

# **The A-Z Guide to Studying in Oxford for International Students 2008 -2009**



**International Student Advisory Service**

**University of Oxford**

**Examination Schools**

**High Street**

**Oxford, OX1 4BG**

**Email: [International.Office@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:International.Office@admin.ox.ac.uk)**

**Website: [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/io](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/io)**

## **The International Student Advisory Service**

The International Student Advisory Service is responsible for providing advice about issues affecting international students, including immigration questions, and assisting students needing to extend their visas. It runs an annual Orientation Programme for new students, workshops and presentations during term time and organises a departure programme for students preparing to leave the University to return home, or to work in the UK after their studies.

The office provides support for the University's broader international activities and co-ordinates the University's participation in the Erasmus programme and other exchanges. It also provides information on funds and opportunities for Oxford students wishing to study abroad.

The International Student Advisory Service is open for general enquiries by telephone or in person from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Monday to Friday, and is located in the Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford OX1 4BG.

The telephone number for general enquiries is 01865 270105, Fax 01865 270104. Email enquiries should be addressed to [International.Office@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:International.Office@admin.ox.ac.uk). Please remember to include a title in the subject field and state your course, nationality and college.

Website: [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/io](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/io)

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## Academic Year and Terms

The academic year is divided into three terms, Michaelmas, Hilary, and Trinity. A term is eight weeks. The terms run from Sunday at the beginning of '1st Week' to Saturday at the end of 8th Week. The weeks are numbered from Sunday to Saturday in between. The dates for the terms for 2008-2009 are:

Michaelmas Term 2008	12 October –6 December
Hilary Term 2009	18 January – 14 March
Trinity Term 2000	26 April –20 June

## Accommodation

Colleges are usually able to accommodate undergraduates and graduates in their first year of study, and sometimes for longer, but if you need to find your own accommodation, you can contact the Land Agent's & Accommodation Office. This is on the ground floor of Ewert House (the entrance is via Ewert Place). Accommodation goes quickly so visit them as early as possible, especially if you are a couple or have your family with you. The office address is Ewert House, Ewert Place, Banbury Road, Summertown, Oxford OX2 7DD. The visiting and calling hours are Monday - Friday, 10.00 a.m.-12.45 p.m. and 1.45 p.m.- 4.00 p.m. tel (+44) (0) 1865 280811/2 or email [land.agent@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:land.agent@admin.ox.ac.uk).

For private accommodation, try Daily Information [www.dailyinfo.co.uk](http://www.dailyinfo.co.uk), the University Gazette (in print or at [www.ox.ac.uk/gazette](http://www.ox.ac.uk/gazette)), or the Oxford Times newspaper (published every Friday).

## Banking

Banks offer two main account types: current accounts, which give you a cheque book and cash card, and deposit (or savings) accounts, which pay you interest but may be less flexible. Spend some time choosing your bank and your account type, as there are many different options. An information leaflet comparing the various types of bank accounts in Oxford will be available at the Orientation programme for International students in October. It can also be downloaded from [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/io/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/io/) To open an account, you will usually need your passport, a letter from your College confirming your current residence in Oxford, a letter confirming your offer of a place on the course, proof of your home address, and proof of income or funding. Try HSBC at 65 Cornmarket Street [www.hsbc.co.uk/internationalstudents](http://www.hsbc.co.uk/internationalstudents), Lloyds at 1 High Street [www.lloydstsb.co.uk/](http://www.lloydstsb.co.uk/), or Barclays at 54 Cornmarket Street [www.barclays.com/internationalpersonal/ib\\_8\\_student.htm](http://www.barclays.com/internationalpersonal/ib_8_student.htm).

## British Council

The British Council is an organisation concerned with promoting education in the UK for overseas nationals, promoting the learning of English, and strengthening educational co-operation between the UK and other countries. To help you with any queries you might have about life in the UK, look at their guide to studying and living in the UK at [www.britishcouncil.org/](http://www.britishcouncil.org/)

## Childcare

The University runs four nurseries but they are heavily over-subscribed, so you should apply as early as possible. Wolfson, Balliol, St Anne's, and Somerville also have their own nurseries. Play-schemes are run during the holidays. Contact them directly for more details at [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/child/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/child/). Overseas/EU students are expected to have made

financial provision if they are bringing family, including childcare costs. There is a Childcare Relief Fund, to which all matriculated full-time students can apply in cases of unforeseen hardship. The funds are limited, they cover childcare costs only, and applicants will need to provide details of their financial circumstances. Home students can apply for childcare support through the Access to Learning Fund. For more information email:

*student.funding@admin.ox.ac.uk*

## **Colleges**

The University of Oxford is comprised of 39 Colleges and seven permanent private halls. Full-time undergraduate Oxford students apply for admission to one of these Colleges instead of directly to the University. Graduates are admitted via the faculties and academic departments first and then admitted to a college. A College is the place where students live, eat, and socialise. It is also the place where they receive small tutorial teaching sessions. In addition to resources provided by the University, each College has its own library and sports facilities, and some have their own bar and theatre. Most Colleges have their own clubs and societies, offering a variety of non-academic activities for students to take part in. Meals are provided in the College dining hall, sometimes in additional cafeterias. Most meals are self-service, but there are regular 'formal halls' (served dinners).

## **Computing**

Each of the colleges offers their own computing facilities and support to students. In addition, Oxford University Computing Services (OUCS) offers facilities, training, and a wide range of IT courses. For more information on their services, call (2)73200, or visit the website [www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/](http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/)

## **Council Tax**

The Council Tax is a system of local taxation collected by local authorities to pay for local services that they provide. If you live in an 'exempt dwelling' you will not need to pay the Council Tax. There will be no bill for your house, flat, or other accommodation. Exempt dwellings include:

- Accommodation provided by the University or college
- Private dwellings occupied only by students

If you live with people who do not meet the definition, you may have to pay the tax. For more information about Council tax see :

[www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/information\\_sheets.php](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/information_sheets.php)

## **Counselling**

A confidential counselling service run by professional counsellors is available to help students with emotional or psychological stress. See the website: [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/shw/counserv.shtml](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/shw/counserv.shtml) or tel: (2)70300. The Oxford University Student Union (OUSU) has a student advice service as well and you can make an appointment by calling them on 288450/1 or by emailing them at: *advice@ousu.org*

'Nightline' is a listening and support service run by students for students (term-time only) at 16 Wellington Square, tel: (2)70270. They are open from 8.00 p.m. throughout the night to 8.00 a.m. the next morning. During these hours you can phone or drop by to speak to either a male or female student volunteer.

The Samaritans provide a similar service all year round at 60 Magdalen Road, tel 722122 or 08457 909090.

## **Currency**

The only legal currency in the UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) is the Pound Sterling (GBP or £), which is divided into pounds and pence. £1 is made up of 100 pence. Coins are available in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 pence, and 1 and 2 pounds. Notes are available in denominations of 5, 10, 20, and 50 pounds. Some shops may be reluctant to accept fifty-pound notes and if you have one you should check it carefully as there are some forged notes in circulation. Scottish notes are a different design to English ones, but are legal currency throughout the UK. The Republic of Ireland (Southern Ireland) uses the Euro (€), but the UK has no plans to adopt this currency in the near future.

## **Dentists**

See **Healthcare**

## **Disabilities**

Information for students with disabilities, including guides to University and college access, plus sources of financial support, can be found on the website [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/) You can also contact the University Disability Coordinator at: [disability@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:disability@admin.ox.ac.uk).

## **Doctors**

See **Healthcare**

## **Driving**

Students are discouraged from driving in Oxford because of traffic congestion and the difficulties of parking. You are advised to cycle, walk or take the bus.

If you want to travel out of Oxford you may want to hire a car. See [www.yell.com/](http://www.yell.com/) for details of car-hire companies in Oxford. You must have a valid licence and adequate insurance.

You may be able to drive using your current licence for up to 12 months and then exchange it for a GB (Great Britain) licence. This will depend on where your licence was issued.

Further information can be found at [www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/information\\_sheets.php](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/information_sheets.php)

## **Email**

All new students are provided with email accounts on the University's Herald system. Students with accounts on the Herald system can check their email online by opening a web browser (e.g. Netscape, Internet Explorer) and going to: <https://webmail.ox.ac.uk/> Outlook Express is available on college computers and it is possible to configure this to access your Herald email account. Instructions are available from [www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/email/config/](http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/email/config/) Students without a Herald email account can register for one at [www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/email](http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/email) Once you have an account, you will be able to read and send email using the College computers – either by logging into the University computers across the network, or by using an email client programme like Outlook Express.

## **Entertainment**

Oxford offers a vibrant live music scene, cinemas, theatres, plenty of pubs and restaurants, and a varied nightlife. Daily Info [www.dailyinfo.co.uk/](http://www.dailyinfo.co.uk/) has a 'What's On' guide, which includes theatre performances, concerts, live gigs, a guide to pubs, restaurants and takeaways, and a review section.

The Oxford Handbook, produced by the Oxford University Student Union (OUSU), has

reviews of nearly all of Oxford's bars, restaurants, pubs, and clubs in its 'Going Out' section. It tells you about following the 'Tourist Trail' (history of the city, city sights, museums, colleges, parks and punting). There are four cinemas in Oxford, two in the centre, on Magdalen Street and George Street (both called Odeon), one in Cowley (Ultimate Picture Palace, on Jeune Street), and one in Jericho (Phoenix Picture House, on Walton Street). The main theatres are the Oxford Playhouse, the New Theatre, and the Old Fire Station. There is also the Pegasus Theatre in Cowley (Magdalen Road) where you can see new contemporary theatre.

## **Families**

You will find information on accommodation, childcare, employment, and healthcare in separate sections of this booklet. For detailed information on all aspects of bringing your family to the UK, including immigration and schooling, look at:

[www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/information\\_sheets.php](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/information_sheets.php)

Children under the age of 16 who are in the UK as dependants of international students are allowed to attend a state school free of charge. You should contact the Education Department at Oxfordshire County Council before the start of the school year in September to arrange a place for your child. For further details and to find out about schools in your area see: [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/) click on Education and Learning then Schools

The Oxford University Newcomers' Club helps newly-arrived wives, husbands or partners of members of the University and visiting scholars to settle down and to give them the opportunity to meet people in Oxford. They organise regular coffee mornings, and a varied programme of events, activities, and excursions. They meet at the University Club, 11 Mansfield Road on Wednesday mornings 10.30 am - 12 noon. For more details, see <http://oxforduniversity.newcomersclub.googlepages.com/>

## **Fees**

All students are liable to pay fees to the University.

- EU Undergraduates can apply for fees support from the government. Maximum fees are £3,145 for 2008-9.
- Overseas Undergraduates are liable for College Fees and University Fees. Some scholarships may be available but you should normally have secured your own funding before you take up your place.
- EU Graduates may apply for support provided by research councils in the UK but the awards are competitive. You are liable for the same fee level (University and College) as a British student.
- Overseas Graduates are liable for College and University Fees. Some scholarships may be available, but you should normally have secured funding before taking up your place.

See the following websites for more information:

[www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/finance/](http://www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/finance/) (Undergraduates, Home, & EU)

[www.admin.ox.ac.uk/gsp/finance/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/gsp/finance/) (Graduates, Home, & EU)

[www.admin.ox.ac.uk/io/funding](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/io/funding)

[www.admin.ox.ac.uk/postgraduate/finance/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/postgraduate/finance/)

## Food

For information on restaurants, takeaways, pubs, supermarkets and specialist food shops, visit the Daily Info 'Food and Drink' section at [www.dailyinfo.co.uk/](http://www.dailyinfo.co.uk/) or look at the restaurant reviews in 'The Oxford Handbook' published by the Student Union. There is a Chinese supermarket on Hythe Bridge Street, plus a Russian delicatessen and a number of Indian/Caribbean shops on the Cowley Road. There are Sainsburys' supermarkets on Magdalen Street and in the Westgate Centre, and there are Co-op supermarkets on Walton Street and in Summertown. There is a fresh food market in Gloucester Green every Wednesday.

## Funding

For information and advice on scholarships and funding, see the Student Funding website [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/studentfunding](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/studentfunding) or call into the office at University Offices, Wellington Square, between 9.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. Be aware, however, that most scholarships are awarded to students before they arrive in Oxford.

EU Undergraduates whose fees are paid in full by the government are entitled to an Oxford Bursary. Ask the Bursar in your college for further information.

The University has a hardship fund that all matriculated students can apply to in situations of unforeseen financial hardship. A committee meets once a term to consider applications and awards may be grants and/or loans. Forms are available from your college hardship officer or the Student Funding and Access Office.

## Grading System

UK universities use the following grade structure for examinations.

I	"First" (the best)
II.i or 2.1	"Two-one" or upper second
II.ii or 2.2	"Two-two" or lower second
III	"Third"

This system will be relevant to you if you take examinations. If you are an undergraduate submitting supervision work, your work is likely to be graded in different ways. Since supervision work does not contribute to your final, quotable "result", it is often up to the supervisor what method he or she uses to grade work. Some Master's courses will use 'pass' and 'distinction'.

## Healthcare

You, your spouse, and any children under 16 (19, if still at school) are entitled to free health care from the National Health Service (NHS), provided that you are registered for a course of at least six months. You should register with a doctor as soon as you arrive. Most colleges have their own doctors, but you can register with another doctor if you wish to. Although the consultation with a doctor and any hospital treatment is free, you will have to pay for medicines, glasses, dental treatment, and certain other special services.

If you are from the European Economic Area (EEA), and in the UK for less than six months, you should bring your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) with you. The easiest way to apply for an EHIC is online at [www.dh.gov.uk/travellers](http://www.dh.gov.uk/travellers). Alternatively, you can apply by calling 0845 606 2030, or apply by post, using the form and pre addressed envelope available from Post Office branches. This card entitles you or your family to full NHS treatment on the same basis as students who are studying for six months or more. For detailed information, see [www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/information\\_sheets.php](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/information_sheets.php)

## Holidays

There are eight public holidays in England known as 'Bank Holidays' when most offices, banks, and shops are closed. Public transport may also be limited. When a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the next working day is taken as a day off. Christmas Day (December 25) and New Year's Day fall on a Thursday this year.

The Bank Holidays are:

Christmas Day and Boxing Day	25 & 26 December 2008
New Year's Day	1 January 2009
Good Friday	10 April 2009
Easter Monday	13 April 2009
May Day Bank Holiday	4 May 2009
Spring Bank Holiday	25 May 2009
Summer Bank Holiday	31 August 2009

You should plan in advance how to spend your Christmas holiday, as this can be a lonely time if you are not going home. You could try HOST (see below), or International Students House London (an international student centre, centrally located near Regent's Park, which offers accommodation and activities). For more information see [www.ish.org.uk/](http://www.ish.org.uk/)

## HOST Scheme

HOST offers International Students the opportunity to spend a couple of days or a weekend with a British family, to experience the local culture and visit a different region of the UK. You will have to pay a registration fee of £36 (currently, subject to change) as well as the travel costs to join the programme. Details and application forms can be found at: [www.hostuk.org.uk/](http://www.hostuk.org.uk/)

## Immigration

See **Visas**

## Insurance

Insurance is highly recommended against loss of personal property, medical expenses, or problems with payment. Endsleigh Insurance [www.endsleigh.co.uk/](http://www.endsleigh.co.uk/) (2 King Edward Street, Oxford) offers specialist insurance for international students, but there may be other offers worth noting. Have a look on the Internet and make sure you know which areas are covered by the policy and which are not.

## Language Centre

The Oxford University Language Centre at 12 Woodstock Road supports the teaching and learning of languages for all members of the University. It also offers courses in English as a Foreign Language for overseas students and their spouses. Early enrolment is necessary. See [www.lang.ox.ac.uk/](http://www.lang.ox.ac.uk/) for more details.

## Libraries

Oxford University has nearly 100 separate libraries. The principle research library is the Bodleian (comprising the Old Library, the New Library and the Radcliffe Camera), with other collections in the Taylor Institution Library (Modern Languages), and the Sackler Library (formerly Ashmolean). Most faculties, departments, and colleges have libraries of their own. All students are given a University card on arrival, which also serves as a librarycard. For more information on libraries and resources see: [www.lib.ox.ac.uk](http://www.lib.ox.ac.uk)

## **Mail**

In the UK letters can be sent first or second-class. First-class stamps are 36 pence and second-class stamps are 27 pence. Overseas letters are best sent by airmail. The main post office is in St Aldate's.

Internal mail can be sent through the University Messenger Service free of charge. Your college and department will have a collection point and will advise you of the collection times.

## **Oxford University terminology**

There are many terms unique to Oxford University and a number of them are explained at [www.ox.ac.uk/about\\_the\\_university/introducing\\_oxford/oxford\\_glossary/index.html](http://www.ox.ac.uk/about_the_university/introducing_oxford/oxford_glossary/index.html)

## **Police registration**

See Visas

## **Radio / Television**

Oxford has a good selection of national and local radio stations. The main local radio stations are:

- BBC Radio Oxford (96.2FM)
- Fox FM (102.6 FM)
- Passion FM (107.9FM)

There are also five national radio stations:

- Radio 1 (97-99FM)
- Radio 2 (88-91FM)
- Radio 3 (90-93FM)
- Radio 4 (94.6-96.1FM)
- Radio 5 Live (909 & 693AM)

Oxide Radio 87.7FM is Oxford University's student-run radio station.

The UK has five main television stations, BBC1, BBC2, Channel 4, ITV and Channel 5, as well as SIX TV – The Oxford Channel, Oxford's community television station.

In Britain, it is illegal to use a television if you do not have a television licence. These are available from post offices and cost £131.50 per annum for a colour television and £44 for black and white. Alternatively, you can call TV licensing on 0844 800 6790, or you can pay online. For further information see : [www.tvlicensing.co.uk/](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/).

## **Religious Organisations**

Most colleges have a chapel in which Anglican services are held during term. All members of the college may participate, whatever their denomination. The College Chaplain organises the religious life of the college and should be able to help and advise students if required. The University Church of St Mary is the official place of worship of the University, but Oxford has a wide variety of places of worship. These include the Pastorate (based at St Aldates church), the Anglican Chaplaincy (Pusey House in St Giles), the Roman Catholic Chaplaincy (The Old Palace, Rose Place, St Aldates, tel: 276993), the Orthodox Church (1 Canterbury Road), the United Reformed Church in Mansfield College, the Oxford Quaker Centre (42 St Giles), the Synagogue and the Oxford Jewish Centre in Richmond Road, the Mosque (10 - 11 Bath Street, St Clements), and the Islamic Studies Centre in George Street. In addition, the

University offers a number of religious societies, details of which can be found in the Oxford Handbook, which is available from The Oxford Student Union Shop in Thomas Hull House, Bonn Square, tel: (2)70777.

## **Safety**

**Emergencies:** For immediate assistance in an emergency dial 999 free from any phone. When you are connected to the emergency service operator, you will be asked whether you need the fire brigade, the police, or the ambulance service, and for your exact address. *You should only call this number if you need help straightaway.*

**Security:** You should keep your room locked at all times and try to make sure that external doors are also locked. Remember to close the windows when you leave and not to have your laptop on display next to any windows. If you encounter any suspicious activity on college premises, you should immediately contact the Porter's Lodge. Find out whether your college has an insurance policy that covers your personal possessions. If not, you are recommended to find your own insurance cover (see 'Insurance').

Make sure that you keep your possessions within sight at all times and be especially careful in the first few months of arriving here, as there are some opportunistic thieves who are aware that there are new international students arriving in Oxford who are unfamiliar with their surroundings.

**Personal Safety:** Some colleges may offer their students personal emergency alarms - ask your College Secretary or Porter's Lodge. Alternatively, you can buy an alarm from the Oxford Student Union shop at Thomas Hull House in Bonn Square. The shop is open from 10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m. during term time.

**Security in the UK:** You must not leave baggage unattended at any airport, train, or bus station, because of the concern about terrorist threats. You should report any unattended items of luggage to the police immediately. Information about preparing for emergencies is available at the Home Office website which is [www.preparingforemergencies.gov.uk](http://www.preparingforemergencies.gov.uk)

Do not give money to anyone who approaches you on the street, or believe any stories they may tell to obtain money from you. If you wish to help homeless people you can buy a magazine called 'The Big Issue', which is sold by homeless people on the streets to help them earn an income. Otherwise you could give money to a charity called Oxford Night Shelter. See [www.oxfordnightshelter.org.uk](http://www.oxfordnightshelter.org.uk)

Be very careful of your belongings in crowded tourist areas as well as cafes, bars and restaurants. Keep your valuables in sight and your wallet in a safe place (i.e. inside your jacket pocket or at the bottom of your bag/handbag). Take care when withdrawing money from cashpoint machines. Look over your shoulder to make sure that nobody is watching when you enter your pin number.

The British Council, the Home Office and the police have prepared a new personal safety booklet for international students. Copies of the publication can be downloaded from the following website.

[www.educationuk.org/](http://www.educationuk.org/)

(Click on 'Living in the UK' and then 'Health and Safety')

## **Smoking and drinking laws**

There is a strong anti-smoking movement in the UK. Smoking is prohibited in most offices and teaching premises and on all forms of public transport. Since Summer 2007, smoking has been banned in bars, cafes, clubs and restaurants.

Drink-driving laws in the UK are very strict and there are regular checks by the police. Some parks and streets in Oxford are 'alcohol-free zones' and there is a fine of £500 for drinking in these areas. Warning signs on the street indicate the designated areas.

## **Societies**

The University offers around 350 clubs and societies which are listed in the Oxford University Student Union Handbook and on the website:

[www.admin.ox.ac.uk/postgraduate/studying/clubsoc.shtml](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/postgraduate/studying/clubsoc.shtml). There are many International Societies and you should find that your country is represented. Most Societies have a stand at the Freshers' Fair, which is on 8- 11 October 2008 at the Exam Schools in High Street.

## **Sport**

Sport is played at both college and university level, with the latter for more serious sportsmen/women. Most colleges have their own sports grounds, squash courts, and boathouses. The University also provides a wide range of sporting facilities, many of which are located at the Iffley Road Sports Complex. It also has a swimming pool (Rosenblatt pool). See the University sports website at [www.sport.ox.ac.uk/](http://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/) for more information.

## **Storage and Shipping**

You might need to find somewhere to store your belongings during the vacations, when you have to vacate your room. Ask your college first, as they may have storage areas or empty rooms available. If not, they may be able to recommend a storage company. You could also look in the Yellow Pages phonebook [www.yell.com](http://www.yell.com) Before you pay, check whether there are any restrictions on gaining access to your belongings.

At the end of your course, you will probably have accumulated more than you can carry and you may need to have some things shipped back home. Ask your college if they can recommend a company. Otherwise, try Parcel Force tel: 0800 224466 [www.parcelforce.com/](http://www.parcelforce.com/) or Mail Boxes Etc tel 514655 [www.mbe.uk.com/](http://www.mbe.uk.com/)

## **Student Jobs**

If you are looking for work during the holiday period then more information can be found in Vacation Work Publications available at [www.crimsonpublishing.co.uk/](http://www.crimsonpublishing.co.uk/) At Christmas time the Post Office also takes on temporary staff. Schools and colleges often need teaching assistants throughout the year. Other part-time job vacancies can be found advertised on: [www.dailyinfo.co.uk/](http://www.dailyinfo.co.uk/)

## **Student Union (OUSU)**

Every Oxford student is automatically a member of the Oxford University Student Union (OUSU). This is a federal organisation made up of every College's Student Union. It exists to represent students' interests at University level and to provide central services and support for all students. It provides an advice service (including welfare and legal advice); it organises campaigns and University events; and it runs a student shop. It also publishes a number of handbooks, such as the Oxford Handbook and the Oxford Directory, which provide detailed information about living and studying in Oxford. The Oxford Handbook will be distributed at the Freshers' Fair, which is being held from 8 -11 October 2008 at the Exam Schools in High

Street. Otherwise you can contact OUSU for a copy at Thomas Hull House in Bonn Square (junction of Queen St & New Inn Hall St), or see [www.ousu.org](http://www.ousu.org) Additionally, there is a Graduate guide. It explains how the University works and provides practical advice on welfare, finances, sport etc.

## Telephones

**International calls:** Telephone cards are usually the cheapest way to make international calls and there are many different cards available. You can buy them in almost all newsagents, post offices, and supermarkets.

**Mobile Telephones:** These can be purchased from many retailers in Oxford. There are two main types of telephone deals, one is a 'pay-as-you-talk' deal, where you buy the phone and vouchers, and the other one is where you pay for your calls on a monthly contract. You will need to provide proof of your residential address to sign up.

**Public Telephones:** They accept coins, credit cards and phone cards. International calls can be very expensive. (BT) is the main telephone company, but there are many other suppliers, and some of them are cheaper for international calls.

**University Network Phones:** The University has its own telephone network. To make a call from one network phone to another you dial the extension number, which is usually five digits. For example, if you came across the number 270105 you would only have to call the last five digits (70105) if it was part of the University network.

## Transport and Travel

**Within Oxford:** The best way to get around Oxford is by bicycle, but you should buy a good lock, as bike theft is very common. Make sure that you lock your bicycle to an immovable object. You should be aware of where you can cycle and that you must use the left-hand side of the road in the UK. You should not cycle in pedestrian areas or on pavements unless they are designated cycle paths.

The University has a cycle registration scheme, which assigns a number to your bicycle. If it is stolen the police will try and find it by the unique registration number. The registration pack (price 50p) should be available at your college lodge.

To buy a second-hand bike, look on the notice boards at your college, go to the Bike Zone on Market Street, Bee Line Bicycles at 59-65 Cowley Road, Cycle King at 128-130 Cowley Road, or visit Walton Street Cycles at 78 Walton Street. The Oxford Union sells bikes on Wednesdays from 8.00 a.m. during term-time in their grounds in Frewin Court. (The gateway is off St Michael Street.) You could also look at the advertisements in the Daily Info [www.dailyinfo.co.uk](http://www.dailyinfo.co.uk)

Buses are the other way to get around in Oxford. For timetables and fares see [www.stagecoach-oxford.co.uk](http://www.stagecoach-oxford.co.uk) or [www.oxfordbus.co.uk](http://www.oxfordbus.co.uk) If you travel regularly on the buses, buying a weekly or monthly bus pass will save you money.

**Within the UK:** Coach travel is usually the cheapest way to get around, especially with a student discount 'NX2 card', but be aware that it is slower than travelling by train. For fares and timetables see the National Express website at: [www.nationalexpress.co.uk](http://www.nationalexpress.co.uk)

Rail travel is usually more expensive, but with a ‘Young Person’s Railcard’, you will get a third off your fare. The card is available for people under 26 and for full-time students over 26. See: [www.youngpersons-railcard.co.uk](http://www.youngpersons-railcard.co.uk)

For rail timetables and fares see [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) or call National Rail Enquiries on 08457 484950.

**Travelling to London:** There are two bus services to London: the Oxford Tube, run by Stagecoach bus company [www.oxfordtube.com](http://www.oxfordtube.com) or the Oxford Express, run by the Oxford bus company [www.oxfordbus.co.uk](http://www.oxfordbus.co.uk) You can buy a multi-pass ticket if you are making regular trips to and from London and this makes the overall cost a bit cheaper. If you book in advance through Megabus [www.megabus.com/uk](http://www.megabus.com/uk) the cost is even cheaper, although this is not as flexible.

**Travelling between London airports and Oxford:** Buses travel regularly from both Gatwick and Heathrow airports, day and night, seven days a week. For more information see website: [www.oxfordbus.co.uk](http://www.oxfordbus.co.uk)

**To other European cities:** Eurolines offer cheap coach travel all over Europe. See [www.eurolines.co.uk](http://www.eurolines.co.uk) or tel: 08705 143219. Eurostar runs the high-speed train link between London, Paris, and Brussels [www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com) For European train travel see: [www.raileurope.co.uk](http://www.raileurope.co.uk) Flying to Europe is usually more expensive, but sometimes there are very cheap offers if your dates of travel are flexible and you book in advance. See [www.easyjet.co.uk/en](http://www.easyjet.co.uk/en) or [www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com) **STA Travel** at 36 George Street [www.statravel.co.uk](http://www.statravel.co.uk) is the main agency which specialises in student travel. It issues ISIC cards for discount travel [www.isic.org](http://www.isic.org)

## UKCISA

UKCISA, the United Kingdom Council for International Student Affairs [www.ukcisa.org.uk](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk) provides advice and information to international students studying in the UK. All UK universities and most colleges of further and higher education who take international students are members of UKCISA. Information and advice is free and the website provides a useful set of information sheets covering a diverse range of topics such as immigration, fee status, driving in the UK, health advice and opening a bank account. See [www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/studying\\_living.php](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/studying_living.php).

UKCISA also has an advice line for students who cannot find the answers to their questions from the information sheets. The telephone number is 020 7107 9922 and the line is open Monday to Friday from 1.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.

## Visas and Immigration

**PLEASE NOTE THAT DUE TO A MAJOR REORGANISATION OF THE IMMIGRATION RULES FOR STUDENTS IN APRIL 2009, THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WILL BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AND YOU SHOULD KEEP UP TO DATE BY LOOKING AT OUR WEBSITE [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/io](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/io).**

**You should put a note in your diary now to remind yourself to make preparations two months before your visa expires.** Make sure you leave plenty of time for renewal if you are planning to return home for Christmas or the summer holidays. The International Student Advisory Service is able to help you submit an application for a visa extension, though you

will need to complete the form and obtain the supporting documentation yourself. For more information see the website: [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/io/batcheschem.shtml](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/io/batcheschem.shtml).

If you are an EEA national (EU countries, plus Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein), you are allowed to enter the UK and study here without needing to apply for a visa. If you are not from the EEA you will need to obtain a visa which will indicate the length of time you are allowed to stay in the UK. If you need to stay longer than this, you will need to apply to the Home Office for an extension around one or two months before the expiry date of your current visa. You will need to complete form FLR (S), available from the International Student Advisory Service, or the UK Border Agency website at [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk/extending/](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk/extending/). There is a fee of £295 for an application by post and £500 for a same-day service.

### **Registering with the Police**

Students from certain countries may have to register with the police within seven days of arrival in the UK. If you are required to register it will be noted on your visa. If you do have to register, you should take your passport, two passport-sized photographs, and a registration fee of £34 to the main police station in St Aldates. Please note that you must take the exact money to the Police Station. You will receive a Police Registration Certificate in the post.

If you extend your visa or change your address whilst in the UK, you will have to make a further visit to the Police Station to update your certificate. This is free of charge.

### **Schengen Visas (travel to Europe)**

The Schengen Visa Scheme allows people wishing to visit certain countries within the European Economic Area (EEA) to travel using only one visa for a trip that could last up to three months. At the moment there are 24 countries who have signed the Schengen agreement and who make up the Schengen area. These countries are:

Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden.

Nationals from any of the countries listed above, plus the United Kingdom and Ireland (which have not joined the Schengen visa scheme), do **not need** a Schengen visa to travel within the Schengen area. In addition, students from Canada, Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Singapore, South Korea and the USA **do not** need a Schengen visa.

If you do need a visa, you have to decide where you want to travel within the Schengen region. If you are travelling to just one country you must submit your application form to that country's Embassy in the UK. If you are travelling to more than one country, you should submit your application to the Embassy of the country where you will spend the majority of your time. If you plan to spend an equal amount of time in several countries, you should submit your application to the Embassy of the country you will visit first. This is very important, so you should plan your trip carefully in advance.

There are three types of Schengen visas. Please see our website for information on these [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/io/guide/schengen.shtml](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/io/guide/schengen.shtml)

To obtain information about all the UK embassies go to [www.fco.gov.uk/](http://www.fco.gov.uk/) and click on the shortcut menu 'Foreign Embassies in the UK'. This will enable you to contact the correct embassy and start the application process. You will also need various documents in support of your trip. The fee is approximately £45 but can vary slightly between embassies.

Another important point to note is that some embassies require you to have a specific amount of time left on your passport after your return to the UK (eg 3 months). Again you should check this with individual embassies.

Schengen visas are not issued the same day and it is often necessary to visit the embassy as part of the application process.

### **Further information on visa immigration issues**

For more information on immigration issues, please look at the International Student Advisory Service website [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/io](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/io) or the UKCISA website [www.ukcisa.org.uk/](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/)

### **Work**

If you are a student from within the EEA or Switzerland and wish to work during your studies, please see [www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/eea\\_work.php](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/eea_work.php).

If you are an international student from outside the EEA, the immigration rules for students may allow you to work for up to 20 hours per week during term-time and unlimited hours during vacations (see note below about research students), without seeking permission from UK authorities. This is provided that you do not have a prohibition to work stamped in your passport. You may, however, need approval from your college or supervisor.

Working permission for research students is different. As you may be expected to continue your research during a University vacation period, you will need to limit your employment to a maximum of 20 hours per week, unless you obtain written permission from your supervisor to take a break from your studies, and then you can work full time for the specified period.

For more information, see: [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/io/guide/employment.shtml](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/io/guide/employment.shtml).

If you are permitted to work in the UK you will need to get a **National Insurance Number**. Phone 0845 6000643. You will be given an appointment at Oxford Job Centre Plus in Worcester Street. You will receive a letter telling you which documents to bring. For advice on working during or after your studies see: [www.ukcisa.org.uk/](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/)

**We hope this guide has proved useful, and that you may like to help us with the next Orientation Programme in 2009. Please email us next summer, if you are able to help**  
*(International.Office@admin.ox.ac.uk)*

## Notes