously, you can always buy books, but you literally never need to.

Oxford has endless libraries with every book you could ever need (and many more). Once you get here, you'll get a 'SOLO' induction showing you how to find/request books. It can be useful to bring a couple of A-Level textbooks, as you may find yourself wanting to refresh something you haven't done for a while. Merton also offers a book grant so if you do end up buying books for your subject before getting here, you can get them reimbursed [here](#) with your University SSO up to £100 per year.



## **Sub Fusc**

'Sub fusc' is the name given to the academic dress at Oxford. You normally have to wear this for matriculation (see p.13) and your University examinations, and it consists of:

- Plain white collared shirt
- Black shoes
- White bow tie OR black ribbon
- Dark suit with dark socks OR
- either dark skirt with black
- stockings OR dark trousers with
- dark socks
- Mortarboard
- Gown



## **Where to buy it?**

You can buy your academic gown new from three shops (all within 10 minutes of Merton)

- Ede and Ravenscroft
- Shepherd and Woodward
- Walters of Oxford

You can also purchase the gown second hand from Facebook on groups like [this](#) or from older students.

## **When to wear it?**

Full academic dress is rarely worn, only for matriculation (more on that later) and exams, but your gown will get a lot more use – at Merton, gowns are worn at Formal Hall (one of the two options for college dinner).



## **A Quite Comprehensive List of Suggested Items to Bring and Handy Hints**

\* = These items are especially useful

### Official Items

- Funding and loans paperwork\*
- Passport\*
- Bank details\*, cards\*, money
- NHS and National Insurance cards
- Medical details\*
- Passport photos\*
- Some form of ID\* – e.g. driving licence, proof-of-age card

### Room items

- Sheets, pillows, mattress topper, duvets\*
- Alarm clock\*/radio
- Bedside lamp/desk lamp
- Drawing pins for the notice-board
- Cutlery, crockery, mugs, glasses
- Tea towels (hint: wrap crockery in tea towels when packing to prevent chips/breakages)
- Washing-up liquid and cloths
- Laundry equipment\* (detergent, large bag, clothes horse etc.)
- Mini-Fridge (hint: get one that runs quietly, or, better still, silently)
- Kettle and mugs (invite people for tea!)
- Music system – speakers, headphones, mp3 player dock/charger, CDs etc. + batteries!
- Photographs from home
- Computer equipment and wires
- Mobile phone and charger\*
- Tea, coffee, cereal and other food/drink

### Personal items

- Earplugs
- Dressing gown and PJs\*
- Slippers
- Toiletries (toothbrush!) \*
- Towels\*
- Shavers, razors\*
- Small medical kit (painkillers may come in handy)
- Stationery and notebooks\*
- Relevant A-level notes, books
- Stamps, envelopes
- Bop costume materials (see Entz guide)
- Condoms/sanitary products (although you can get these in college for free)

### Clothes\* (please don't forget these, it won't be pretty)

- Formal wear – jacket and tie or a formal dress for formal hall (and for sub fusc)
- Gown, mortarboard – buy them when you get here or order online
- Sports clothes

### Other

- Bike, bike lock, helmet, reflective gear, lights – register your bike with the lodge when you get here, and they'll tell you where your nearest bike shed is
- Sports equipment
- Teddy bear/blanket/general comfort item, photos from home

# ACCOMMODATION

1st Year rooms are randomly allocated and are in two locations both on the main college site – Rose Lane, and Merton Street (and maybe Grove if you have some access requirements). See the map for these locations. When you arrive a helper will show you to your room.

*Things that college provides:*

- One desk lamp
- Furniture (wardrobe, drawers etc.)
- A single bed
- A desk and chair



If anything's wrong, just [file a report with maintenance on the Intranet](#) and they'll come and fix it for you. Rooms are cleaned once a week by your scout, but you have to take out your own bins. You will also be allocated access to a kitchen near your accommodation - check out the food section for more info!



**Here are some sexy pics:**

Rose Lane – where most of the first-year accommodation is located



The beloved Merton Street balcony <3



## BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

There will be a fair bit of Admin you really need to do – just keep an eye out for emails from Merton email addresses and try and do things they ask fairly promptly.

Probably the two most important links (and bits of info in this guide) are these – the college website, and the JCR, or Junior Common Room (that’s you and all other undergraduates) site. Almost all questions and information you could ever need will be found on these pages, so check them out, and make sure to have a browse.

MERTON COLLEGE  
Oxford’s best college  
[www.merton.ox.ac.uk](http://www.merton.ox.ac.uk)



MERTON COLLEGE JCR  
Merton’s best common room  
[www.mertonjcr.org](http://www.mertonjcr.org)

### Website

This site has a lot of useful info and instructions regarding accommodation, medical registration, and finances etc. There should also be a handy ‘to do’ list, which should help you keep track of all the administrative tasks there are to wade through.

### JCR Website

<http://www.mertonjcr.org> is, as the name suggests, the website of the Junior Common Room. Here you will be able to access a (hopefully) more reader-friendly array of information about the college, created by members of the JCR.



# THE FIRST DAY



Note: it's a core experience for Merton PPEist to make a lettuce joke

## Actually Arriving

Please make sure you arrive. This is very important. Don't forget.

UK Mainland Freshers need to arrive on Monday 6th of October – you'll be given either a morning or afternoon slot in which to arrive, but exciting things start from c. 5pm so definitely be here by then. Directions can be found on the below. International students and UK students not from the Mainland may be permitted to arrive earlier than normal this year – please look out for an email from College if this applies to you.

## **The academic year is divided into three terms:**

Michaelmas (October – December)

Hilary (January – March)

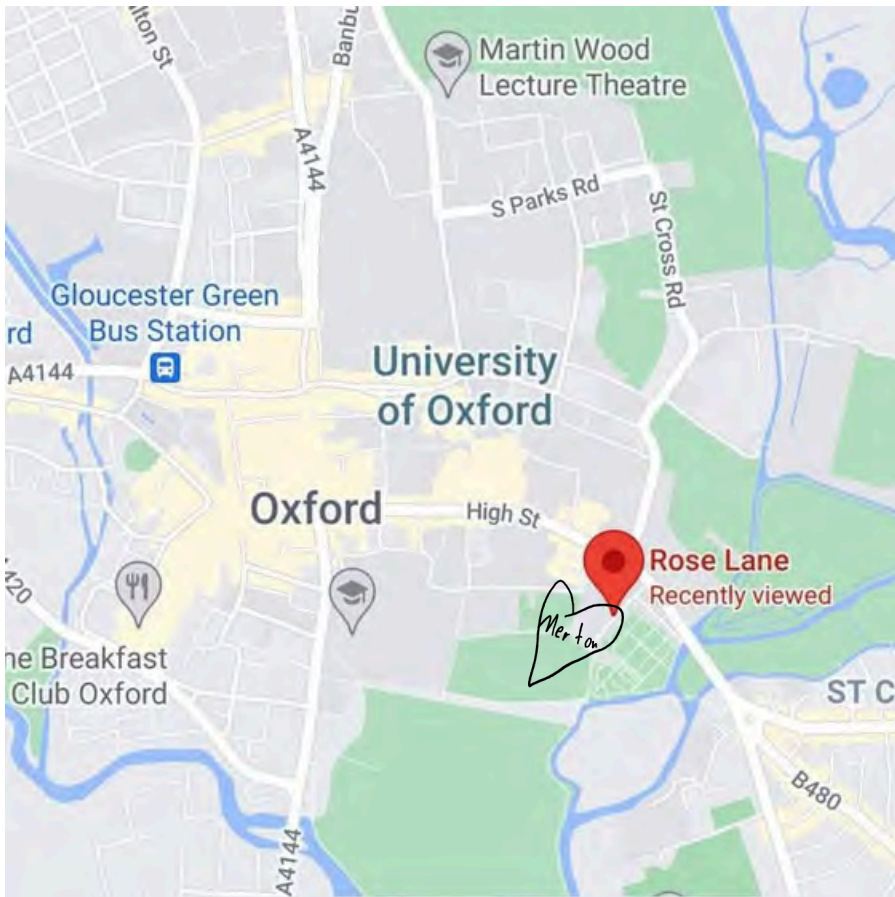
Trinity (April – June)

Each term consists of 8 weeks, which begin on Sundays (oddly enough) and are referred to as 1st – 8th Week. There is also a 0th Week at the beginning of each term, during which you can return to Oxford early (and scramble to do the work you were meant to do over the vacation) but you **have** to be back in Oxford by Thursday of 0th week because most subjects will have collections (mock exams). Freshers' Week will be 0th Week in the academic calendar. So your first day this term will be Monday of 0th week. Simple, right?

## **Once you're here...**

The first day at Merton actually contains one of the toughest challenges you will face during your time here – navigating the centre of the city by car. Oxford is not very car-friendly, as vehicles were not considered by 10th century town planners. My advice:

Google maps – ROSE LANE – this will get you to car parking and friendly Merton helpers. Here's a screenshot of where you're aiming:



Once you're at your room, everything's up to you. Unpack (or get your parents to unpack), put the kettle on, get to know your new neighbours, and dive into college life.



# FRESHERS' WEEK

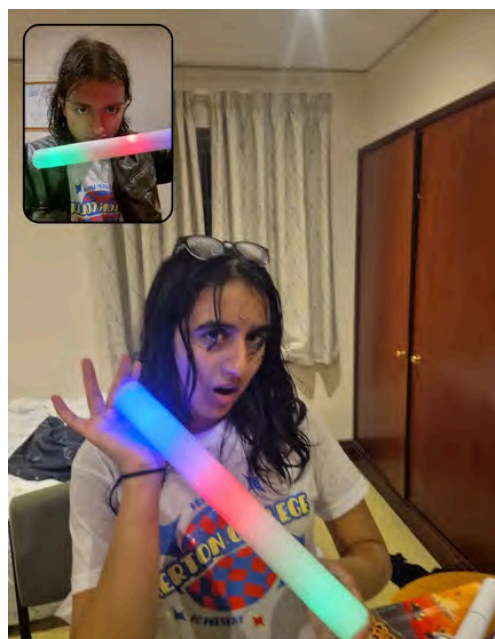
You'll get your hugely exciting timetable for this at some point – this is organised by College and the entz (entertainment) reps so it will be *majorly* fun. Expect some compulsory and boring admin talks from college, some important things like consent talks, and admittedly rather a lot of very fun socialising events (both drinking and non-drinking).

## Oxford Freshers' Fair

A highlight of the week: here you find information about every University club and society such as all sports teams, newspapers, or subject societies. It's not just those though, there are over 300 – from the OU Real Ale Society to the Oxford Guild of Assassins. If anything even slightly interests you, just put your email address down. There's no pressure for further commitment – the societies expect some people to lose interest once term begins. If nothing else, you can be like me and feel super popular with your weekly emails from 100 societies you've never actually made it to. This year it'll be held in Exam Schools, so only a minute or two away from Merton, and Dominos is usually there handing out free pizza, so that's also a good incentive to go!

## The Admission Ceremonies

The Merton admission ceremony - this will take place in the college chapel during Freshers' Week. During the ceremony, your name and subject will be called, you write your name in a book and (despite it feeling like the kind of moment in which I would expect a sorting hat to be placed on my head) that really is it! Your admission to the college will be followed by a drinks reception with your tutors and a celebratory meal in hall. Do not worry about what will probably be your first formal dining experience at Merton, it is equally low-key, but if you would like some tips for formal events at Oxford like what to wear (formal dress) and formal etiquette, I have included a few later on. Last year, people typically wore suits or other formal outfits like black-tie attire and dresses.



Note: bring an umbrella to the club in autumn if you can (we learnt that the hard way)

The 2024 Freshers shirt!!



The University admission ceremony - this is known as matriculation. Students are required to matriculate wearing sub fusc in a ceremony in the Sheldonian Theatre. There'll be a photo of all of you together in college (and some individual photos for your granny/uncle/dog to put on their wall), and then off for the ceremony. Some important bureaucrat says some Latin and you're done!



The actual ceremony isn't always thrilling

Traditionally, once you matriculate, students like to spend the day having great merriment. I leave the interpretation of that open to your personal taste but often students take photos by the Rad Cam and go punting!

### **Don't panic**

Only a few events are compulsory, and they will all be marked on the timetable, so you're perfectly free to enjoy Freshers' Week however you want. If moving away and all the change gets to you (this will happen to everyone at some point), help is at hand. Welfare is very strong at Merton, and there will always be someone you can go to for help (see Welfare later on).



# MAP OF OXFORD



The highlighted path is for walking from Merton to Uni Parks.

For more ideas and places to go, visit [here](#)!!

## MAP KEY

1. **ROUNDAABOUT** and **MAGDALEN BRIDGE** – the easiest route to college by car. Features a Sainsbury's and a cashpoint, and leads to the suburbs of Cowley (which features a Tesco, bike shops, and lots of trendy restaurants and bars) and Iffley Sports ground, home to most Uni Sports
2. **RAILWAY STATION** – needs no explanation. About 20 minutes' walk from college
3. **HOLYWELL STREET** - Merton owns several houses along this street, and you'll most likely live here or in Manor Place in second year. Also, home to popular pubs the Turn Tavern and the King's Arms
4. **THE PAVILLION (OR "PAV")** - home to sports, barbeques and most importantly, Merton's BOPs (partayssssssss)
5. **THE BOTANICAL GARDENS** - a splendid garden, featured in Philip Pullman's *The Amber Spyglass*, and a great place to take someone (for whatever reason). Entry is free with a University Card

6. **ITALIAMOS** – popular Italian deli shop, which does great calzones and even better pizzas (half off after 5pm, great if you forget to book Hall).
7. **HONEY'S ON THE HIGH** - handy little newsagent, very useful in emergencies.
8. **TAYLOR'S** - another popular deli/ sandwich shop, with similarly wide range of fillings
9. **ALFRED STREET NATWEST** - nearest cashpoint, and apparently my predecessor's favourite because it gives out £5 notes (though not for free). Other cashpoints are at the Iffley Roundabout, on Queen Street, on Turl Street, and along Cornmarket and St Giles.
10. **WESTGATE SHOPPING CENTRE** - big shopping centre featuring lots of trendy restaurants, shops and a big Sainsbury's - where I personally do my shopping
11. **CORNMARKET** - main shopping street, features high-street chains, fast food and access to the Oxford Union. Also the home of **PLUSH**, one of Oxford's sweatiest clubs.
12. **THE COVERED MARKET** - traditional butchers/ bakers/ fishmongers/ cafes/ lunch places, and interesting gift spots
13. **GEORGE STREET** - plenty of restaurants, a cinema, Wetherspoon's, and the Old Fire Station Theatre and nightclub. Leads to the popular club **Bridge**.
14. **BEAUMONT STREET** - the Oxford Playhouse and Burton-Taylor Theatres, and the Ashmolean Museum
15. **THE PITT-RIVERS AND NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUMS** - two of the most interesting museums in the country
16. **G&D's** – delicious ice cream, with oft-changing flavours on offer. Don't order a Sundae if you go on a date with a girl here though, apparently it gives them the 'ick' (so lamented one of my predecessors)
17. **BLACKWELLS** – the famous bookshop, with a huge sale of second-hand books at the start of term. There is a very nice Café Nero on the 1st floor, popular for working in with students. Nestling in its midst is cosy late-opening pub the White Horse, of Inspector Morse fame.
18. **KING EDWARD STREET** – home of popular Mexican takeaway Mission Burrito
19. **TURL STREET** – Oxfam second hand bookshop, KNOOPS, and Missing Bean
20. **BODLEIAN LIBRARY (THE BOD) AND RADCLIFFE CAMERA** – huge, ancient, famous University library (linked together by the underground Gladstone Link). May contain books (in fact, every single one ever published), and now also home to the History Faculty Library.



21.**LITTLE CLARENDON STREET** – cocktail bars, another G&D's, and gateway to the popular suburb of Jericho.

22.**ST GILES** – home to another Tesco and another Sainsbury's

23.**QUEEN STREET** – more shops, most notably including an M&S.

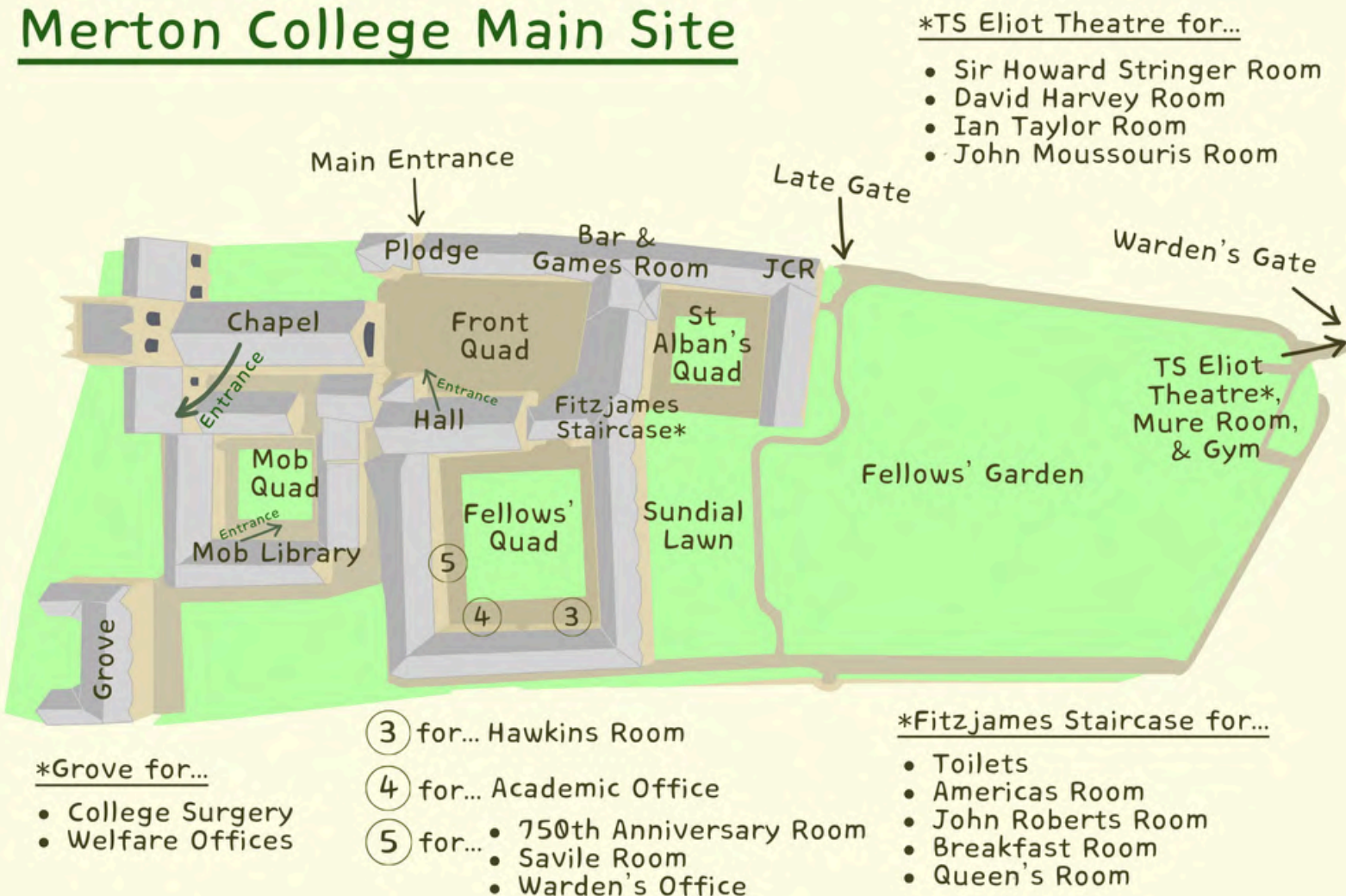
24.**AHMED'S** – Merton's favourite kebab van, a staple snack for all Mertonians, whether rolling out of a club or reeling from an essay crisis. Another popular (but less good) kebab van, Hassan's, is on Broad Street, or Fake Ahmed's, also on the High Street.

25.**PARK END STREET** – leading onto the Said Business School, Park End Street is right by Worcester Street Car Park (and Thirst - one of Oxford's strangest clubs)



# About Merton

## Merton College Main Site



[Check this out for more info on rooms at Merton!](#)



# COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE

Even by Oxford standards, Merton is a stunning college. There's a map above, but you will soon know it inside out anyway. College is arranged into quads – there's Mob Quad (oldest quad in Oxford University), Front Quad, St. Alban's Quad and Fellows' Quad. There is also the Grove building, the Rose Lane buildings and North Lodge at the other end of Fellows' Garden, with the Finlay building, the OWL library and Merton Street houses just outside the main site. Most of the quads in college consist of rooms for either students or tutors. About five minutes' walk away is Holywell Street, where lots of older years (including yours truly) live, and about ten minutes away is the Pavilion.

With all that the college owns, it's no surprise that you are offered accommodation for all the years of your course. You'll often see people referring to their rooms in the form Quad/Street, Staircase/House: Room. Eg. Front Quad, 1:4.

The nerve centre of the college is the lodge, home to our college porters, who are on duty 24/7. If ever in need, ask the porters anything – you will find that they know everything there is to know about the college. Next door is the post room, where you'll find your pigeon hole or 'pidge' to pick up mail. No owls here sadly. It'll contain various pieces of information, such as your room number, when you arrive. Get your parents/friend/pen-pals to send mail to Merton College Oxford and it will appear in this pidge for you to collect. Also, in the Post Room is the machine for getting your laundry card.



the view from the top of Merton Tower

The lodge's gate closes at 11pm so after this time, you will have to use the 'Late Gate' (on Merton Street, almost opposite OWL) or the 'North Lodge Gate' (surprisingly, next to North Lodge) to get into or out of college.

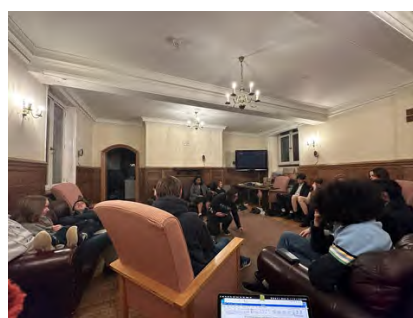


## **Fun Facilities**

The college bar is a good place to go to find life at Merton in the evenings. Drinks and snacks are served from 6:30pm until 11pm. Many a fine evening can be spent idling around between the bar, games room (with pool, darts and table football) and the benches in Front Quad. Upstairs from the bar is the JCR, a large room open from 8am until midnight that has table tennis and ludicrously comfortable leather sofas (JCR Meetings, or OGMs, also happen here). Next to the JCR is the TV room with a large television (and a Nintendo Switch), and just outside is Fellows' Garden, a wonderful place to relax and/or pretend to do some work. In Trinity (summer) term, college allows students to play croquet on Chestnut Lawn (outside Grove).

## **Other Facilities**

Other facilities include bike sheds (behind the OWL library and in front of North Lodge) and the music rooms, the key to which you can get at the lodge. There's also the beautiful college Chapel, which holds services during term time, and is often used for other musical or



dramatic productions. We also have a small college gym which is open 24/7 and free for all college members after an induction in Michaelmas.

## **And most importantly... food!**

<https://epos.merton.ox.ac.uk> – this is your bible, your page to book meals, see menus, top up your card, and find meal timings etc.

Merton's food is reputed to be among the best of all the Oxford colleges. For around £11 a day, you can eat three good meals in Hall. To attend any meal in hall, you need to book on using EPOS by 10.30am the day before, and by 10.30 am on Friday for Saturday, Sunday, and Monday meals. Hall staff may be lax for your first few days in college, but do remember to do this!

For breakfast, you can just turn up: the selection is usually pretty similar day to day, with pastries, porridge, boiled eggs and toast.

On Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday, there are actually two evening meals. There's Early Supper, served 6pm-6:30pm, which is a main course and dessert, and there is also Formal Hall four days a week, which costs the same as Early Supper £5.82 but is a full three course meal, typically served at table, with smart dress and gowns worn. Merton's Formal dinner is one of the cheapest, but tastiest Formals in Oxford and a great chance to catch up with friends and take lots of photos.

There is always a vegetarian and vegan options available at lunch and dinner, so no need to worry if you're veggie. You can also request Kosher and Halal meals and specify many other dietary requirements. Brunch, served late Sunday morning (good for food, also good for catching up post BOPs), is a cooked breakfast – delicious.



Unlike some colleges, which operate a bulk-booking system whereby you pay a fixed amount for the term's meals, we operate a pre-booking system – you top up your card online and then only pay for the meals you actually eat. You simply book in for the meals you want before 10.30am on the day before. Meals tend to book out a couple days in advance: especially formals which tend to book out in a couple minutes when spaces open at 9am a few days before. Your year's whatsapp group chat will also likely become a marketplace for those spontaneous occasions where you no longer want a hall booking or you do want one last minute: such a system ensures no-one wastes money or food. There are also three kitchens assigned to first



Bread and cheese - the breakfast (dinner) of champions (Merton students)

years, roughly based on your accommodation (as well as a fourth JCR kitchen accessible to all students). Whilst this would translate to approximately 30 students per kitchen, it's not nearly as bad as it sounds! A combination of the fact that many people rarely cook, and the fact that everyone has different eating schedules

means that you'll usually be able to find a hob if you want one. Whilst there is some communal equipment in all the kitchens: fridges, pots and pans, a microwave, it's a good idea to bring some of your own things, particularly knives, a cutting board, pots, plates and bowls etc.

You may choose to bring a mini-fridge for their rooms as the fridges can run out of space (and there's the risk that someone's yoghurt will leak all over your freshly bought broccoli), but this isn't necessary. Remember to be selective with what you bring; if you're like me, you'll bring tonnes of things that you'll literally never use (like a grater) that you'll also have to pack back into boxes when it's 3am post-bop.

**IF YOU BRING PANS MAKE SURE THEY ARE INDUCTION OR THEY WON'T WORK IN A SINGLE MERTON KITCHEN!**

# TECHNOLOGY

## **Bring a laptop.**

Every room in college has access to the internet and should be covered by the Eduroam (Wi-Fi) system. For more information on getting Eduroam click [here](#). If your coverage is unreliable, report it to the IT Department via [it-support@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:it-support@merton.ox.ac.uk). An alternative to Wi-Fi is an Ethernet cable – a two-metre one will work for your desk and for libraries, and should probably stretch to your bed (which, you will find, is ideal), but a 10-metre one would make absolutely sure. If you don't already have one, you can purchase them very cheaply from the University IT services at the beginning of Freshers' Week or from Amazon beforehand.

There is a blanket ban on all P2P software such as Limewire and BitTorrent – just be sensible.

If you happen not to be very good with computers, don't worry; the procedure for getting your computer set up and connected is actually very simple, and help will be on hand if you get stuck. If you have any questions or issues about such matters, don't hesitate to get in contact with the JCR IT Officer ([jcr.it@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:jcr.it@merton.ox.ac.uk)) for any tech support. If you want to get set up as soon as possible, write down the MAC address of your computer's Ethernet connection on a slip of paper and bring it with you when you arrive.

## **Computer Rooms**

There are also computers provided around college in the libraries. Printing facilities are also available in the libraries, and there's currently no charge for printing.





# The JCR



## WHAT IS THE JCR?

Merton has three central college bodies – the Senior, Middle, and Junior Common Rooms. You will usually hear these referred to as the SCR, MCR, and JCR. The SCR is the body of fellows of the college, the MCR is for postgraduate students and the JCR is for us, the undergraduates. There is no central University building (although feel free to misinform any tourists), and the college authorities and services almost always take precedence in day-to-day life. We're members of Merton first, Oxford second.

### JCR Meetings

The JCR is basically like a Student Union for Merton undergrads. It is essentially self-governing, with an annual budget. JCR meetings are held every other Sunday, and all JCR members are invited to eat free snacks and also vote on important issues. All sorts of matters are discussed at OGMs (more information on the next page), and every member has the right to propose, scrutinise and vote on motions. Although it's possibly not the most glamorous part of life at Merton (hard to believe, I know), many JCR members find taking an active part in the running of our community very rewarding, and a lot of people end up getting heavily involved in meetings.

### The JCR Exec and Committee

Every summer, the JCR as a whole elects a new JCR Executive Committee - the team responsible for managing and implementing our policies and taking care of administration (**including your amazing Access rep**). There is also a JCR General Committee with more specific roles, such as Food and Bar Rep, BAME Rep and JCR Photographer,

who support the Exec by carrying out vital tasks for the successful running of the JCR. The general committee is elected in a rolling programme, throughout the year, with most JCR meetings featuring 'hustings' (people ask why you should be this position) for various roles. Getting involved with the committee is well worth it, solely for the enjoyable sensation of wielding power (and making a real change blah blah) and freshers are always welcome (and encouraged!) to run for committee positions.

Check out the JCR Guide for more info about what roles are available and when they're husted!



Time Ceremony!  
(aka saving the  
Space-Time  
Continuum)

## **Keeping Informed about the JCR**

It is primarily the responsibility of the JCR Vice President to keep members informed of what happens at OGMs – look out for emails beforehand, advertising the hustings and agenda, and afterwards, with the official minutes. If you're interested in a committee or Exec position, a good idea would be to chat to the current person, who is introduced on the JCR [website](#). If you're really extreme, you could take a look through the JCR Constitution and Standing Orders (not recommended bedtime reading, despite their sleep-inducing properties), which contain the definitive rules for the JCR's operation, clear descriptions of every post and the full schedule of elections – again, available on the website.

## **The OGM**

### **What the hell is an OGM?**

An OGM, or Ordinary General Meeting, refers to when all your undergraduate representatives get together to discuss the issues raised by...you guessed it, you undergraduates. Oh, and also where we get to have free food and drinks (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic)!

If any of the following seems a bit confusing, there'll be a talk about the JCR and OGMs in freshers' week, as well as an OGM on Sunday of 1st Week so look out for that as it'll be a good opportunity to learn more about the JCR.

### **What happens in an OGM?**

Minutes, minutes, minutes. Don't worry this first bit won't take long before we begin in proper with the President's Business. Your JCR President will update you on how they've been representing your interests in college and on any proposed changes, before passing on to the JCR Committee to do the same. Listen carefully, because next you get a chance to ask them questions. This might be anything ranging from "How DARE you reduce the pizza budget!?" to, "Are you SURE we want to spend all our reserves on a painting of the JCR president?".

Next, we move on to hustings and voting for any committee position due to be re-elected – have a look at our "Introduction to your JCR Committee" pages to see if you fancy gunning for any of the roles!



Finally, we conclude with motions which, as the name suggests, is where you really get the chance to make things move. This might be by getting funding from the JCR for a project, formally asking college to change an element of their policy which you don't feel is right, or really anything else that passes under the definition of "a motion".

So, to sum up, the process is: minutes, updates, questions, hustings and then motions!

#### How can I change this thing I care about?

**A Motion** = a proposed action that needs JCR approval because it will represent the whole JCR or use JCR funds.

*How to Submit a Motion:* (honestly just messaging the Vice-pres is easiest, they'll walk you through what's below anyway)

- 1) Nominate one person as the Proposer of the motion, and another person to be the Secunder. To be either a proposer or secunder you must be JCR members and able to attend the OGM you want to raise your motion in.
- 2) Fill in the form on the JCR Website at least 4 days before the start of the next OGM

*What will happen at the OGM:*

- 1) The President will read out your motion and then your peers will ask you short factual questions about what you're proposing to do.
- 2) We may now debate the motion, or formal opposition will be raised which we will also discuss.
- 3) If you've had some opposition there will be a final vote taken by hands in which you need a simple majority to pass your motion. If you've had no opposition your motion will pass straight away!



# THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

## **JCR President - Cesca (she/her)**

Hi all! Congratulations on being accepted to the wonderful college that is Merton! My name is Cesca and I'm a second year History and English student (fondly known as a HENGuin) who has the honour of being your JCR President for 2025-26.

I cannot wait to welcome you all to Merton during Fresher's Week - and I hope you are all excited for all the lovely memories you are going to make here. Your first year at Merton, and especially first term, will absolutely fly by so try and make the most of all the fabulous events and experiences you can get involved in, whilst also looking after yourself - a tricky balance! I have so many fond memories of last year, with the College Admissions Dinner (a lovely chance to meet your coursemates, tutors and share a fancy dinner) and the College Parent's Quiz (incredibly competitive) being particular highlights of Fresher's Week for me.



My role as JCR President is to be the main point of contact between the JCR (the undergraduate students at Merton) and the wider college body to make sure the interests of the students are at the heart of all college decisions. This practically involves sitting on various committees within college, representing Merton on a university level and sending lots of emails!

There are lots of incredibly exciting things planned for Michaelmas, with this year being the year of Merton's Winter Ball - Oxford's only white-tie Winter Ball and Merton's annual Time Ceremony tradition also landing in first term. But, it would also be wonderful to see you all get involved with the JCR yourselves. It's a central point of student life at Merton, and is also the starting point of any change you'd like to see to college or your experience as a Mertonian. You can get involved by coming to our fortnightly OGMs (Ordinary General Meetings, accompanied by free pizza) and by running for Committee roles within the JCR, with the first OGM being held on the Sunday at the end of Fresher's Week.

Enjoy the rest of your Summer, we cannot wait to see you all in October - any questions, feel free to pop me an email!

### **Vice-President - Max (he/him)**

Hi! My name's Max, I am a second year Russian and Philosophy student and JCR Vice President for this year. Firstly I want to say congratulations to you all for making it to Oxford and more specifically Merton, we can't wait to get to know you and welcome you into our community. Please don't be too worried about these first few weeks, whilst they can be really intense we are all here to support you - that's the benefit of having a college community.

As VP my main job is doing a lot of admin and annoying all of you with emails to let you know about all the fun events happening in college throughout the year. Aside from that I also organise the room ballot which is something you don't need to worry about yet!

Please feel free to get in contact with me at any time with any questions about anything to do with college and university life, I can't promise I will be able to answer all of them, but if I can't I will probably be able to find someone who can.

I'm really looking forward to meeting you all in freshers' and hope that until then you have a lovely summer and get some relaxation in before what I hope will be an intense but incredibly fun and rewarding year!



### **Academic Affairs Rep - Elysia (she/her)**

Hello! My name is Elysia, and I am a second year Philosophy and Spanish student, and your Academic Affairs Rep (ACAF) for 2025-26. It is my job to act as a representative for the JCR in academic matters, representing us to college, and communicating with the library to ensure that all our services remain accessible and enjoyable! I have a particular interest in smaller subjects/ joint degrees, as it can feel a little more challenging to comprehend the balance/ timetabling at first, so I will be more than happy to help with that. If you have any feedback on the timeliness of tutors' feedback and marks, library services, and postgraduate opportunities, feel free to reach out at [jcr.acaf@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:jcr.acaf@merton.ox.ac.uk), or come and catch me at Fresher's week!





## **Access and Equal Opportunities Rep - Anisha (she/her)**

Hiyaa!! My name is Anisha. I'm a second year PPEist and the 2025-26 Access & Equal Opportunities Representative (...and the one writing this guide)!! This means I oversee matters of equality between undergraduates at Merton (in terms of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, religion, etc.) as well as working with the Schools Liaison Officer to host outreach events like the open days for prospective students. I also run the access account on Instagram (@mertonjcraccess give it a follow!), where I try to demystify Oxford life and encourage applications to Merton. If you have any questions, feel free to comment on that account or dm me and I'll answer. When you get here, the same still applies, so feel free to approach me about any concerns you have, whether it is to do with access or anything else!

If you'd like to get involved with access, why not become a student ambassador? You can help out on open days, school visits, and even get paid! You can also get involved in the JCR Committee, with many committee roles being hosted in OGM, where you can represent different groups (such as disabilities representative) or work in particular areas (such as social media representative). My role and all the other JCR Executive roles will be hosted in at the end of the year, so keep any eye out for that if any suit your fancy. But for now, just focus on getting used to Oxford and Merton and make sure to ASK if you have any questions (whether it is me or anyone else in Merton, we're always here to help!). Can't wait to see y'all in freshers week, look forward to it!!



## **Entz Rep - Sophie (she/her)**

Hi! I'm Sophie and one of your Entz Reps this year! I'm a second year French and German student. As an Entz Rep, my job is to organise Merton's social life and destroy the stereotype that Merton is where fun goes to die with plenty of events, both sober and alcoholic. I'll be a friendly face throughout Freshers' (and of course the rest of the year) and am really excited about you all coming to our evEntz as well as hearing your suggestions both at OGMs and through our email or Instagram. Looking forward to seeing you all soon and putting Merton back on the map with our socials, weird ceremonies, and BOPs!



### **Entz Rep - Isaac (he/him)**

Hey guys!! I'm Isaac and, together with Sophie, will be your Entz reps for 2025-2026. I study law and you can usually find me at my residential spot in the law room or downing a few glasses at the bar.

As Entz rep, I will be in charge of ensuring you guys have the most fun-filled and memorable first year in a way that is unique and comfortable for each and everyone of you :)



### **Treasurer - Ethan (he/him)**

Hello freshers! I'm Ethan, a second-year student studying Physics and Philosophy, and also your JCR Treasurer for this year. Firstly, a huge congratulations to all of you for getting into Merton! This is no small achievement; I hope you are all proud of yourselves. I also hope you are all excited to come here and meet some wonderful people and learn some wonderful new things! I look back on Freshers Week fondly, where I met some of my best friends for the first time.

What does my role mean for you? As treasurer, I mainly make decisions about how to spend the JCR's budget, sharing between subject societies, college societies, college events and various motions. I also meet with the college to discuss the needs of the JCR, and negotiate battels (rent) for the next year.

These decisions about motions are made collaboratively, alongside you, the JCR! Be sure to submit motions and come to Ordinary General Meetings (OGMs) to make sure that you make the most of the resources this college has to offer. I also make critical decisions about the types of pizza to have at OGMs, if you need another reason to come...

I look forward to seeing you all in October!



### **Welfare Rep - Tabitha (she/her)**

Hi everyone! My name is Tabitha and I'm one of your two Welfare Officers this year alongside my amazing college wife. In my spare time I'll also be a second-year physicist.

As a Welfare Rep I'm here to help with any problems you have, uni-related or otherwise. College has an amazing welfare team, but I know that it can be confusing or daunting to try accessing help, so I'm here to point you in the right direction! I'm also here to talk to about anything and am peer-support trained (another great system that the jcr has in place).

You'll absolutely see me around college and we'll be running (in my totally unbiased opinion) loads of super fun activities throughout the year including trips to ice cream shops, walks round the meadow, ice skating and so much more. The highlight of welfare is Welfare Tea every Sunday which is a mass of free food, and I'd love to see you all there!

Everyone who knows me will say that I can chat for hours and I'm always looking for an excuse for a cup of tea so please say hello if you see me! I would love any feedback on how you find the welfare support at Merton and if there's anything else you would like to see activity(or food!) -wise. Please feel free to contact me at [jcr.welfare@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:jcr.welfare@merton.ox.ac.uk) or my phone number is 07848 849148 – no problem is too big or too small.

Can't wait to meet you all





### **Welfare Rep - Kate (she/her)**

Hello freshers! My name is Kate (she/her), and alongside Tabitha, my fantastic college wife, I will be one of your two Welfare reps for this year! Otherwise I'm a second year English Language and Literature student who spends a lot of time wild swimming.

Being a Welfare rep essentially means that I am here to listen to and help with any difficulties that you might have throughout this year. I'm always around for a chat if you're feeling a little blue, but I am also a trained peer supporter and can liaise with college Welfare and support systems on your behalf to get you the help you need, whether that's personal or academic. Struggling sometimes is totally normal and will happen to everyone at some point, and that is what we are here for.

That doesn't mean that I'm only around when you're having a tricky time, though - I'm really looking forward to meeting all of you and just getting to know you, so please come and chat to me any time! (I am a massive yapper) Tabitha and I will also be running lots of fun events to get your minds off work, including the weekly JCR Welfare Tea, which is just lots of free food and waffles every Sunday. (if you have any special requests or feedback please let us know!!)

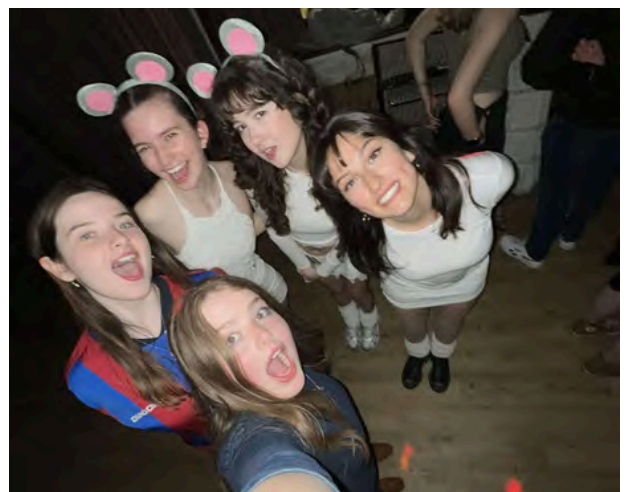
If you need me, you can contact both of us at [jcr.welfare@merton.ox.uk](mailto:jcr.welfare@merton.ox.uk), and me personally at [kate.penny@merton.ox.uk](mailto:kate.penny@merton.ox.uk). You will definitely see me around college and in Hall so please say hello!



# THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

Apart from the Executive Committee (generally shortened to Exec), there is also a large general committee, with roles in charge of certain sectors (such as the Social Media and Publications Rep - where you'll be able to update this guide for next years freshers!) to roles focused on the welfare of certain demographics of students, like our Transgender Students' Representative and Gender Equality Representative, to logistical roles like IT Officer. Here's a full list. Most of these roles are relatively low commitment and honestly pretty fun, so I'd strongly recommend coming along to OGMs to see if there's anything you might want to do. For more info on getting involved, check out the separate JCR Guide.

- Social Media and Publications Officer (aka Walter De Merton)
- Disabled Students' Rep
- Suspended Students' Rep
- Arts and Culture Rep
- Events Photographer
- Affiliated Organisations and Careers Rep
- Gender Equality Rep
- LGBTQIA+ Rep
- Transgender Rep
- Food and Bar Rep
- Social Backgrounds Rep
- Sports Officer and Admiral of the Fleet
- Returning Officer
- Welfare Helpers
- Charities Rep
- IT Officer
- Subject Society Presidents
- Environment Rep
- BAME Rep
- International Students' Rep



# College Life





## Work? Ughhhh

BOPs and cups of tea aside, I probably should remind you that we are all supposedly here to get a degree. This is Oxford; indeed this is Merton College, Oxford, one of the highest achieving colleges till I arrived. I'm afraid this does boil down to quite a lot of hard work.

But don't panic! Both Oxford and Merton are renowned for their (truly amazing) academic provision, and I'm sure you'll enjoy whatever course you're taking. You should do a reasonable amount of work to get you through your first year, but you won't have to do so much that you can't feel a part of our community. Use the intelligence that got you here to strike a sensible work-life balance. Don't worry if you do find it difficult at first – it is Oxford, after all. It's worth trying to settle down quickly into your own work pattern. At University you won't have a structured timetable for each day, you have considerably more free time than at school, and will have to motivate yourself to meet deadlines. Everyone approaches work in different ways – whether you prefer late-night epics in libraries, or slow, bite-size chunks – try to find what works for you. Bear in mind that terms are only eight weeks long, and it's best to get into a rhythm sooner rather than later.

Teaching at Oxford is a mix of lectures, classes, seminars, labs, and the famous tutorial. Tutorials can be pretty intimidating at first as Oxford tutors are at the very forefront of their respective fields, but they were undergraduates once too, so get stuck in. If you've been given a reading list, it's a good idea to get through at least some of it before coming up, to grasp some basic knowledge about the topics you'll be studying in first year. Above all, try to read what is relevant to what you will be studying in your first term – you may want to ask your college parents for their recommendations.

**The main thing about work is: don't worry.** College saw something in you when they made you an offer, so you're more than capable of thriving here – if you need to reach out for a little extra help or support (whether from welfare, your tutors or your peers) it will always be given without judgement.

In terms of facilities, Merton is very well equipped for all your studying needs. There are two college libraries (the OWL and one in Mob Quad). They also have computer rooms with free printing facilities.

I should mention the small issue of exams. You'll have collections (college exams) at the start of most terms (your first should be in 0th Week Hilary, aka January) – these are really quite informal, and honestly nothing to worry about.

Meanwhile, University exams (Mods or Prelims, at the end of your first year, or at the end of Hilary if you're a lawyer, or halfway through your second year if you do Classics) are somewhat more important, but they don't count towards your final degree class. Eventually you'll have Finals, which do actually count to your degree.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

### **A Day in the Life Of... A French and German student!**

Hi! I'm Sophie, a second year studying French and German, hoping to give you the briefest of insights into what a typical day looks like for me.



As a languages student, my days differ drastically as to how many contact hours I have and how much work I need to do, however you can definitely create your own structure to manage the chaos that an... interestingly... organised fac throws at you. Typically, I would have (per week) a seminar or tut for French, two translation classes per language, two tutorials for German (perks of not many people doing it), a speaking class per language, a grammar class for German, and four lectures split across the languages; all in all, that gives around 14 hours. In between these and incredible amounts of procrastination, I typically try to get on with my work for the week ahead, whether a few translations or an essay. Despite how easy it is to get immersed in your work with the freedom that humanities gives you, I set myself a hard stop on work at 10pm, which I find really helpful and relaxing.

My alarm goes off around 7:30 or 5:45 depending on whether I have rowing that morning. After whatever I'm doing (whether exercise, last minute work, or checking emails), I often have a 9am and have intermittent classes between that and around 5:30. Don't worry – I've made that sound really long but in reality I have maximum 3 or 4 hour-long things to get to and just potter about in between. The lecture timetables are published at the beginning of term, making it a bit easier to block out slots for tuts – be aware though that you might sometimes have to tell your tutors that you have other things on when they try and schedule things, they're normally pretty understanding. Nevertheless, they're always very keen to reschedule things asap if they fall ill or you can't make it for some reason – be prepared for some much-resented emails in which they try to add at least 2 contact hours into your week. I'm a big fan of just going back to my room in my free time between classes, or even a local cafe as I'm not a big library person. If you are a library lover, however, there are loads you can access, including Merton's three(? - I'm writing this as Old Mob is still being renovated and thus unavailable) which are all lovely and welcoming spaces.

I often have hall lunch sometime between 12:30 and 1:10, and hall dinner at around 6:15; I have the unhealthy habit of scheduling my entire activities for the day around when my next meal is. As I'm a Chapel Officer, I will also sometimes attend a service in the college chapel or help out with that, meaning I get a takeaway later or cook dinner. That also means I am a firm fixture at at least one formal a week, which is great value for money. After a normal early supper (what dinner/tea in hall is called), I typically go and do a bit more work or stream something to relax (after popping into the bar to see who's there). No matter what your day ends up looking like, don't forget to schedule some time in for yourself and/or for socialising. Generally, I'm in bed between 10:45 and 12, but – contrary to popular belief – Oxford does have some sort of nightlife, and so it's not unusual to see me out at a pub/club or on a long, touristy night walk.

A languages/humanities degree can be hugely variable and complicated, especially coming from a very structured school environment. As long as you throw yourself into everything you do, you'll have a great time. Looking forward to seeing you all in Freshers'!





# A DAY IN THE LIFE

## A Day in the Life Of... A Physics and Philosophy student!

Hi! My name is Ethan and I am a second year Physics and Philosophy student, this is what my average day looks like!

Being half STEM half humanities, you get the best of both worlds - I have the structure that a STEM degree would give me, but also gives me some freedom to explore that humanities are great for. I usually have about 10-12 hours of lectures, two classes and two tutorials in a week for physics.

Philosophy is usually two hours of lectures, 1 class and 1-2 tutorials, depending on the week. Physics is usually based on problem sheets, which you usually have 2 per week. The tutorials are usually 2 to 1, and whilst this can seem scary, once you've had your first one you'll see that they're actually not that bad - tutors really do just want to help you learn! Philosophy can also be problem sheet based, especially for logic. Since I am a STEM-Philer, I had to do extra logic in the second term (fun...) so I had a problem sheet a week, with a class and tute (short for tutorial) accompanying. I also had an essay either every week or every other week. One of the advantages of being a PhysPhiler is that every Thursday, my physicist friends would be off to do their labs (which I don't have to do), so I dedicated that day to making most of my progress on essays.

A typical day is hard to describe, I had very different experiences between the first, second, and third term, however if I had to pick an average day for me, from my most work heavy term (Hilary term, the second one), it would go like this:

Start the day by waking up at 7:30-8 (often later though if I don't have a lecture, I like to sleep). Then I would get ready for the day, and walk with the physicists to a 9am lecture. Usually there are two or three of these, by which point it's usually lunch time around 12, so we come back to eat in the hall, usually finishing sometime around 1. Then, I try to do some work in the library, probably until 3ish, where I would probably take a break. I might have a tutorial at some point, which lasts an hour. Then I might come back to the library until 6, which is then time for dinner in the hall.



This usually lasts until 7, and I either do some work afterwards, but more likely I play pool, and possibly go out with my friends. You can always find time to be social, trust me.

My days often were very different from this though, and I'm sure your days will also have differences, but that's something to be excited about for next year!

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

### **A Day in the Life Of... A PPE (Philosophy, Politics and Economics) student!**

Hi! I'm Arjun and I'm going to be the LGBTQ+ Rep for 2025-26. If you have any worries, questions, or just want to chat about what life is like for LGBTQ+ students at Merton and Oxford, you can come to me! I'll be working with Access Rep and Anisha (my college wife!) and the Access team to make university that little bit more accessible for queer students - we'll be running events, talks, activities and hopefully many more fun things. For example, last Trinity Term's Pride Month there was free pride flags I bought for anyone in the JCR to take. I'm a second year PPEist, and when I'm not doing one of P or P or E, I'll either be in chapel (singing as a choral scholar in Merton College Choir), or in the bar enjoying a power pint. I hope you're excited to join Merton, I can't wait to meet you all!



After waking up in the morning at 9am, I have breakfast in my room - just cereal and milk. Hall breakfast is delicious but I'm a late riser and often miss it!

Afterwards, I head straight to lectures. In Michaelmas term, I was lucky enough to have 10am lectures and no 9am starts! I walk the two minute journey from Rose Lane to Exam Schools with some tea in my thermos. I have one economics lecture and one philosophy lecture, and I make some extremely detailed notes for the first five minutes of each.

At 12pm, I head back to North Lodge kitchen for lunch with some of my friends: usually some toast and crisps for me. The kitchen is a lovely place to socialise with friends from all across first year accommodation, and became a fun meeting place for all sorts of events (baking a hear me out cake during Michaelmas term's week 5 blues was particularly fun).

After lunch, I head straight to a tutorial - I was lucky to have most of my tutorials in Merton main site this year (except for a few in Univ and Hertford). I really enjoyed all of my tutorials this year; they're a great chance to have a fulfilling academic discussion with your friends in the presence of someone who can guide your conversation if you don't really know what you're talking about. At 4pm, I come back to my room and get changed into formal gear (on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays when I have choir - otherwise I might have a several hour nap).

At 5pm, I walk through Fellows' Garden towards chapel, where I have an hour's rehearsal before an hour-long evensong with the college choir. If ever you're in Front Quad in the late afternoon or evening, you'll probably hear us bashing out some beautiful choral music!

After evensong ends (and a glass of free chapel wine!), I head to Hall for a formal. I'm lucky enough to get all three formals in a week free, for singing with the choir. The vegetarian food is always great, and the Hall staff are lovely and very accomodating. (TOP TIP: Formal Hall is even more fun after a trip to the bar and a chat with Neal, Shaz, or another one of our incredible bar staff). I enjoy the nourishment of a three course meal I probably wouldn't be getting otherwise, and head to the bar after Hall ends (a time-honoured tradition). After a quick powerpint, I head straight to OWL, for a... relaxing... bout of formal logic, microeconomics, or some sort of politics. After a healthy nap in the (super comfy) OWL PPE room sofa, I finish all of my outstanding tasks as well as next week's essays.

I head back to Rose Lane 1 fulfilled, ready for another action-packed day.





# FUN

Whatever your interests, you're bound to find someone else who shares them somewhere! At the Freshers' Fair you'll be harangued by sportsmen, musicians, actors, writers, politicians and goodness knows who else, all wanting you to take part in their favourite activities. There is also a mini Merton Freshers Fair for sports/societies specifically for Mertonians. Here I've provided you with a taste of what you can get involved in:

## **Sport**

Merton offers a brilliant opportunity to all its students to play nearly any sport they want. We have free courts and rackets for tennis, squash, beautifully maintained grounds for football, netball, rugby, volleyball and (increasingly popular with the MCR) ultimate frisbee and free access to badminton and hockey nearby. Merton is also just a short walk from Iffley, the university sports centre where I highly recommend Mertonians, especially freshers, give any and all sports they're interested a go. University sports is available regardless of whether you're on a team, is cheaper than after university and a great way to meet people from outside college.



Merton also has a great games room with table football, pool and darts and also offers the truly Oxfordian experience of punting and hosts real tennis courts just opposite the main porters lodge. Check out the full list of sports societies on offer at the Merton Freshers Fair and University Freshers Fair!

## **Rowing**

Merton College Boat Club (MCBC) is our thriving rowing community at Merton. We offer rowing and coxing at all abilities - from complete beginner crews, to our high performing 1st eights. We row at our newly renovated boat house on the Isis, and at a beautiful river stretch in North Oxford called Godstow, which runs alongside Port Meadow.



Rowing is a fantastic way to meet people throughout College. The boat club holds all sorts of fun social events throughout the year, including brunches, barbecues, events with other college boat clubs, and nights out, including in freshers' week. Almost all of those who join us in Freshers' Week have never rowed or coxed before but with a few weeks of training, are racing in Oxford's iconic bumps races.

2025 has been a great year for MCBC! In Torpids the women's first eight achieved blades and men's first eight reached 7<sup>th</sup> on the river, the highest since 1966! Summer Eights was also a huge success for MCBC, with the women's second eights achieving blades, the men's second eight bumping into division 4 (meaning they do not have to row on to qualify next year) and the men's first eight solidifying their place in division 1 - the highest position they have been on the river since 1980!

Coxing is also an incredibly fun way to be involved in the boat club. Our coxes are the masterminds behind the boats; steering the crew, and providing technical and motivational feedback to the rowers. Almost all of our coxes start learning at Merton, no experience is required!

Sign up at the Merton freshers' fair to try out rowing or coxing - commitment needed! There is no experience or fitness level required. If you have any questions, please get in contact via the emails below! You can also explore our Instagram (@mertoncollegebc) or website ([www.mertonboatclub.com](http://www.mertonboatclub.com)).

Josh, the President, at [mcbbc-president@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mcbbc-president@merton.ox.ac.uk)

Liv, the Women's Captain, at [mcbbc-womens@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mcbbc-womens@merton.ox.ac.uk)

Will, the Men's Captain, at [mcbbc-mens@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mcbbc-mens@merton.ox.ac.uk)

The novice captains will be running taster sessions in Michaelmas Term, so feel free to reach out to Max and Lorna at [mcbbc-novices@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mcbbc-novices@merton.ox.ac.uk)

We really look forward to hearing from you over the summer, or meeting you in freshers' week!

### **Merton Film Society**

Film enthusiast? Aspiring filmmaker? Or just someone who loves a good movie night? Merton Film Society is the place for you! Founded in 2022, we organise regular cinema nights in the TS Eliot Theatre during term time, bringing together students from all subjects to watch a good movie together. The theme for Michaelmas 2025 is '1950s' so come join us if you want to experience the Golden Era of Hollywood on the big screen! Free wine and snacks are provided! Keep an eye out for the term card for more information on what films we will be watching!

Instagram @mertonfilmsociety

Email: [freya.munsch@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:freya.munsch@merton.ox.ac.uk)



## **1980s Society**

1980 society is Merton's feminist society where all are welcome! We run regular events throughout the year such as our discussion group wine and whine, and cake and compliments, as well as special events like our garden party. Look out for our upcoming alumni panel event in Michaelmas - we hope to see you there!

## **Drama**

Student drama at Oxford is a thriving community, welcome to people of all levels of experience! The best way to get involved is by joining the OUDS (Oxford University Drama Society) Facebook group - this is where you can find callouts for cast and crew, information about workshops or upcoming shows, and other opportunities. For Freshers, there is Drama Cuppers, an inter-collegiate competition in 5th week of Michaelmas where students put on 20 minute productions (either published or student-written) in a black-box theatre. This is a great introduction to drama at Oxford as you are taught the basics for lighting/sound, what it's like working in an actual theatre, and you will probably make friends/connections too!



Merton also has its own drama society, the Merton Floats - follow [merton.floats](https://www.instagram.com/mertonfloats) on Instagram. Every summer, the Floats puts on the Merton Garden Play, a wonderful tradition of performing in the beautiful Fellows' Garden! Our latest production was Euripide's Helen. Garden plays tend to be more casual than OUDS productions and are another great way to get involved, often attracting freshers.

If you're interested in Cuppers or have any other questions about drama at Merton or Oxford, feel free to contact the current Merton Drama rep, Jemima Freeman: [jemima.freeman@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:jemima.freeman@merton.ox.ac.uk)



## **Politics**

The politics scene at Oxford is rich and varied, catering for all political persuasions. Most major political parties have equivalent student societies that meet regularly for debates and invite speakers from their respective parties. The other major political body at University level is the Oxford Union, which provides excellent formal debating opportunities for all abilities as well as political backstabbing of the sort usually reserved for Westminster (beware of Friday 7th week when all the hacks come out). There are also a wide variety of speakers who are invited, coming from all sorts of professions (like Tom Hanks!) , not just confined to the political sphere. Membership is c. £300 but it is for life (and there is also an Access Life Membership rate).

Finally, within Merton itself, the college has its very own politics society, **the Neave Society**, which is Merton's very own

debating society. Named after one of our many famous alumni (although perhaps not our most famous political alumni...), traditionally we discuss topics with a political slant, but over the last two years we've covered education, the arts, gender equality, the media, and terrorism. Neave Society is totally informal and only open to Mertonians, so it's a very friendly atmosphere, complete with wine and biscuits. In the past we've also hosted political speakers and hope to have a few more over the next year!



## **Journalism**

The University has two good student papers, the Oxford Student ('OxStu') and the Cherwell both of which have won national awards. There is also the more recent Blue but I hear that's more of a blog. There are also plenty of smaller journals to get involved with, ranging from the University-wide gossip magazine The Tab to the intellectual arts magazine The Isis, to the satirical Oxymoron. Or, alternatively (and this is a personal appeal), you could take a more hands-on approach, and engage in creating amusing stories for the Merton Chronicle. As someone who's involved in lots of student journalism myself (hint: OxStu is the paper to read – OxYou is the best satire section around), I can highly recommend taking the chance to write for a publication even if you've never done so before – it can be a great opportunity to get your opinions out there or have some fun.

If you want to get involved, follow their Instagrams and they'll advertise writing opportunities!

## **Charity**

Oxford's charity scene is thriving and there is certainly something for everyone's interests and time constraints including bake sales, pool tournaments and so much more! We run events both in college and as a wider university. If you're looking to get involved then consider running to be the JCR Charities Rep or getting involved with RAG, which is the SU's Charity Arm and always looking for people to volunteer and attend balls for free!

## **Merton College Choir**

Merton College Choir is an internationally renowned choir and one of the finest auditioned college choirs in Oxford. Students are invited to support the choir and enjoy Merton's fantastic choral tradition by attending evensong throughout the week- a lovely occasion which students often follow with a Formal dinner in Hall. Merton is an extremely musical college and, alongside the college's outstanding choral tradition, Merton College Music Society supports instrumentalists in offering regular opportunities to perform.

## **Performance and Ensemble Opportunities**

The Music Society aims to support all types and abilities in showcasing its instrumental music: for performers and music students aiming to gain experience on the concert platform, the Music Society offers a weekly lunchtime recital series throughout term. This is an opportunity for soloists and small ensembles both from Merton and across Oxford to showcase the highest standards of musicianship.

For those looking for a more relaxed ensemble atmosphere, Merton's non-auditioned orchestra, **the Fidelio Orchestra**, holds lively weekly rehearsals, working through diverse repertoire based on musicians' interests and requests to then perform in Merton Chapel once a term. The orchestra is highly supported by the college community, making each concert a special event, and never fails to surprise the audience with its programme!

Oxford University Music Society also offers two auditioned Symphony orchestras for the University's most able and dedicated performers. Each orchestra performs once a term in the Sheldonian, undertaking larger and more ambitious works with professional and auditioned student conductors. Any student interested in doing some singing, regardless of experience, is warmly invited to **Merton's Kodaly Choir**. This choir runs once a term, learning songs in a matter of rehearsals before performing in Merton College Chapel – a highly rewarding experience for singers of any standard!

## **Other Opportunities for the College Community**

Merton College Music Society will also hold Merton College Concert Series. Each term, visiting professional and semi-professional performers and ensembles will perform at Merton College. These concerts will be wonderful experiences and everyone, regardless of musical experience or subject, is encouraged to attend.

Students are encouraged to get involved with the music society in other capacities – opportunities to get involved with Arts management and the organisation of Merton College Music Society events will be advertised during Freshers' Week and beyond. The musical scenes of Merton and Oxford are vibrant ones, and musicians at

college are encouraged to put forward their ideas and ambitions for musical activities, performances and opportunities to Merton College Music Society.



## **Arts**

Oxford offers a surprising array of art opportunities for students, many of which are not well-advertised at the fresher's fair or elsewhere.

The University Art Society, Pottery Society, and Textile Society provide welcoming communities where people come together to create, often with supplies provided. Follow them on Instagram to stay up-to-date with events. The Photography Society offers high-end tech and a dark room, which is pretty cool! Life drawing classes are available through various societies and independent groups like Common Ground Cafe. The Bodleian Bibliographic Press offers workshops on Wednesdays 5-8pm where you can use some of the



first printing presses for typesetting or relief printing — this is not very well advertised; I'd email Sarah Simblet about this.

By far, my favorite place for art is the Christ Church Art Room. It's a free space run by the wonderful art tutor Sarah Simblet. The Art Room operates somewhat underground, so email Sarah for information. They offer workshops in printmaking, painting, textiles, carving, sculpture, and more. It's a lovely community of artists and a great space to create.



Also, look out for art sales and showcases of student work at the Ruskin, 50 Hurst Street's open days for professional lino prints, and the Ashmolean Museum for inspiration.

### **Gardening Society**



The college gardening club meets every Sunday morning (11am, so you can still have a lie-in and head to hall for a leisurely brunch afterwards) and it's always a great hour. In Michaelmas we'll be harvesting the autumn veg and also ordering our seeds to sow come spring, and last year we also made our own rose hip brandy! Lyndon (the assistant chaplain) runs the club and used to be a farmer so he really knows what he's doing - plus there's often flapjacks :) Basically, come along if you like having a chitchat or eating food (and optionally getting your hands covered in soil)

### **Religion**

#### **Christian Union**

We're the Christian Union for Merton and University College (Muniv) and you can find a summary about who we are on our Instagram, or on the OICCU's website (that is the website for the Oxford Intercollegiate Christian Union). The link to our page is [here](#), you can also find us on Instagram @muniv\_cu and get in contact with us at [emily.yates@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:emily.yates@merton.ox.ac.uk) and [robyn.hayward@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:robyn.hayward@merton.ox.ac.uk)

We tend to meet in college groups about once a week for a bible study and food, with lots of other Christian union events uni-wide to get involved in too, as well as thriving local churches which we'd be really happy to point you to as well. We're a space for everyone - seekers, those with questions, or those already of faith - so please drop us an email if you have any questions! Can't wait to meet and welcome you!

Emily and Robyn (Merton Christian Union Reps)

#### **Jsoc**

Oxford has a large and thriving Jewish community consisting of students, faculty, and residents. The main synagogue in Oxford is the Oxford Jewish Congregation (OJC) which holds both Orthodox and Egalitarian services. Also based at the OJC is the Oxford Jewish Society, the largest of Oxford's Jewish student societies. Oxford JSoc provides daily kosher meals, weekly Friday Night Dinners, and many other religious, cultural, educational, and welfare activities.

Oxford has two Jewish chaplains provided by University Jewish Chaplaincy, who are trained to provide welfare and other support to Jewish students and to assist with all issues whether related to Judaism or not. Oxford JSoc also has trained peer supporters available for any Jewish student that may feel more comfortable accessing support from another member of the Jewish student community.

Oxford JSoc is an open and welcoming space for anyone interested in exploring or learning more about Judaism, from any level of observance or cultural background.

For more information, contact:

JSoc president MT25: [oxford.jsoc@outlook.com](mailto:oxford.jsoc@outlook.com)

Facebook group: Oxford JSoc

Instagram: [@oxford\\_jsoc](https://www.instagram.com/oxford_jsoc)

We will also be at the freshers fair with the other faith societies so come say hi if you'd feel more comfortable speaking to us in person

### Isoc

Our ISoc is a student-run body and serves as the focal point for Muslims in Oxford. We have an open and diverse membership, and a reputation for being amongst the University's most vibrant and active societies. We aim to organise a host of different activities, services and events to engage and bring together the Muslim community in Oxford.

As a Muslim Fresher (Basmala, a history second year), I know what it might feel like to come into a space which doesn't have many faces that look like ours, and so I recognise the importance of ISoc in facilitating that much needed space for some of us. Many former freshers have described the ISoc as a second home as we not only offer events, but you are likely to meet people similar to you perhaps more than you would initially expect. There is no one type of person that comes to our ISoc – we have different nationalities, schools of thought, sects, and levels of religiousness so there is hopefully a place for all!

For those interested, we pray and casually meet up in the Oxford University Muslim Prayer Room & Mosque, Robert Hooke Building opposite Keble College on Parks Road. The address is Robert Hooke Building, Parks Rd, Oxford OX1 3PP.

Whether you are a born Muslim, a revert, someone curious about Islam, or just interested in the culture, there are friendly faces everywhere that will be more than happy to welcome you. Do not worry about your level of religiousness as this is a space to congregate and have fun rather than divide or judge (there is no one checking at the door).

For further info, feel free to check out our [website](#) (if not for anything other than the list of delicious halal places in Oxford) and we hope to see you soon!

### **Merton College Chapel (CofE)**

Dating back to the 13th century, Merton's Chapel forms the heart of Walter de Merton's college. Dedicated to St Mary and St John the Baptist, it features a breathtaking east window, unique for maintaining its original Medieval stained glass, a screen which Sir Christopher Wren was commissioned to fit in 1671, and a Dobson Organ. The ancient walls create fantastic acoustics for the world-renowned College Choir, made up of students from Merton and beyond, is world-renowned - check out their recorded albums on Spotify!

This spectacular place of worship is also home to one of the most lively and diverse College Chapel communities in Oxford. There are so many opportunities to get involved, regardless of your faith or background, from attending services, to becoming a Chapel Officer, or exploring opportunities of baptism and confirmation.

Our current Chaplain, having recently joined Merton only last year, is Justin White, with Lyndon Webb as Assistant Chaplain. Michaelmas is a fantastic time in the Chapel, so look out for Justin's weekly emails which will keep you updated on all things Chapel.

Please get in contact with, Justin, Lyndon or Jen (our wonderful Verger), via the following emails, if you have any questions:

Justin (he/him): [justin.white@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:justin.white@merton.ox.ac.uk)

Lyndon (he/him): [lyndon.webb@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:lyndon.webb@merton.ox.ac.uk)

Jen (they/them): [jennifer.crompton@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:jennifer.crompton@merton.ox.ac.uk)

We'll see you at the Chaplain's Drinks and Freshers' Service in 0th Week!





# TIPS AND ADVICE FOR FORMAL EVENTS

When we sat down at our first formal meal in hall there were 7 pieces of cutlery and I had no idea what each was supposed to be used for. Turns out you're supposed to eat with the outside cutlery and work your way in - who knew?! Spoiler alert: your bread roll is the one on the left.

## Top tips for Formal Hall

- As with all the best events, it's usually BYOB (bring your own booze aka drink) so go grab Tesco's finest £5 bottle of wine\* Unlike the canteen-style setup of lunch and dinner, food is served to you by the lovely hall staff.
- At some meals (this will be communicated to you beforehand), including the Freshers' Admission Dinner and Parents Lunch, wine is served with the meal and if you don't want to drink, you can turn your glass over.
- Get there early to make sure you're sitting together - aim for 15 minutes before the designated start time.
- You can reserve a place by crossing the cutlery over the placemat – to be used when your friend is running late, not to book out half a table for an event! (you can do that by emailing hall).
- Grace (a prayer) is always read before formal begins - someone on the high table will bang a gavel, you stand up (careful of the benches!), Grace is read, then you sit down. Occasionally a second Grace is read after the meal has finished; you don't need to stand for this.
- Aside from laughing at my incompetence, one of the biggest bonding moments in freshers' week was going to my neighbours' rooms to see what they were going to wear for the night's event. Thankfully none of us ever got kicked out of the JCR for wearing jeans to the black-tie night, but it's always helpful to have a little reference for some outfit inspiration, so here you go...
- There are up to three JCR organised formals per term so if you would like to organise one for an event e.g. BAME Formal, get in touch with the JCR President



\*other drinks/supermarkets are available I haven't been sponsored (but get in touch to discuss future opportunities – college aren't paying me to write this ://)

## Formal

Dress for formal at Merton doesn't have to be anything too much; a jacket & tie (or equivalent) is as smart as you need to go. Dark jeans and a nice top can work, as well as skirts/jumpsuits/trousers etc. Just think - you're going for a nice meal so wear what you'd wear if going to a nice restaurant! The only difference is that **gowns** should always be worn for formal.



## Black-tie

This varies depending on the event. Dinner jacket, white shirt, black bow tie and suit trousers are a classic, but if that's not your cup of tea there are plenty of other options. Generally, think wedding vibes so pretty fancy, but things like nice jumpsuits or trousers are fine. Dresses can be floor length (more common for balls), mid-calf or short cocktail length, depending on what you feel comfy in! You can guarantee that there'll be a range of styles so it's really not too restrictive.



## White-tie

The fanciest events you can go to are white tie events, and at Oxford some balls will require white tie. Here in addition to a white shirt, a white waistcoat and bow tie are worn, with a black tailcoat over the top. The alternative to a suit here is a floor-length dress and you can even go super dressy with accessories like tiaras and gloves! Merton is the only Oxford college to host a **triennial white tie winter ball**, and the next one is **happening in THIS YEAR (on November 29th)**! Keep any eye out for **tickets in your first few weeks at Merton** (they cost a pretty penny - **with tickets being £225 or £140 for access tickets** - but as someone on the committee - it IS worth it!).



Oxford is full of new experiences so if you ever feel like you've not quite done something right - don't worry. You absolutely don't have to go and buy a full formal wardrobe before you arrive; black and white tie can be hired from several places and ballgowns are exchanged/sold second-hand in charity shops, [Oxford Facebook groups](#), between friends, and on apps like Depop and Vinted. You may also choose not to go to any balls or formal events, if there's none that grab you. So long as you have one or two more formal options you'll be absolutely fine and if you get a black suit for sub fusc you can wear it for pretty much any occasion!



Note: a digital camera is a very good investment for memories!





# Important Information



# MONEY AND FINANCE

Important money stuff below, link with more info here:

<https://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/undergraduate/financial-information>.

**BATTELS** Oxford word which means bills, mainly for accommodation. As a welcome treat, you will find your first battel emailed to you before you arrive – this needs to be paid by the Friday of 1st Week, either by bank transfer or card at the Finance Bursary. If there are genuine reasons why you can't pay by that time, then it is important to contact the Finance Bursary ([bursary@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:bursary@merton.ox.ac.uk)) as soon as possible

**LAUNDRY** There are CIRCUIT laundry facilities (an evil company that you should curse under your breath at every opportunity) under the JCR and at Rose Lane 5. Washing and drying each cost a small fee per time; you need a laundry card, which you can obtain from the machine in the pidge room. Card top ups are done online, and then by tapping your card on a machine in the laundry room.

**PHOTOCOPYING** The photocopier can be found in the basement of the OWL Library, which you'll need your University Card to use. Photocopying and printing is freeeeeeeee (which it isn't in most libraries around the uni so do it in College)

**BOOK GRANTS** You are eligible to receive up to £100 per academic year to purchase new or second-hand books for academic purposes through Merton's book grant scheme. Although the scheme is named 'Book grant' scheme, it can also cover e-books, e-readers, electronic materials, apple pens, DVDs, sheet music, and book and page scans (typically for 5p per page). For Freshers, the grant can cover books you purchase on the advice of your Tutors before coming into residence at the college. For books purchased during residence, your Tutor will approve the purchase before you are allocated the grant funds to cover it. To receive the grant in the relevant term, you must make the application by Friday of the 6th week of that term. The grant will be credited to your battels at the end of the term in which you made the application. So, if you make an application by the Friday of the 6th week of Michaelmas term, the approved amount will be credited to your battels for the end of that term.

**VACATION RESIDENCE AND GRANTS** College may be able to give you a room during the vacation if you need it (mainly for academic reasons) and fill in the application form in good time and before the deadline. If you have exams/other academic reasons to stay you can apply for a grant to cover the cost. You'll be emailed with all the information you need to apply.

**TRAVEL GRANTS** College has a grant for travel relevant to your course, such as language exchanges, research, and academic conferences. Applications should be made to the Student Support Sub-Committee, by Friday of 4th Week of the term preceding the proposed travel. Details are usually circulated before the start of each term.

**STUDENT SUPPORT** If you ever need financial assistance, then the college, the University, or the government may be able to provide funds to help you out. If you need to apply for a hardship grant, contact the College Financial Assistance Officer at [financial.assistance@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:financial.assistance@merton.ox.ac.uk). The relevant forms for applications to these different bodies are available on the college intranet. There is also an Oxford bursary scheme, for which you will be automatically submitted - if not, email by your LEA if you applied for a student loan [oxfordopportunity@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:oxfordopportunity@admin.ox.ac.uk) for more details on how to apply

**JCR FUNDS** The JCR has a large budget which can be spent on pretty much anything, from pool tables to a PG Tips monkey, so long as it benefits the JCR! It's part of the Treasurer's job to make sure that this money is being well spent – on what the JCR wants. To that end, motions to alter spending are periodically introduced and debated in JCR meetings. Perhaps more importantly, if there's anything that we're not spending money on that you think we should, then please do get in touch (or submit a motion).

**MERTON WINTER BALL TICKETS** (which go on sale in the first few weeks you get here) are expensive (with tickets for students being £225, with access prices are available at £140), but we can promise you it's WORTH IT! For a life changing ball experience - just keep an eye on finances when you get here!

**Don't Panic:** You'll be shown where the Bursary is, and helped with all the official stuff, in Freshers' Week – and if you have any questions before then, ask one of the Exec via email or on Facebook (I, the Access Rep have a lot of advice on money saving that I should be posting soon!).





## GLOSSARY

**AHMED** Merton's favourite kebab man – winner of the UK Kebab Awards (Kebab Van Category) 2019. See the entz guide to learn all about the great kebab van debate.

**ALUMNUS** Someone who used to go to the college (their alma mater). We tend to boast about Tolkien, Randolph Churchill, T. S. Eliot, William Harvey, Mark Haddon, Max Beerbohm, Adam Hart Davies, the current Emperor Naruhito of Japan, Princess Akiko of Japan, Basil Blackwell, Thomas Bodley, Roger Bannister...

**BATTELS** College bills, paid at the start of every term.

**BLUE** If you represent the University at the highest level in sport, you win a blue. We're dark blue, Cambridge are light blue. See **TAB**.

**BOD** Bodleian Library. Big place with over 7 million books – in fact every book ever published in the UK. Means there's little chance to use the 'I couldn't find that book' excuse. Includes the much-photographed Rad Cam.

**BOD CARD** Your University Card, used to gain access to the Bod, to take out library books (except from the Bod, which doesn't lend), and at Merton, to pay for food, and (most importantly) to gain access to BOPs... Try not to lose it!

**BOP** Fortnightly JCR Entz event, involving fancy dress, drink, dancing, and music. Ostensibly stands for 'Breach of the Peace'.

**BRUNCH** Delicious fry-up from 11am every Sunday. One of the most popular meals.

**BURSARY** Pay your bills here.

**COLLECTIONS** College exams, usually at the start of each term. Cash prizes if you get a first, but don't worry too much about them. That's what FINALS are for (or just accept academic mediocrity early on like I did).

**DPOP** Deputy Principal of the Postmasters, along with the POP (Principal of the Postmasters), in charge of disciplinary procedures within the college. Turns out no other college calls them this, tends to be referred to as getting 'Deaned'.

**ENTZ** Entertainment provided by the JCR including BOPS, nights out, karaoke and various other forms of 'entertainment'.

**ESSAY CRISIS** Common among arts students. Involves frantically writing an essay with deadline fast approaching, and kettle on the boil ready for more coffee.

**EXHIBITIONER** Someone who gets a first in their PRELIMS or MODS, usually. Wear fancy gowns and have plenty of book tokens.

**FINALS** The big ones. Usually third year for artists, and end of each year (except the first) for scientists. If you want to annoy a finalist, tell them you're stressed about your **PRELIMS** or **MODS**. Works every time.

**FRESHER** That's you. Fresh-faced and enthusiastic first-years. We look forward to meeting you – hopefully you'll look forward to meeting us too (at least slightly).

**GOING DOWN** Leaving Oxford.

**GRADUATION** You've finished your degree. Now enjoy the ceremony, the prestige... and the pretty, furry gown.

**HACK** Someone active on the political scene for the sake of a principle, that principle being their self-interest and self-aggrandisement.

**HILARY** Second term of the year, in spring. Commonly abbreviated along with year, e.g. HT21 for Hilary Term, 2021.

**JCR** Junior Common Room.

**JCR EXEC** Executive Committee of the JCR. A team of highly dedicated, fantastically intelligent, and incredibly nice people who represent you to the college and keep things running smoothly (not me though, it's a sore point – look out for my motion to add me to the exec in an OGM).

**LABS** Practical fun for scientists. Usually one or two afternoons a week.

**LECTURES** Arts students may have two or three per week. Scientists will usually have two or three per morning.

**MATRICULATION** Isn't as painful as it sounds, it's actually the University admissions ceremony. You get talked at in Latin for a few minutes by the Vice Chancellor, and then head straight down to the pub (not an official part of the ceremony).

**MCR** Middle Common Room. Common room for graduate students.

**MERTON CHRONICLE** Scurrilous gossip rag, written by Walter de Merton and co. Regardless of where, what or when it happened, Walter saw it.

**MICHAELMAS** First term of the academic year, in autumn. Abbreviated to MT.

**MODS** Equivalent to Prelims. Exams for subjects such as Law and Classics (Classics Mods being particularly evil, with over 30 hours in second year) which occur in Hilary, rather than Trinity term.

**OGM** Ordinary General Meeting. Fortnightly meetings where JCR matters are discussed. Best place to be on a Sunday evening!!!!



**PIDGE** Pigeonhole. Your port of contact with the outside world. Location of all incoming mail and internal notices too. Very exciting when you have something unless it's from a bank.

**PORT** Strong, sweet, fortified wine from Portugal. Popular with tutors, subject dinners, and the **TIME CEREMONY**. Unpopular with mornings-after.

**POSTMASTER** Someone promoted from an **EXHIBITIONER** for further exam success. Nothing to do with letters.

**PRELIMS** First-year exams in most subjects. They don't count towards your degree, but you can get prizes for good results. See **MODS**.

**ROWING** Popular Oxford sport. Great fun to those who do it, absolute insanity to those who don't. I'm very much a fan, so hopefully will see lots of you down at the river.

**SCR** Senior Common Room. Common room for fellows, and the fellows' body.

**SUB FUSC** Official garb consisting of white shirts, dark suits, bowties, ribbon-ties, gowns, and mortar boards for exams, etc. Very stylish and highly fashionable (see pg. 13).

**SUSPENSION** Taking time out on health or welfare grounds. Not the same as being 'sent down,' permanent expulsion for academic or disciplinary reasons.

**TAB** Someone from the Other Place – variously known as Mordor, Hades, and Cambridge.

**TIME CEREMONY** Ancient Merton tradition, founded in 557 AD. Walking backwards around Fellows' Quad when the clocks go back ensures that mystical time particles ('chronicles') don't disrupt the space-time continuum. Vital for the continued existence of the Universe – play your part!

**TRINITY** Third and final term. (Abbreviation: TT)

**TUTORIAL** Involves you and maybe a few other undergrads discussing your essay with your tutor. The jewel in the crown of the Oxbridge system, climax of the academic week, and not as scary as it might seem. Promise.

**WARDEN** Head of the college. Our Warden is Professor Jennifer Payne.

**WARDEN'S COLLECTIONS** Your annual meeting with the Warden, Senior Tutor, and subject tutor(s) to discuss your academic progress. Also, not as scary as they seem.



# KEY CONTACTS (people's emails come up automatically when you start typing their name)

**THE LODGE** All enquiries – 01865 276310

**POLICE** Emergency – 999 Non-urgent - 101

**AMBULANCE** Emergency - 999 (for urgent medical advice in non-life threatening situations - 111)

**FINANCE BURSARY** Enquiries about battels and payments –  
bursary@merton.ox.ac.uk

**ACADEMIC OFFICE** Enquiries about Freshers' Week and on-course academic administration – 01865 276329

**ACADEMIC REGISTRAR/DISABILITY COORDINATOR** Jemma Underdown

**CHAPLAIN** Rev. Justin White

**THE WARDEN** Professor Jennifer Payne

**PRINCIPAL OF THE POSTMASTERS** Prof. Matthew Grimley

**DEPUTY PRINCIPAL OF THE POSTMASTERS** Juliette Chaucheteux

**DEAN** Fra' John Eidinow

**HEAD OF WELFARE:** Helen Webster head.welfare@merton.ox.ac.uk (01865 2)86536.

**SENIOR WELFARE ADVISOR:** Jenny Barrett welfare.adviser@merton.ox.ac.uk (01865 2)86296.

**COLLEGE NURSE:** Julie Osborne merton.nurse3@nhs.net (01865 2)76320.

**JUNIOR DEANS FOR WELFARE:** urgent out-of-hours welfare issues during term-time 01865 271534 or via the Lodge.

**BURSAR** Charles Alexander (Finance) and Tim Lightfoot (Domestic)

**FELLOW LIBRARIAN** Dr Julia C. Walworth

**SENIOR TUTOR** Dr Jane Gover

**OXFORD UNIVERSITY** Links to faculties, departments, etc. –  
[www.ox.ac.uk](http://www.ox.ac.uk)

## And that's all we have time for folks

Shout out to the previous social media and publications reps for their previous guides which we have plagiarised used as a basis to create this one, including Gauri Kumar, Milo Dennison Benedict Yorston, Jack Horrobin, Adrian Burbie, Jack Philips, Josh Travers, Anna Gatrell, Caleb Rich, Brendan Kjellberg-Motton, Joe Hackett, Ben Sampson, Freddie Hendry, Peter Berry, Niall Allsopp, Bill Hellier, Tom Bloom, Gary Male, and, most recently, Antonia Johnson.

Thank you for sticking with us for the duration of this guide, and we're looking forward to welcoming you in Michaelmas!

Also cheers for the many photos (i.e. the nice ones) that are courtesy of the Merton website and to those who submitted photos..





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FSubcommittee 2025s

