

MAGDALEN FRESHERS' HANDBOOK 2025-26



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Welcome!



Welcome to Magdalen and congratulations on getting into Oxford! I am sure you have heard this plenty of times already, but it is something worth repeating, as it's such an impressive achievement. We hope you're feeling super proud of yourselves and super aware of how hard you've worked to get here. Make sure you spend some time resting and celebrating over the last few weeks of summer before term starts - you've earned it!

Starting university can be slightly scary, possibly even more so for somewhere like Oxford, but hopefully this booklet will answer a lot of your questions. If there's anything else you're confused about (or interested by), feel free to reach out to us, your college parents, a member of the JCR or anyone! There are lots of people mentioned throughout this booklet who'll be more than happy to help you in certain areas and we (your Freshers' reps) are always available for a chat.

Your college parents are current second years (at least one of whom will be doing your subject) who are there to answer any questions you have before you arrive, and help you settle in during your first few weeks. At some point soon you'll be receiving letters from them, introducing themselves - please do reach out to them once you get these as they will be looking forward to meeting you, but can't reach out to you until you have made the first contact! As well as college parents, you'll also have college siblings in your year, which will ensure there are a few friendly faces around when you arrive!

Having a Facebook account is really useful as it's where lots of the events and societies at university are organised (for some reason Oxford runs on Facebook). So if you don't already have one, it might be a good idea to get one set up before you get here so you can start looking around at stuff! We should be running a Facebook and an Instagram page so make sure to check those out.

It's also worth noting that people at Oxford use lots of weird words/abbreviations - so don't be surprised if second years sound like they're speaking about stuff you don't understand. We've included a jargon buster on page 8 of this booklet to go over some of the main words, but don't be afraid to ask people (like your college parents) what certain words mean - we all had no idea until this time last year either! You'll be using them in your everyday conversations (whether you believe it or not) in no time.

Freshers' Week is always a slightly hectic experience. There will be lots of talks organised by the college, and lots of activities organised by us (wooo!), and it can feel like there's a lot of pressure to constantly be out doing something. Don't worry if you feel like you aren't taking part in everything, or meeting everyone straight away - you will have plenty of time beyond Freshers' Week to do that. Make sure you set some time aside to unpack, settle in, and recharge as you will eventually all get Freshers' Flu (which is very real and definitely sucks). Freshers' Week can also feel like quite a lonely time, so don't worry if you don't have the best week of your life - and remember there's plenty of people who are always available for a chat.

Anyway, we hope you find this booklet useful, and on behalf of everyone at Magdalen - we really can't wait to welcome you in October!

The Freshers' Reps



THE FRESHERS' REPS

Our role is to organise Freshers' Week and be friendly faces around College as you settle in! We're here to answer all of your questions (head to our Instagram or shoot us an email!) and we hope to make your transition to University as smooth as possible.



We will be wearing (very subtle) pink cowboy hats all throughout Freshers' Week to help you find us when we're out and about! You will come across lots of new names and faces all week, so we want to make it super easy for you to recognise us. Come up to us at any time and we can point you in the right direction (literally - no one gets through Freshers' Week without getting lost!)

BELLA TAYLOR (*she/her*)

Medicine // isabella.taylor@magd.ox.ac.uk



Hiya!! I'm Bella, and I'm a first year medic as well as your executive freshers' rep this year :) Alongside trying to give you the best freshers week yet, I have very regular college party attendance, annoy my entire corridor practising flute & piccolo for orchestra, and am an active member in my Oxford church and the christian union (I'll be one of Magdalen's reps this year!) I'm proudly Bristolian - though sadly without the accent to prove it - and I think one of the best things about Oxford is all of the beautiful libraries and colleges we have access to; I've visited almost all of the undergraduate ones so am very happy to give recommendations. I spent a month of first year on crutches, which sadly put a pause to my Magdalen novice rowing career, but this has just given me so much insight into how much support can be found in the Magdalen and Oxford communities.

THE FRESHERS' REPS

HAWWA HUSSAIN (*she/her*)

Experimental Psychology // hawwa.hussain@magd.ox.ac.uk



Hi! My name's Hawwa and I'm so excited to be one of your freps (fyi I'm the one writing this handbook)! I study Experimental Psychology, (which to say is people-based would be a huge understatement), so best believe I am very happy to chat to you or help you out if you ever need it! You might find me at crochet society on Saturdays, reading on the New Building lawns in Trinity term, or perhaps in the library. I totally remember how it felt moving away into a completely new environment, but one thing that really helped was having the freps around to guide us and help us settle in the best we can, and I really hope that we can be those people for you. Something I learnt about Oxford is that there is simply so much opportunity here, chances to do things you never would have

thought of before, so my main advice is don't let things just pass by, always have something to show for your day. Can't wait to meet you all in October!

ALBERT KNIGHTS (*he/him*)

Physics // albert.knights@magd.ox.ac.uk



Hello! I'm Albert, I'm studying Physics (a blessing and curse that I get to share with Alessandro) and I'm very excited to be one of your Freshers' Reps this year. Coming from south east London, life at Magdalen and at Oxford felt very different from anything I'd experienced before, but it's been one of the most rewarding and exciting parts of my life so far, and that's in no small part due to the welcoming community at Magdalen. A lot of my time is spent on my degree, but I also try to find time to play music and see lots of music events, of which there are no shortage in Oxford. There are so many things going on in this whacky and wonderful city, and especially in the first few weeks there are a lot of societies that offer free taster sessions, which I strongly recommend you check out. I got to try many things I'd

never done before, from rowing and pistol shooting to Dungeons and Dragons, without paying a single penny. So seize the day and have fun! I've probably had to do the least frep-related work out of everyone, so please help me redeem myself by asking me as many questions as you like, whether you want advice about workload, or food recommendations, or just to know what laundry pods I use - I'm here! Looking forward to seeing you all in October.

ALESSANDRO BARTOCETTI (*he/him*)

Physics // alessandro.bartocetti@magd.ox.ac.uk



Hi there! I'm Alessandro, and I'm currently studying the best subject in the world (Physics). I am thrilled to be one of your Freshers' Reps in the coming year! I am a fine specimen of the Italian people, and, as such, I like to indulge in the art of cooking every now and then. Coming to the UK, for this reason, has been quite a shock considering their very famous culinary tradition. Obviously, it is not just the cuisine that is very different, but in fact many other things, that go from having to make friends in a different language to setting up a British bank account. During your first week, if you feel anything is challenging more than it should be, don't be afraid to ask; I also experienced the pain. When it so happens that I have some free time I have various (I think too many) things to choose from. Playing the piano is among one of my favorites, simply because I like classical music. I also enjoy

practicing Judo, for some stress relief, and to keep morale up when the degree starts requesting a lot. The strangest of my hobbies is probably Japanese calligraphy, but there is an unappreciated elegance to the discipline. There is probably a society for any activity you can think of here in Oxford, so you'll never get bored. See you after the summer!

THE FRESHERS' REPS

LOUIS KIDGER (*he/him*)

PPE // louis.kidger@magd.ox.ac.uk



Hi all, I'm Louis, from the Peak District (near Manchester). I am one of the sizeable team of Freshers' Representatives (frep) for 2025. I am a PPEist here at Magdalen. My role as a frep includes the selecting of college families, as well as arranging various events in freshers' week (I have tried my best to make sure the clubs don't cancel our tickets, as they did last year...). I am also involved with a lot of outreach, doing charity work helping with Oxbridge admissions. Outside of my degree, I also enjoy going to extra talks, various clubs, and am still trying desperately to find the time and will to go and do some piano practice. You will often see me around college - especially in the Beckwith room in the library, or otherwise around Central Oxford. Feel free to say hi/ask any questions as if you have any. My email is louis.kidger@magd.ox.ac.uk for any pressing concerns. Best, Louis

MJ LANGA (*she/her*)

History // madeline.langa@magd.ox.ac.uk



Hello!! I am a frep; so I'm here to help you get situated in Oxford!! My name is MJ and I am a second year studying History!! I especially adore medieval stuff, though if you ever feel like yapping about anything that happened before 2000 I'm all ears! I am from Los Angeles, California, so I can definitely relate to the feeling like you're in a completely new environment here. My best remedy has been to explore the city (it's marvellous, I really recommend stopping by the covered market and Ashmolean) and meeting all the lovely new people here!! I hope to meet you all soon!

ALEXANDER KWON (*he/him*)

Music // alexander.kwon@magd.ox.ac.uk



Hi, I'm Alexander and I'm a music student here at Magdalen. I'm from Edinburgh (up the Scotland) but used to live in Lancaster and don't worry, you do get used to the tap water here eventually. Oxford has been such an amazing place to really delve into my previous passions, like music and play in orchestras and ensembles around the city (often playing several concerts a week) and also pick up new hobbies like rowing and coxing as well as playing tennis on the amazing grass courts. Oxford is such an amazing place and community with so much to offer and I would definitely recommend immersing yourself in the unique culture and opportunities on offer here. Magdalen is such a great college in terms of all the support it offers as well as having so much beautiful green space and plenty of perks (like punting and sitting on college grass, it sounds dull but it's a real life changer.) In my spare time I love playing music (duh) trying out new things and just hanging around with my friends whether that be cooking, playing board games, late night chats or going to the pub and bops. Go into your first term with an open mind and I hope you'll have as much fun as we did.

----- CONTACT US -----

Email: freshersrep@magdocr.co.uk

Instagram: @magdalenfreshers2025

We can be contacted on the Instagram by an anonymous form too, so feel free to use that for any questions you feel less confident asking directly.

top 5 things to do after reading this handbook...

1. contact your college parents!

you can ask them anything and everything - they're excited to meet you and want to hear from you!!

2. figure out Facebook...

there will be a moderated "Facebook group" for all of the Magdalen freshers, alongside the wider Magdalen one. joining will help you meet each other before arriving and we will post lots of announcements on there; contact us if you're having any difficulty joining and we can help you out – a lot of us had no idea how to use Facebook before we got here!

3. follow us on Instagram

@magdalenfreshers2025

check out the freshers account for photos and videos of accommodation, regular Q&As, interviews with some current students, and photos of the college (my personal favourites)

4. plan your decor!

one of the best parts of moving away from home is getting to decorate a new room from scratch! bring photos, posters, and fairy lights, anything that makes your room feel more personal

5. start getting student discounts

set up your own Tesco account and get a clubcard! we also recommend setting up accounts like Unidays and Student Beans – you will be able to use your Oxford email address to register for these accounts once you've completed all the registration paperwork!

JARGON BUSTER

One thing about Oxford students is that we love to give normal things strange nicknames... Here's a list of weird, confusing words you might come across! They will all seem strange at first but by second week you'll catch yourself saying these phrases without even noticing. If you see a wacky word hasn't made this list, send us an email and we can explain it to you...

Batells - Your termly College bill.

Bear Pit - Magdalen's own sporting grounds, accessed through a gate at the back of Addison's Walk.

Blue - An award for outstanding sporting achievement at university level, typically only awarded to athletes who have competed on the first team against Cambridge in a Varsity match.

Bod - The Bodleian Library, one of Oxford's biggest and most famous.

Bod card - Your University card and main form of student ID. Necessary to get into College, the JCR and other places across the University. Can be used as payment in Hall and the OKB via Upay.

Bop - College parties held in the OKB.

Buttery - The standard meal service in the college dining hall, which is probably similar to your school canteen. The Buttery (generally referred to as 'Hall' by students) serves breakfast and lunch Monday to Saturday, and dinner every day of the week. Meals are about £3-4 with vegetarian options, and catering for religious or allergy requirements if you request in advance.

Cherwell - A tributary of the Thames running through Oxford, and also a student newspaper in Oxford.

Class - Group teaching, usually with more people than a tutorial

Collections - Mock exams held at the beginning of each term, mainly just to check your progress. Not to be confused with President's Collections, which is a short meeting you'll have with the President and your tutors at the end of Michaelmas to talk about how you're getting on.

Crew date - One of the biggest draws of joining a sports team, besides enjoying the actual sport that is. The meeting of two teams, usually from different sports and colleges, meet for a meal, some wine (or preferred non-alcoholic drink) and drinking games. Sometimes hilarious, sometimes an ordeal, often involving fancy dress and always messy. A good chance to get to know people from other colleges. These are optional and are generally organised more or less at the last minute.

Cuppers - Intercollegiate competitions in many sports - usually in Trinity

Dean - Fellows responsible for the behaviour and welfare of students.

Deaned - Something to avoid wherever possible. Involves a meeting with the deans after you've broken college rules.

Deer park - What we have (two of). Casual.

Evensong - An evening service in the College Chapel with music sung by the choir. It lasts about 45 minutes and is popular with tourists or members of the public; the music and readings are from the Christian church but anyone can attend.

Fellow - A top academic in College. Some of them (Tutorial Fellows) are responsible for giving you tutorials, marking your essays, setting you "collections" and marking those too. Apart from that, they are (nominally) running the College.

Finals - Exams at the end of your undergrad degree and the dreaded time for any student. The library replaces the pub, books replace friends and revision replaces conversation. Not to worry, they aren't until third year... usually.

Formal Hall - A formal three course meal in the Dining Hall. Gowns must be worn, and Sundays are optional Black Tie. Fun to take your parents/visitors to and a great way to celebrate special occasions.

Hall - The canteen. Quality is changeable (you are encouraged to give feedback), but value for money is great. Think school dinner but far more edible and in a much nicer setting.

Hilary - Spring term (January to March). Arm yourself with chocolate digestives and tea, wrap up well and prepare to face darkness at 4:30 pm.

Isis - The name of the river Thames when it runs through Oxford, and the artsy student magazine.

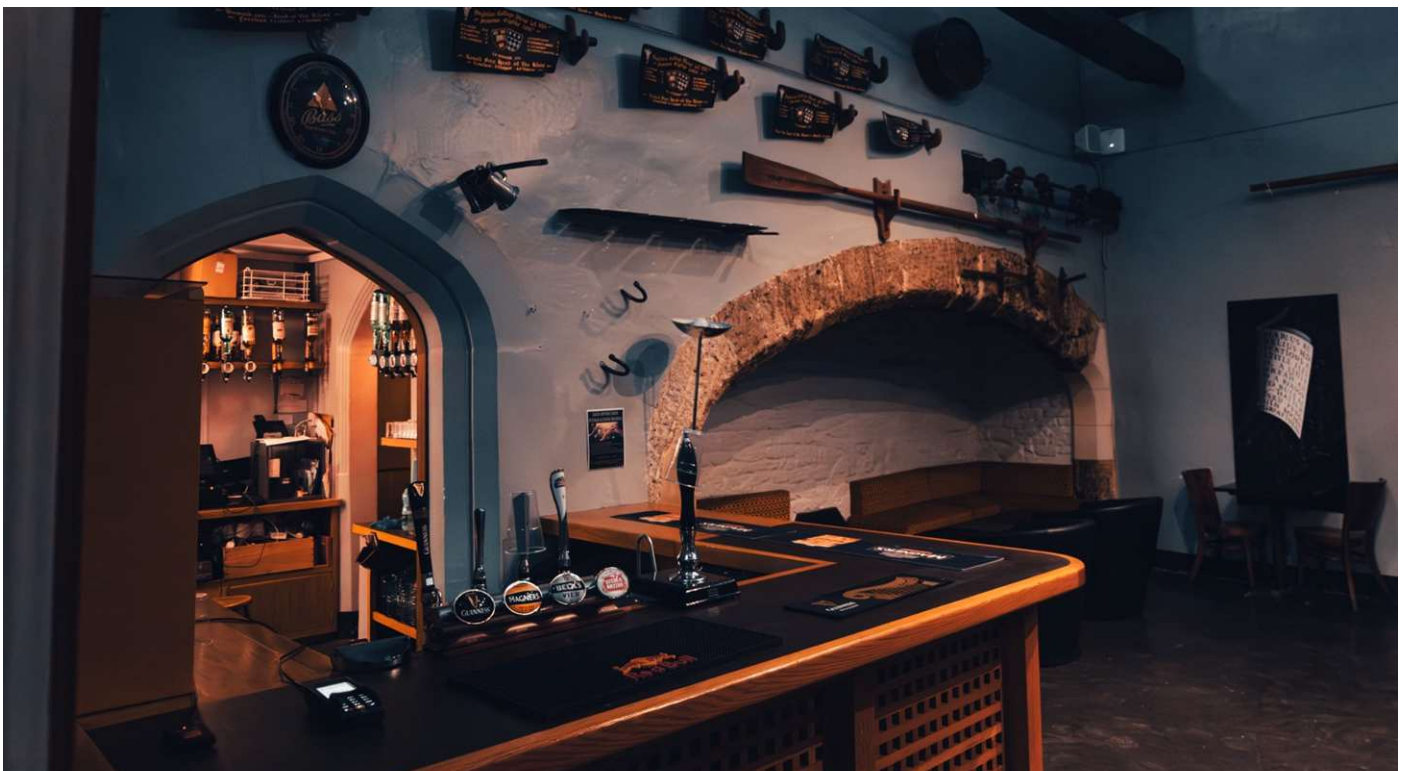
Late Gate Key - The key that gets you into and out of College after the porters shut the main gate at 11pm. Also allows you entry into nearly every accommodation area in College, the JCR, Addison's Walk and many, many other places. If you lose it, replacements are expensive and the porters will be very unimpressed, so guard it with your life!

Magdalene College - Our sister college in Cambridge. We have a tendency to beat them at... well, everything... except in the most recent matches this year oops. The annual Magd-Magd sports days are a great place to show your collegiate pride and the post-match crew dates are always fun! Each college takes turns to host, and this year it's on us!

Matriculation - A formal ceremony in which you become an official member of the university. You have to get up quite early, put on your sub fusc and head over to college for roll call and pictures. Then you're off to the Sheldonian Theatre, becoming a tourist attraction on the way (yes really...), and there you have to queue a lot and get spoken at in Latin. After that it's often an entire day of celebrating with friends and usually a Bop too!

Michaelmas - Winter term (October to December).

OKB - Old Kitchen Bar, an in-college café that's brilliant for an "OKBunch" of paninis, jacket potatoes, and baguettes. It has a lovely outside seating area by the river which is a popular spot in the summer months. At night, it becomes a bar, and is a nice spot to grab a cheap drink. Also where Bops are held... can you tell we all love bops?



(our beloved OKB)

OUSU - Oxford University Student Union, or “SU”, a student union designed to represent views of students to the university and support JCRs in their negotiations with Colleges. Membership is free and automatic by virtue of being a member of a JCR.

OWR - Oscar Wilde Room. Fits around 60 people and has a terrace onto the roof of the OKB. It can be booked out by any student and is frequently used for in- college events and birthday parties, as well as the annual Oscar Wilde dinner organised by the LGBTQ+ reps early on in May.

Oxford Union – Oxford’s famous debating society that invites speakers and host events. Lifetime membership is £315.

Pidge - The post room with many beloved pigeon-holes.

Plodge - Porter’s Lodge, the entrance into College.

Porters - Your best friends in College. They (tend to) know anything and everything about what is going on in College, so if you have any issues or questions then do seek them out.

Prelims - First year exams.

Punting - A favourite Magdalen summer pastime, and another silly thing often associated with Oxford. Students get access to a fleet of punts (which do come with a fixed charge in Trinity, but still work out as far cheaper than renting them). Punting is hard and you will get stuck and maybe fall in. But it’s fun!

Scouts - The wonderful people that clean your room, change your sheets, and generally make sure that the accommodation is tidy. Make friends with the Scouts; they do a lot and know everything going on.

Stash – Any kind of clothing that displays your college crest or sports team logo.

Trinity - Summer term (April to July). The best term, despite Prelims.

Tute – Tutorial, the small classes you have with your tutors, usually with a couple other students.

Varsity - Anything Oxford vs Cambridge related. Normally applied to annual sports matches.

Welfare - A source of comfort, advice, copious quantities of free food (the best kind of food) in the form of pizza and cake-based goodies and providers of all your health needs.



(we’re not lying about the deer!!!)

PREPARATION

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation for freshers this year will be in St Swithuns Quad, Longwall Quad, and college-owned houses on Longwall Street. Most freshers used to live in the Waynflete building which is a few minutes down the road but it was officially sent to its death this summer and is being redeveloped, so you guys will be living in college grounds this year! Accommodation is randomly allocated (unless you have specific requirements) so there's no need to stress about choosing somewhere. You will be told what room you are in when you arrive in October.



You will have access to kitchens, which have toasters, hobs, ovens, fridges, and usually a freezer. The kitchens differ depending on where you are, some are quite small, some are decent sized. The freezers tend to be quite small, so if you're thinking about meal prepping from home, be considerate of others and try not to take up all the space!

Keep in mind you are only allowed to keep kettles in your room, any other appliances must be kept in the kitchen. Deep fat fryers, air fryers, and rice cookers are also not allowed anywhere in college, even the kitchens. There will also be access to washing machines and dryers somewhere near your room (see the "Laundry" section).

Unfortunately, your rooms won't be en-suites but they will have sinks in them. There will be toilets and showers on your floor shared between a few other people. They are cleaned by the scouts everyday though so they're quite clean. If you need an en-suite or an accessible room on medical, religious, or disability grounds, make sure to email the accommodation team!

Everyone pays the same daily rate for accommodation (more on this in the "Finance" section). You are guaranteed accommodation for the rest of your degree, which is allocated via a fair and randomised ballot system and will probably be "within walls" (in college)!



if you have specific accommodation requirements, please contact admissions@magd.ox.ac.uk as early as possible so suitable arrangements can be made!

A kitchen in St Swithun's Quad →



College rooms come with a pinboard, a desk and desk chair, a bed with bedding, a mini fridge, at least one lamp, bins and most will also have a bedside table, at least one extra chair, and a coffee table.

We definitely recommend bringing decorations to liven-up your room!

Some decor ideas include...

- photos – they might help with any homesickness!
- posters
- fairy lights and other small lamps
- plants
- a small rug
- blankets and cushions
- (fake) vines and plants



A room in Longwall Cottage →

Head to our Instagram (@magdalenfreshers2025) to see more photos and videos of first year accommodation!

PACKING LIST

Must-Haves:

- Clothes and hangers
 - ⇒ Hangers are not provided – so bring as many as you’ll think you need! (Yes - and they sell out at all the local stores!) Also bring plenty of clothes, as laundry costs money so you might want to limit the amount of loads you do, and there’s **plenty** of storage!
 - ⇒ Consider bringing some smarter clothes for formal events – dress codes range from smart casual to black tie so it’s handy to come prepared!
 - ⇒ Any fancy-dress stuff you have lying around is perfect for BOPs and sports socials
 - ⇒ We also recommend slippers/sliders for walking between your room and the kitchen or bathroom (and maybe some flip flops to wear in the shower!)
- Toiletries
 - ⇒ As well as all the usual, make sure you stock up on any cold/flu medicine and tissues. Fresher’s Flu can hit pretty hard, and the supermarkets tend to get wiped clean of any useful stuff pretty quickly by Oxford’s large student population.
- Washing basket and detergent
 - ⇒ A basket, bag, anything you can carry your laundry in to and from the laundry room, you don’t want to be leaving a trail of clothes behind you!
 - ⇒ Drying racks are a must have in my opinion, we do have tumblers we can use for free if you would rather (beware sometimes clothes may not fully dry in these), but a drying rack is especially useful for hand towels and shower towels!
- Towels
- Stationery
 - ⇒ Check your emails in case your tutors suggest you bring anything specific, such as a certain type of calculator! Also, subjects where you might need to draw diagrams may benefit from bringing some sort of plain paper (my first diagram had lines in the background...)

Technology:

- Laptop and charger
- Headphones
- Extension cables
 - ⇒ All rooms have plug sockets, but they can be oddly placed. Remember adaptors if you are an international student!
- USB stick
 - ⇒ Not entirely necessary, but useful as a second storage option for all your important work
 - ⇒ Also handy because printing in the college library is free if you use a USB stick (there is a fee for wireless printing!)

Kitchenware:

- Saucepans, frying pan, chopping board, sharp knife, and spatula
 - ⇒ It is possible to eat catered for almost every meal, but a lot of people cook at some point. However do be realistic about what you’ll actually get use out of!

- Tupperware
⇒ cooking in bulk and meal prepping is cheaper and saves lots of your precious time!
- Plates, bowls, mugs, and cutlery
- Baking trays for frozen stuff, strainer (pasta is always a good option)
- Tea towels and washing up liquid
- Kettle and any other small appliances
⇒ Kettles (but no other appliances) are allowed in your room. Any other small appliances, such as toasters (although most kitchens have one) and toastie machines, need to be kept in the kitchens. Each room already has a mini fridge.

Optional:

- Bed linen
⇒ College provides bedding for all students, and the sheets are washed every week by your Scout. It's totally fine to bring your own if you'd prefer a more personal feel – but be aware it will be your responsibility to wash this.
- Sports kit
⇒ If you're interested in continuing a sport or picking up something new, bring some kit with you - especially if you have a sport you want to continue that needs equipment (e.g. a racquet or hockey stick).
- Musical instruments
⇒ These could make for a nice break from work, but be realistic about how much you may use it, beware it might end up just sitting in the corner
- Bike, bike lock, helmet, and lights.
⇒ Oxford is a big cycling city, and even though Magdalen is pretty central (and almost all of Oxford is walkable), a bike can make those journeys just that little bit quicker – if you do plan to cycle, make sure to check safety regulations regarding this, e.g., if cycling in the dark, you must have a light!
- Decorations
⇒ College rooms can be very bare when you first arrive, so bring some things that will brighten the place up and make you feel more at home.
⇒ You'll have a big pinboard so we recommend bringing posters and pictures to fill it.
⇒ Other common decorations are plants, cushions, blankets, and fairy lights.
- Doorstop
⇒ Propping your door open is a great way to meet people in Freshers' Week!
- Mirror
⇒ Most college rooms don't have one or it'll be awkwardly placed. If you wear makeup, a tabletop mirror is a must-have!
- Card holder/lanyard
⇒ Not necessary but you will need your university student (“Bod”) card everywhere! Phone wallets can be useful if you're super forgetful but we are advised to not keep our cards near our phones as this can deactivate them over time
- Food
⇒ It can be helpful to bring your favourite snacks from home for those first few weeks - protein bars, favourite tea, etc. (Especially great for international students!)

Note on sub fusc:

Sub fusc is the Oxford 'uniform' but is only worn occasionally. These occasions include Matriculation (a fancy ceremony that takes place at some point in your first term) and in-person exams. You might be asked to wear your gown a bit more frequently (to Formal Halls, for example). Wearing sub fusc turns you into a bit of a tourist attraction, so be prepared to be stared at (and possibly asked for a photo). This doesn't have to be packed – you will be sent an order form with your Freshers' pack, and you can then pick it up from College when you arrive during Fresher's Week. Alternatively, you could buy your own, but academic dress is taken quite seriously, so it's important to make sure you are following the guidelines (these can also be found online).

Full sub fusc guidelines: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/dress>

SUB FUSC:

1. one of:

- dark suit with dark socks, or
- dark skirt with black tights or stockings, or
- dark trousers with dark socks or dark hosiery

Socks, tights and stockings **must** be worn and must cover the ankle entirely. There should be no gap between the bottom of the trouser leg or skirt and the top of the socks or stockings.

2. dark jacket, if required - worn underneath the gown
3. black shoes
4. plain white collared shirt or blouse with sleeves
5. white bow tie, black bow tie, black full-length tie, or black ribbon.

PLUS:

1. the appropriate academic gown
2. mortar board or soft cap

SOME OF THE ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES:

- 'Dark' in this context means dark grey, dark blue or black. Clothing must be plain; pinstripes and similar patterns are not permitted.
- Ministers of religion may wear clerical dress, with a gown over, when attending ceremonies.
- If you wear a head dress / scarf for religious reasons, a black scarf should be worn.
- Members of the armed forces may wear service dress under their gown, in place of sub fusc. This is only applicable to members of The British Armed Forces in the UK. Uniform caps should be removed when indoors.



FINANCE

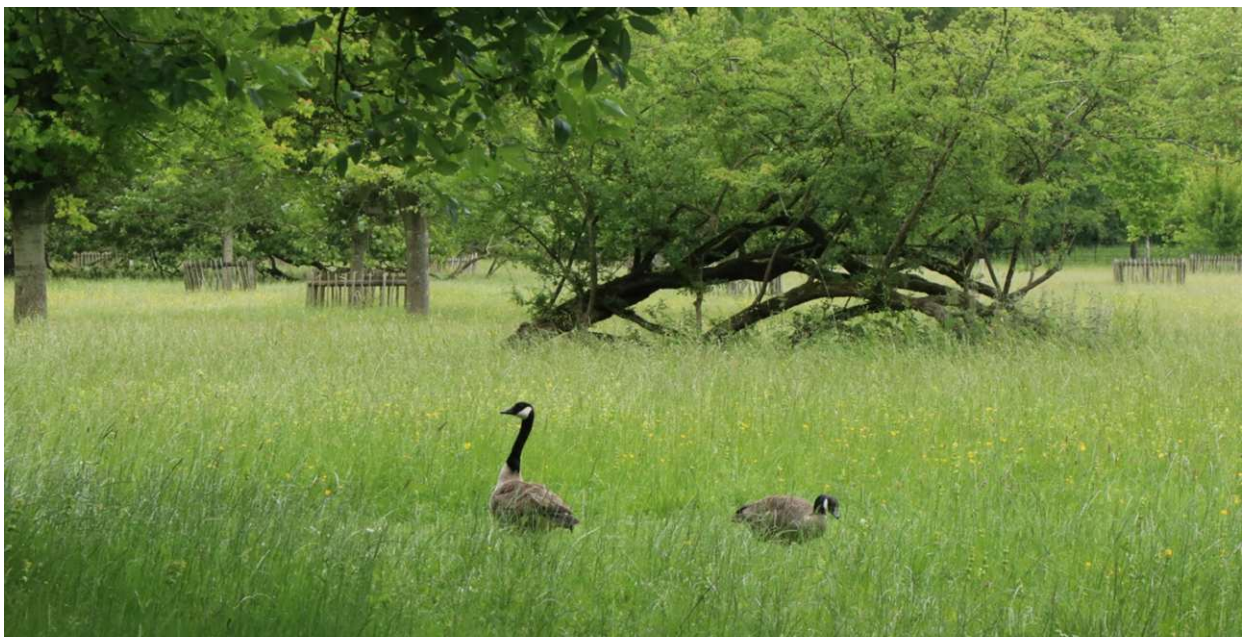
All undergraduate rooms at Magdalen are charged at the same rate, which for 2024/25 was £28.07 per night (this is likely to increase by a very small amount this year). Over a term (which consists of 59 nights), this comes to £1656.13 (though the amount may vary if you arrive in college early, or leave late). This cost includes utilities, weekly cleaning and bedding, and you only pay for the nights you actually stay in your room, making it far cheaper than living out in later years. There is also a fixed termly catering charge (£91 last year), which funds the upkeep of the college's kitchens. In your first term, college will also charge you a £100 deposit, which is returned at the end of your time at Magdalen (provided you haven't broken lots of things!). Additionally, there may be some money towards scholarships and trusts added, though you can opt out of these. These costs are charged to you through "batells" which are termly bills, and normally payable by the Friday of 1st week, although you should get in touch with the Deans if you cannot pay them by that date – for example, if your student loan hasn't come through yet – and they are super understanding!

The approximate monthly costs of living in Oxford (including accommodation and food), as calculated by the University based off a survey of current students, are in the range of £1,425 and £2,035 for 2025/26. Magdalen is determined that none of their students will struggle financially, and there is a wide range of financial support available.

There are many different sources of funding available to help cover fees for studying here at Oxford, and specifically at Magdalen. Most (if not all) of these grants or bursaries do not need to be repayed, and some will even be automatically allocated to the students who are eligible.

For information and advice from the University about fees and funding, including eligibility for UK Government support and information about Oxford support and assistance, please see the University's web pages at: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding>.

For information about the financial support offered by Magdalen, please see the funding page on our website at: <https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/funding-your-course/>.



Funding from Magdalen JCR

JCR General Meeting Discretionary fund awards up to £500 for projects or items for the JCR. Any questions should be directed towards the JCR Vice-President (*Jennifer Holly*).

Creative Projects Fund awards grants to support personal creative projects. It is administered by the JCR Vice-President. Applications must meet the following criteria: the project must be personal and creative; the application should demonstrate a prior and/or ongoing commitment to the project and/or its field; the application should not be related to or for the purpose of degree work; all other potential sources of funding must have been explored; and all reasonable steps to minimise the size of the award requested have been taken. Any questions should be directed towards the JCR Vice-President (*Jennifer Holly*)

Gender Expression Fund is provided to junior members for items aiding in gender expression. These items include, but are not limited to, binders, concealing underwear, packers, and breastforms. Applications must be made in writing to the Trans Officer or the LGBTQ+ Executive Officer, which then, after consultation with the Treasurer, jointly decide on the application. The anonymity of the applicants is to be maintained at all times, also during the consultation with the Treasurer. Any questions should be directed towards the JCR LGBTQ+ Executive Officer (*Luna Wang*).

Cultural Events Fund is provided to fund cultural events of a celebratory or educational nature, such as may be organised by members of the JCR. The Fund can be accessed by making an application, in writing, to the equality committee, which then after consultation with the Treasurer decides on the application by simple majority rule (excluding abstentions). For guidance on submitting an application, contact the RaEM Rep (*Aparna Shankar*).



FRESHERS' WEEK

You should arrive in College by 5pm on Sunday 5th October 2025, but the earlier you can get here in the day the better! Students arriving by car will be able to park briefly outside College (on Longwall Street) to drop off luggage, but there is no parking directly in College. You should come directly to the Porters' Lodge to find out which accommodation you have been allocated and collect your keys – there will be plenty of current students to guide you in the right direction and help you settle in! Contact the Freshers' Reps via email/Instagram on the day if you get lost at any point or need directions!

MOVING IN

Parking can be a little stressful as there are a very limited number of parking spots near college. The map below shows parking spots in blue and first year accommodation in red to try and make this a little easier. Disclaimer: student accommodation is subject to change so there may be buildings used for accommodation that are not indicated on this map! We will help you out on the day if this is the case.

The area of solid blue is an official parking area on Longwall Street. There is also a car park just over the bridge on St Clement's Street, as well as some temporary parking on Rose Lane (just opposite the porter's lodge) and Merton Street (slightly further down) – these are indicated by the blue arrows. Be prepared to unpack as quickly as possible, as many other freshers will also be trying to move in, so it's best to get your things in as quickly as you can to free up spots and keep things moving!

International students (or anyone else) wishing to move in earlier than the 5th October must email the Home Bursar, Albie Ray, for permission (home.bursar@magd.ox.ac.uk).



THE JUNIOR COMMON ROOM (JCR)

Very confusingly, the “JCR” can refer to two things. On one hand, it refers to the undergraduate body at Magdalen (including you guys!), who have an annually elected JCR committee that represents their interests. The JCR is also the name of our common room, located in Cloisters. The JCR has two rooms. One of the rooms is a games room including table tennis, darts, and air hockey. The other room has a 75 inch 4k TV with surround sound and Netflix, as well as some video game consoles. The JCR can be a popular place to hang out when there’s a big sports game on, or just to chat and play games with friends.



FOOD AND DRINK

The Dining Hall (which looks like something out of Harry Potter) is open at breakfast, lunch, and dinner every day (apart from breakfast on Sundays). Breakfast is served from 8 am to 9:30 am, lunch from 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm and dinner from 6:00 pm to 7:15 pm. The chefs can cater for any dietary requirements as long as students book and inform them in advance. Meals can be paid for with card, cash, or your bod card using the “Upay” system – which will be explained once you get here! There are also “Formal Halls” on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Sundays every week (as well on special occasions). Formal halls are one of the fancy traditions at Oxford. They are three-course meals and the dress code is smart casual with your sub fusc gown, or black tie on Sundays. Some “special formals” include wine (such as Christmas) but you are always allowed to bring your own along to regular Formals. Formal Halls must be booked and paid for in advance via the Upay system. The Freshers’ Formal will be held on Wednesday of Freshers’ Week – you do not need to book or pay for this Formal! We also have a college Café – the Old Kitchen Bar (OKB). The OKB is divided into two main areas: the dining area and the bar area. In the day, the OKB is open from 10:00-18:00 (Monday to Saturday) and serves a wide range of made-to-order snacks and light meals so that

students can choose from baguettes, paninis, soups, salads, jacket potatoes, or cakes throughout the day! Pizzas are also available 7 days a week from 19:30 – 21:00. In the evenings, the OKB serves as our college bar (with cheap drinks!) and is the location of our beloved College BOPs – more on these later!!



LIBRARY

Magdalen's library can be found in Longwall Quad. It is open 24/7 and is accessed using your Bod (Bodleian) card. The library holds lots of books/texts and has four separate silent reading rooms, as well as a couple of spaces where talking is allowed in case you need to work in a group or have a break! You will be given an introductory tour by our wonderful librarians during Freshers' Week.



LAUNDRY

Almost all accommodation buildings have their own washing and drying machines. You will need to buy a laundry card from the Porters' Lodge, which is £2. After this, you can top it up online using Circuit Laundry. A wash currently costs £2.90 and using the tumbledryer is free.

IT

The Oxford IT services website has a Getting Started section that details all the essential information. Your Oxford Single Sign-On (SSO) account entitles you to use all University resources provided by Oxford IT Services, whilst Nexus365 is the University's version of Office365 with email, calendars, and Teams access. Eduroam is the most common way to connect to the Internet. With your remote access credentials, you can use Eduroam across further education institutes. **NOTE:** Your SSO (magdXXXX@ox.ac.uk) is what you use to log in to most accounts related to the university, whereas your email, firstname.lastname@magd.ox.ac.uk, is only the inbox address (and not what you use to log in to anything).

Announcements will often be made via email and Facebook, so make sure you check your University inbox regularly, and that you have joined the Magdalen JCR ("Magdalen College JCR") and Freshers page ("Magdalen College Oxford Undergraduate Freshers 2025")!

POST

Every student has their own pigeon hole (lovingly referred to as a "pidge") in the Post Room, found in Chaplain's Quad. If you receive a parcel, the Porters will leave a note in your pidge, which you bring to the Porters' Lodge to collect your package.

Your mailing address while you are in Magdalen is:

[Your name]
Magdalen College
High Street
Oxford
OX1 4AU



SPORTS

Members of the College get free membership at Iffley Gym (10 min walk from Magdalen), which gives you access to a wide range of sports facilities. You just need to take your Bod (Student ID) Card to the reception and they will sort your membership out for you! It's also worth downloading the Oxford University Sport App, as this is where you can book classes. There is also a new gym in College opening this year!

There are two types of sports teams at Oxford; you can play at a University-wide level or at a College level. There is a University team for pretty much everything, should you have experience in a specific sport, but College teams are also a great way to get involved in something new! There is definitely something for everyone, regardless of ability level, and it's a great way to meet people and keep fit. This is by no means a definitive list, and new clubs are always welcome should you wish to start one! Try-outs and taster sessions for College sports will be held during Freshers' Week.

PSA: "Cuppers" are intercollegiate tournaments, normally held in Trinity (3rd term). There are also league games in other terms, but these aren't taken as seriously.

NETBALL

College Netball is great fun, and a really nice opportunity to see people from college outside of the library, and tutorials. All genders and abilities are welcome, you just need to arrive in sports kit with a water bottle, and you are ready to go! Generally we have a match every week, and/or a training session on the weekend. Particularly exciting events include the Magdalen (Oxford) v. Magdalene (Cambridge) match, as well as the "Cuppers" tournaments in Trinity term. We use a Facebook messenger group chat where we figure out which timings for trainings, matches and socials work best for everyone, and there is no pressure to attend every session, just come along whenever depending on how you feel! Even if you aren't too keen on playing netball, our socials can be really fun so feel free to join as a "social netballer" too! All in all, college netball is low pressure, and really good fun!

TENNIS

Magdalen is among the best-equipped colleges for tennis, with three acrylic courts open all year round and six lovely grass courts that are open during Trinity term. The courts are located only a short walk away in the main college sports ground (The Bear Pit) which is just through the Fellows' Garden. In Hilary term, there's opportunity to play in college Varsity against our rival sister college Magdalene Cambridge and in Trinity term we put forwards a team to play in the annual inter-college cuppers tournament. Magdalen has had huge recent success in cuppers over the past few years, winning in 2021, coming runners-up in 2022 and making a deep run into the draw in 2023. There are plenty of opportunities for players of all abilities to get involved, whether you want to compete for the college cuppers team, or have a more casual hit with friends. The college has rackets and balls which can be borrowed anytime.

RUGBY

Rugby at Magdalen (MCRFC) is an inclusive, popular club that welcomes players of all abilities. With training and matches year-round, there are opportunities to play 15s, 7s, and touch rugby. A hugely successful team, we reached the finals of both Cuppers and 7s cuppers this year, and we're hoping to go one step further next time round. As well as this, we've got the best socials in college, and it's the best place to make friends from other year groups from the start. Follow our Instagram @magdalenrfc for more information.

MEN'S FOOTBALL

Magdalen College Football Club (MCFC) is one of the best things about Magdalen. It's a great chance to let off some steam outside of work as well as make new friends in all different years. We've got 2 men's teams and a women's* team which means there's always plenty of game time to go around. College football is a great mix of some strong competition without being overly serious and there are great opportunities for all teams in both the League and Cuppers in Michaelmas and Hilary before we turn our attention to futsal in Trinity. It's an excellent way to make the most of your time here at Magdalen as well as having some fun at socials. We'll be at the (Magdalen) Fresher's Fair if you've got any further questions!



WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

Women's football is a great sport to get involved in and welcomes people of all abilities. Most girls in the team this year had never played before, and it's such a fun way to learn a new skill and get some great exercise! This year we had a joint team with two other colleges, so being on the team is an amazing way to meet different people from around Oxford as well as at Magdalen. Socialising is just as important as the football, so make sure you come to the evenings we hold at the different college bars! We have matches most weekends against other colleges but it's very relaxed and great fun. Check out our Instagram @magdalenwfc to get excited for next term!

BASKETBALL

College basketball is a very laid-back experience for anyone looking to shoot some hoops. Through Michaelmas and Hilary there is a league where we compete with other colleges and in Trinity there is a knockout style cuppers tournament. We try to have around one practice a week throughout the year. This is all done at the Iffley sports complex which is quite near college. There's no expectation that anyone goes to every practice or game, so if you just want to drop by occasionally or try it out that is perfectly fine. There's a wide range of skill levels and we are always happy to see new players so please come and give it a shot.

HOCKEY

MCHC plays mixed matches against other colleges on Sundays. All abilities are welcome. Our one and only practice session will be during Freshers Week so please do come along (though we can of course put on other sessions if enough people want them!). We can provide sticks and shin pads if you don't have any, but you'll need to bring your own mouthguard. Hockey at Magdalen is really good fun, very relaxed, and a great way to run off those post-Bop hangovers!

There are many more sports that are available at Magdalen which you'll be able to find out about in the Magdalen College Freshers' Fair in October!!! On top of this you can always do sports at the University level, where you can take part in more niche sports- for a full list of sports at the University follow this link: <https://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/sports-a-to-z>

SHOPPING

Magdalen is right next to Cowley – which is a really cool area with lots of independent cafes, restaurants and shops, and is definitely worth a visit (or several). There are too many favourites to mention – but the Ballroom Emporium (a vintage shop) and Peloton espresso (great study coffee shop) are two highlights! We're also on the High Street, which has some more upmarket shops and restaurants, and is also where the Covered Market can be found. The Covered Market boasts a range of amazing independent shops and stalls and is a favourite lunch spot for lots of students.

Going right at the top of the High Street brings you onto Cornmarket Street, which is home to your standard high street shops. Walking further along the High Street will bring you to the Westgate centre, a big shopping mall with your more traditional shopfronts.

There are also endless shops tucked into the nooks and crannies of Oxford – stumbling upon them is half of the fun! Scriptum is a quintessential Oxford stationary store, Unicorn is tiny shop overwhelmed with vintage clothes, and St. Phillip's Books is full of rare and second-hand books - all just a few minutes' walk from the University's main libraries.

Oxford is a great place to shop, whether you're after a small independent boutique or a big department store, and many of the main locations are within walking distance from Magdalen!

FOOD

Groceries

There are quite a few Sainsbury's around, and there is a big Tesco near Cornmarket Street and another on Cowley Road – they're each a 10–15-minute walk away and have great selection (get Nectar and Clubcard for better prices!)

In college

Magdalen serves breakfast, lunch and dinner in 'Hall', which is cheap with big portions. They usually have food available for any dietary requirements, but you can request any more specific ones beforehand and a meal will be sorted for you! For special occasions you can also book formal hall: get dressed up and enjoy a three-course meal for about £10!

Lunch and coffee

A few iconic cafés get lots of business from Magdalen students at lunchtime: Italiamo on the High Street serves amazing calzone, and the Alternative Tuck Shop (ATS) on Hollywell Street has baguettes and paninis with many fillings. Taylor's is another famous local café chain dotted around Oxford, and nothing beats Knoop's hot chocolate. The Covered Market is also a good place for lunch: Rozana's, Sasi's Thai, Georgina's, and Brothers are particular favourites. The OKB in college also has a lunch bar where you can get sandwiches, jacket potatoes, baguettes, soups and salads all for cheap (but they taste sooooo good).

Dinner

Oxford city centre has all usual chains such as Wagamama's, Pizza Express, GBK, Nando's and Itsu (also available on Deliveroo), as well as fast food's finest: not only KFC, Greggs and McDonalds, but also Wendy's, Leon and Popeyes. For special occasions or if you're looking for something upmarket head to Chiang Mai Kitchen on the High Street, Kazbar in Cowley, Pierre Victoire in Jericho or Quod for delicious food and cocktails. Cowley Road and surrounding streets are a hub for international food, including Halal restaurants and butchers – try the Caribbean food at Spiced Roots or Sri Lankan at the Coconut Tree, or for a truly unique Oxford experience, Cowley Road's Mario's Pizzeria followed by G&D's ice cream. If you're still in search of more food recommendations, I'm sure any older students would be more than happy to tell you about their personal favourites.

If you're out late...

After a night out, you'll pass a number of kebab vans on the walk back to college, including Ahmed's, recently voted the best in the country. Chips taste better in the middle of the night!

PUBS AND BARS

There are plenty of pubs in Oxford, including large chains like Wetherspoons and Greene King as well as local breweries showcasing their various ales. The Turf Tavern is an Oxford favourite with its central location, large beer garden and famous guests (including Bill Clinton and C. S. Lewis). The Half Moon is just over Magdalen bridge, stays open until 2am all week and has a great atmosphere with several smaller rooms. For some of Oxford's best pizza, head to the White Rabbit with its lovely outdoor seating area and central location. Other popular venues include the Bear, which is Oxford's oldest pub opening in the 1200s, the Crown, and the Perch which overlooks the river. The Library in Cowley is an independent pub which offers something a bit different, often hosting themed music nights.

Every college has a bar of some kind, with cheap drinks and their own unique college cocktail. St Peter's is widely regarded as one of the best college bars, but I'd strongly recommend visiting as many as you can so you can choose your personal favourite! For something slightly more upmarket, there are lots of cocktail bars scattered throughout the city. There are branches of All Bar One and The Alchemist too, and The Varsity Club on the High Street has a rooftop bar with great views across Oxford. For a more independent option, there's the Mad Hatter, an Alice In Wonderland themed cocktail bar hosting Live Jazz nights on Tuesdays, and Karaoke on Thursdays. You have to answer a riddle to get in, and the cocktails are always top quality with half price specials on event nights.

NIGHTLIFE

Oxford is not famous for its nightlife, but it should be. There are still some clubs where it's impossible not to have a good night out! The student nights are usually during the week, and this guide talks you through the best place to head on each day. You'll need to buy tickets for most club nights ([we've sorted this for you for Freshers' week](#)), which are usually sold on FIXR.

Whilst nightclubs are definitely a popular option for a night out, many students also get involved in events organised by sports societies, or other societies in general. For sport societies, these are called 'Crew Dates', where two sports teams from different colleges will meet at a bar or pub and have a social evening, but for other societies, the format of the event depends upon the society- for example many political societies tend to have weekly events where you can meet likeminded people, debate politics, and often have a drink if you want to too.

Tuesday

Plush is normally the go-to venue on a Tuesday night as it is Oxford's LGBTQ venue in Oxford, and 'Tuesgays' (organised by the LGBTQ society) usually end up here. Normally on a Tuesday, college LGBTQ+ reps host drinks in their college bar, before heading to University-wide pres at a dedicated college each week. Plush is the only club where you can't prebook and have to pay on the door! Be warned – it is a bit of a maze of underground corridors and is famous for being quite sweaty.

Wednesday

Last year, Wednesday was known for Park End at a club in town called Atik. However, since Atik shut down at the end of the year, we don't currently know what will be replacing it as the big event for Wednesday nights out, but we're sure it'll be equally as fun and popular. The 'Park End' night should now be moving to other clubs in Oxford, so keep an eye out!

Thursday

Bridge Thursday is arguably the biggest student night of the week. There are three rooms in Bridge. The first plays pop songs and remixes, though it's not too cheesy (which could be a good thing or a bad thing, depending on your taste). Also on the ground floor is the R&B room, which has a limited capacity, so you may have to queue to get in when the club is particularly busy. Upstairs – expect lots of smoke machines and techno music.

Friday

Fridays are not often big nights for students – but the club of choice would probably be Bridge, as it is still very busy on a Friday!

Saturday

Congratulations! You are coming to the college that holds the best Bops (Big Organised Parties). Bops are held in the OKB (with pres often taking place in the JCR or together with friends in each others' rooms) and are run by the "Entz" team every other Saturday. Bops are some of the best things about Oxford, especially at Magdalen! As they are held in college, they are free, and drinks are cheap as well. Additionally, every Bop has a theme (chosen by the Entz reps), and getting to see the ridiculous costumes people have managed to put together at the last minute is always so much fun. Imagine a school disco, but with alcohol... We promise they're better than they sound.

Bops tend to finish at 11:30 (or 12:30 if there's a late license), so it's quite an early finish to the night. The Entz team usually have discount codes for clubs, which is often popular for those who want to carry the night on afterwards!

Sunday

Welfare tea is usually on at 4pm on a Sunday, where you can get some free snacks and talk to our lovely welfare reps.



THE JCR COMMITTEE

The JCR committee represents the interests of undergraduate students at Magdalen. We meet weekly to discuss topics that have come up and to prepare motions for biweekly general meetings (GM). The committee runs a bit like a school student council but with money and a lot more responsibility! We're responsible for organising student-run events during term and communications between the student body and College staff. A full list of the committee can be found on our website but here are a few key roles you might be hearing a lot from during your first term at Magdalen! You can approach anyone on the committee at any time and they will be more than happy to help you out.

PRESIDENT – JANEK CZARNEK



I'm Janek, a third-year chemist here at Magdalen and your JCR president! My job involves representing all of you to the college, and getting to run the wonderful JCR committee. We've been busy working on a fun-filled Michaelmas for you full of BOPs, socials, and anything else you might want to take part in! I hope you enjoy Freshers' Week as much as we're excited to host it for you. My advice: give everything a go. Join the mailing lists of as many societies as possible, chat to as many people as you can, and walk the city you'll be calling home for the next few years. This week is going to be hectic but wonderful, and the JCR committee is on hand to help. If you ever have any questions, issues, ideas, or even if you just fancy saying 'hello' please don't hesitate to contact me either by email: jan.czarnek@magd.ox.ac.uk, or by popping up to see me in Cloisters IV.3.

VICE PRESIDENT – JENNIFER HOLLY



Hi, I'm Jennifer, a third-year reading Classics and English, and I'm JCR Vice-President. I've really enjoyed my job so far, because it gives me the chance to actually do something productive outside of my degree, with duties ranging from organising General Meetings to creating many spreadsheets for the room ballot (how rooms are chosen each year). It's less all-encompassing than the role of President (hence, no special room) but you still make an impact. You work closely with the rest of executive and end up (hopefully) with a lovely group you can rely on. It is a good bit of admin outside of your usual degree work, but I'd highly recommend the role to anyone who wants something a bit more job-like at Magdalen!

SECRETARY – HADIZA ADEBOWALE



Hi and congrats on making your offer! I'm Hadiza, a 3rd year medic. As the secretary for the JCR I'm responsible for the wonderful weekly notices, where you can find out about all sorts of events happening in college and beyond as well as the menu for the week (you'll have to keep your eyes peeled for the best dishes!) I also minute our committee and general meetings, so feel free to contact me for updates on the JCR's work throughout term. You can reach out about anything at all and outside of the JCR you'll probably find me crocheting or disappearing off to a concert!

THE WELFARE TEAM

EVE WILSMORE (she/her)



Hi, I'm Eve and I'm the JCR's Welfare Executive! This basically means that if you have a problem, question, or concern about welfare, my team and I are the ones to go to. We can help with pointing you to the Welfare Dean, Student Support, or whatever service you need, as well as providing our own welfare resources. We organise events like pre-bop pizza and the weekly (free!) welfare tea, as well as being sober reps at the bop and maintaining the free supply of condoms, lube, sanitary products and pregnancy tests in Pidge. We also run the 'Freddo fairy'—a scheme where you can send a Freddo and a note to anyone in college, and we'll post it to their pidge. Oxford can be a daunting place, but there is lots of support available from us, the college mentor, college nurse, and wider leadership team. Good luck with your first term, and enjoy!

WYN GARNER (he/him)



Hiya, I'm Wyn, a 3rd year Mathematician, and I'll be the JCR male welfare rep while you're here in your first term. My job is pretty simple; to act as a friendly face and first port of call if you have any issues around college, academic, social or health related. Help can come in many forms, whether it's just pointing you in the direction of the right college support staff, (such as our wonderful college mentor) or simply just a person to chat and vent to, whatever it is I'm more than happy to oblige. One of the best parts about the role are the events that we get to put on during term time, these range from weekly welfare teas, a great chance to catch up with mates over some snacks, or more one-off events like a poetry reading in the evening. Finally, you're likely to see me set up near a BOP, ready to help anyone who parties a little too hard... Or just to make sure everyone feels safe and welcome while there. Massive congratulations on getting an offer and I can't wait to meet you in the future!

NINA BIRD (she/her)



Hi Offer-holders! I'm Nina, a 2nd (going on 3rd yikes) year Biologist and your Female Welfare Rep! This means that I'm part of the welfare team running all of the JCR welfare provision at Magdalen, including weekly welfare teas, pre-BOP pizza, the Freddo Fairy and access to free sexual health products. As female rep, I'm also the one to confidentially reimburse anything if you need any sexual health products that we don't stock in pidge. One of my favourite parts of welfare is organising random extra events to keep the mood of the JCR up, for example on the day of writing I have a welfare alpaca visit organised! I look forward to meeting you all, and hopefully in Michaelmas I'll be able to run some more animal-themed welfare events.

CONTACT THE WELFARE TEAM -----
Email: welfare@magdjcr.co.uk
Instagram: @magdjcrwelfare
Facebook: www.facebook.com/magdalen.welfare

THE ACCESS COMMITTEE

HAJA SAM (she/her) and BRADLEY WILLIAMS (he/him)

admissions@magdjcr.co.uk



Hi Offer Holders! Congratulations on getting into the best college in all of Oxford (no bias whatsoever). You should be so proud of yourself, as we are sure you've heard before, is a huge achievement! We're Haja (she/her – 3rd year History and Politics) and Bradley (he/him – 3rd year Chemistry) and we are the JCR Access and Admissions Trustees. This means we support all students from underrepresented and non-traditional Oxford backgrounds to ensure that everyone has the best experience possible at Oxford. Coming from underrepresented backgrounds ourselves, we understand how daunting it may be starting university, especially in Oxford. We work towards expanding outreach at Magdalen by posting on our social media page (follow @discover_magdalen if you haven't already!) and identifying to students all the ways in which they can get involved in outreach, from doing tours to doing mock tutorials for prospective students. We also host events in college, from state school teas to access forums! So, if you like free food and good company, we are always here for you! Please do get in touch if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions on our email admissions@magdjcr.co.uk - we would love to hear from you and we're here to offer a sympathetic ear. We can't wait for you to join our lovely Magdalen community!

APARNA SHANKAR (she/her)



Hi everyone!! I'm Aparna, a second year human scientist and also your JCR BAME rep, which means I represent and support the people of colour in our Magdalen community. Settling into any new place is hard, but can be especially difficult as a BAME person, because even though Magdalen is an incredible family, it can be tricky at times to combat feelings of discomfort or imposter syndrome that are often compounded by hyper-awareness of racial differences here at Oxford. That's why I'm here to make sure that as students of colour, we have a community of wonderful people to fall back on if or when things get hard. I will always be here to talk, about anything at all, but will also be here to address more serious BAME welfare issues you have. Never hesitate to drop me a text, or an email, no matter how insignificant you think your issue may be (it isn't!). I'm planning some fun events to bring us together often, let me know if you have any ideas! I am always always open to suggestions. You'll also all be assigned a BAME parent - a person of colour from the year above to talk to about anything at all - they'll help you settle in and hopefully take you out for coffee, just one more friendly face around college when you're settling in. And you can always still talk to me! Hopefully, together we can make your fresher experience a little more comfortable. I can't wait to meet all of you beautiful beautiful people, sending lots and lots of love, Aparna x

TIMOTHY BIDLAKE-CORSER (he/him)

Hello everyone! My name is Tim and I'm a second-year historian here at Magdalen. I'm the JCR socio-economic officer, which basically means my job is to ensure all Magdalen students are able to access the great opportunities here at Oxford, regardless of their socio-economic background! I'll also be working closely with the other access committee reps to provide intersectional support. I'm always here to listen to and help with any concerns or questions you might have during your time at Magdalen :)



LUNA WANG (he/they)



Hi I'm Luna, LGBTQ+ officer! I'm responsible for LGBTQ+ welfare and social events in college, and managing the gender expression fund. I'm also in contact with other college LGBTQ+ reps and the university-wide LGBTQ+ society to coordinate events. Oxford can be an overwhelming place, but there's a lovely LGBTQ+ community here, and the JCR and college are here to support everyone. Do send me a message (lgbt@magdjr.co.uk) if you ever have any questions, suggestions or just for a chat!

KATY NORTH (she/her)



Hi everyone, I'm Katy, a third-year studying Spanish and Italian here. I'm your Women*'s Officer (woman* in the most inclusive sense of the word; anyone who identifies as part of the Women*'s collective), and I'm your first port of call in college to deal with individual or college-wide women*'s issues. My job is to advocate for the rights of the women* in our wonderful college, representing them in discussions, and ensuring their needs are being met on a day-to-day basis. Another great part of my role is putting on fun events to celebrate us all, and unite our Magdalen community. A highlight so far has been Galentine's letter-writing, with lots of ben's cookies and cake :) Please don't hesitate to drop me an email or stop me around college if there's anything you would like to talk about. So excited for you to start your university journey! Katy xx



SUBJECT INTRODUCTIONS

Due to the makeup of the student body in our year we may not have been able to get a subject introduction for every course. We're very sorry about this and hope that most of you will find the information you need. If your subject isn't here, please email freshersrep@magdjcr.co.uk and we'll try and put you in touch with a student in an older year who can give you some more information.

BIOCHEMISTRY

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/biochemistry/>

Hi, I'm Seb, one of the four Biochemists going into second year this year! Congratulations on your offer to study at Oxford and welcome to Magdalen! Magdalen is a beautiful college, with beautiful, peaceful grounds, and is a good location for getting to lectures and labs; the practical labs on Mansfield Road are around a 10-minute walk from college, and most lectures for first years are held in the Blakemore Lecture Theatre, which is a 15-minute walk from college.

In first year, you will have 8-10 hours of lectures a week, 1-3 classes a week, a tutorial with Rob or Dom (your interviewers), and a practical on a Friday (which usually takes 3 or 4 hours). With the rest of your time, you will need to complete work for tutorials and classes. Each week you will usually have one essay due, two or three problem sheets, and a practical write up. This may sound overwhelming, but you will have time for any extracurricular activities.

Your weekly tutorials with Rob or Dom are a great place to ask questions about anything you are unsure about from your lectures or the essay they will set you each week. They are a more informal setting than you may be used to from school; they work more like a conversation about the essay topic; the aim being to help you gain a deeper understanding of specific aspects of the course.

In the first year, the course is split up into 5 sections: Molecular (Molecular Biology), Cellular (Cell Biology), Physical (Physical Chemistry), Mechanistic (Organic Chemistry), and Quantitative (Maths and Statistics). The Physical and Mechanistic courses are in the context of biochemical systems and processes. The course in first year is broad, with the idea that you will have a good general understanding of Biochemistry at the end of first year. The Biochemistry course in first year is very interesting, the broad course ensures that you can find different aspects of Biochemistry that you find particularly interesting, this may give you an insight into where your future career could take you, and the practicals are a great way to apply your knowledge from lectures.

The textbooks that are useful for the first-year course can almost always be found in the college library, but if you would prefer your own copy, you can find them in Blackwell's book shop on Broad Street. The course isn't particularly focused around textbooks, but if you want any information on which textbooks to prioritise feel free to contact me!

The older Magdalen biochemists will organise a group event (normally dinner at Pizza Express) early in the first term, so you'll get a chance to meet all the biochemists in college and ask for any advice. I can't wait to meet you all!

BIOLOGY

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/biology/>

Congratulations on getting into Magdalen Biology! This page will give you a general overview of Biology at Oxford, and then more specifically, what you can expect from doing Biology at Magdalen.

Biology at Oxford is unique in that it starts with a 4-week orientation period, which few other courses do. This is a good opportunity to get to know Biologists from other colleges. You will likely go on a day trip to the nearby Wytham Woods, and the orientation finishes with everyone presenting a group project. After that, you will have around 8 hours of lectures a week, usually at 9am and 2pm, around 6 hours of labs, and 2/3 hours of computer/statistics/discussion classes. Compared to other subjects, the contact hours are quite heavy for Biology, but they're not unmanageable. Lectures and labs are all in the science area, which is about a 15-minute walk from college, (6 if you're late and sprint it)!! For more information on the content of the course I would recommend looking at the departments website or emailing me!

Magdalen is an incredibly beautiful college to study Biology at. Tutorials here make use of the beautiful grounds of Addisons walk and the fellows garden, where we can study different habitats including parkland, meadow, and pond. There is the most beautiful herd of fallow deer, and many bats which roost around the buildings or trees. We are lucky to have 4-5 tutors here, and sometimes tutorials will be hosted by guest tutors from other colleges. You will have one tutorial each week, for an hour, which usually you will prepare an essay for. Fear not, you will not have to write a tutorial essay in your first week here, but you will be asked to prepare a short presentation about a plant in the botanic gardens of your choice.

There will be various other sites that you will frequent regularly - Magdalen is perfectly located for labs at the botanic gardens. Magdalen students can enter the botanical garden free, with one free guest, so it's a beautiful place for a lunch break. You'll also have some Diversity of Life labs looking at fossils in the Natural History Museum. The Biology department is well located if you want to study at the Radcliffe Science Library (RSL), the Radcam, or the Bod. Towards the end of your first year, you will go on a weeklong field trip with all the Biologists to Devon.

I hope you are looking forward to Biology at Magdalen - please do send me an email if you have any queries about the course content/ tutorials etc. 😊 Emily.lamont@magd.ox.ac.uk

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/biomedical-sciences/>

Hi there! Massive congratulations on getting into Biomedical Sciences at Magdalen, it's really a wonderful course (in the best college too) and I'm sure you'll absolutely love it here :) I'll keep it short and sweet but here are some key facts about the course you might find useful:

As you likely already know, Biomedical Sciences begins quite broadly to build a nice knowledge base for further choices in your second year and beyond. We have four modules: body and cells, genes and molecules, brain and behaviour, and statistics/chemistry/physics that supplement the more biological side of the course.

Our lecture load is about 12-15 lectures per week. Depending on the topic, you may find yourself sharing lectures with the first-year medics, biochemists, experimental psychologists, or even human scientists, which is definitely a great way to meet new people! Apart from lectures, we also average around 1 practical a week. Practicals are quite relaxed (you usually fill in a practical booklet during the practical, but rarely complete formal reports or assignments) and again have a very impressive range, from your classic PCR and gel electrophoresis to neuroscience/pharmacology experiments and (optional, but highly informative) cadaver labs. The vast majority of lectures and practicals will be held in either the Medical Sciences Teaching Centre (MSTC) or the Department of Physiology, Anatomy, and Genetics (DPAG), which are both buildings within the science area on South Parks Road. It's really easy to get there - just a ~12 minute walk down Longwall Street from college.

You will usually have about 1-2 tutorials per week, each of which you will need to write an essay for. The essays are fairly short, and generally require about 1200-1500 words on a topic; first year tutorials are held with a Magdalen tutor and your Magdalen course-mates, and are a great way to consolidate your knowledge by discussing the content of your essays and recent lectures. On top of this, we also have one statistics tutorial each week, in which we look over the statistics work we've been set; these are centrally organised and therefore you'll be in groups with people from different colleges.

I hope you have a great summer and look forward to seeing you in October! If you have any other questions, or just want to talk about the course/university life in general, feel free to contact me at adam.kay@magd.ox.ac.uk.

CHEMISTRY

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/chemistry/>

First, a huge congratulations is in order – to receive an offer to study Chemistry at Magdalen is an enormous achievement. There is so much to look forward to at Magdalen: some of the most stunning architecture and grounds in Oxford, excellent tutors, and a history of academic chemistry success.

Here is some essential practical scheduling information that I would have liked to know on lectures, labs, classes, tutorials and sheets:

1. Lectures are 9-11 am Monday to Friday - while you should try to make it to most lectures, these are recorded and livestreamed, so can always be caught up on. However, take care, as not all lecture recordings are made equal.
2. Labs are twice 11-5 pm every week, with ours being on Mondays and Tuesdays. 6 hours may seem like a long time, but we often finish before then. Plenty of time to finish the lab reports and prepare for signoffs (an in-person discussion with a lab demonstrator on lab report).
3. Classes and tutorials are very similar in the sense that you must complete work beforehand to attend, these are both small group lessons/discussions. For tutorials, work must be handed in prior, and are

smaller groups of 3/4, where the discussion is more content focussed. For classes, the entire Magdalen chemistry cohort is in attendance, and the focus is question based.

4. The syllabus is split in Organic, Inorganic and Physical Chemistry. And the term is split into 2/3-week blocks covering the three branches. There is also Mathematics for Chemistry Class for which runs through the entire terms for first years. To summarize, each week, there is a Chemistry Class and Tutorial, Mathematics Class, associated sheets, two labs and ten lectures.

As you may have gathered from the previous paragraph, Chemistry is one of the most demanding courses, both in terms of contact hours and content; I will warn you, a lot of work will be done. However as daunting as it may seem, you quickly settle into a routine, and I promise there is time for more outside of chemistry. My no.1 tip is to ensure you stay on top of the work, especially in labs; content can be caught up with over the vac, but catching up on labs is more challenging.

There is no need to buy any of the textbooks on the reading list (book vouchers and Magdalen Library has a healthy collection) but make sure you're confident with A-level content. Most importantly, enjoy your summer break as much as possible, and then get ready for everything Magdalen, and Oxford, has to offer. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at thomas.macro@magd.ox.ac.uk!

CLASSICAL ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANCIENT HISTORY

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/classical-archaeology-and-ancient-history/>

Welcome to Classical Archaeology and Ancient History (CAAH), and congrats on getting into the best course in Oxford! CAAH lectures, classes and tutorials take place outside of the college, mostly in the Ioannou centre, and you will be with people from different colleges. In each term you will take two classes, including a 'core' class in Greek history in Michaelmas term and then in Roman History in Hilary. The rest of your classes are optional but, if you take Greek or Latin, you only have one essay a week instead of two. Don't be afraid of the language classes if you've never taken one- I was a complete beginner in Greek and I love it! Generally, the workload can be fairly light depending on the options you choose, and I would advise you allow 2-3 days for essay reading and writing. If you get a chance, I would highly advise going to the Greek vase lectures, as the lecturer offers sessions where you can handle the pottery. CAAH is a fun and deeply interesting course, and I'm sure you'll love it! Looking forward to meeting you in October!

CLASSICS (AND JOINT HONOURS)

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/classics-and-joint-honours/>

Hello, and welcome to Classics at Magdalen!

I'm sure you'll have heard plenty of horror stories about the Oxford workload, but it all feels a lot better if you ask your stem friends about their workload every so often. It also helps to remember that you're never expected to finish everything, just do as much as you have the capacity to do whilst keeping yourself sane and spending time with friends as well.

Depending on your previous experience of ancient languages, you'll be in one of three language streams and will have language lessons provided by the faculty every week (how many lessons per week varies based on your experience). Aside from that, your main work will be your weekly essay for your tutorials, which will probably be taken in groups of 2-4. In the first term these focus on Greek literature (Odyssey and Bacchae), and in the second you'll study Latin literature (Ovid's Metamorphoses and Catullus): usually you and your tutorial partner will alternate weekly between writing an essay and giving a presentation, so you'll find half the weeks of term a bit lighter and more manageable work wise, and won't get so overloaded with essay writing. There will be some other texts aside from the ones listed above, but those four are the main focus in the first two terms; for those terms, your main work will be split between literature-focused essays, reading/translating the set texts in the original language, and learning grammar in language lessons. In the third term you start a philosophy module of your choosing (it adds some variety to your work and I'm loving it right now), and in the first term of second year there's another special subject that you get to pick (history, philology/linguistics, that sort of thing).

As a course IA Classicist (which means I did Latin and Greek at A level), the thing I found trickiest was balancing my time between tutorial essays and translating the texts, but thankfully in classics our tutors are very understanding and supportive, so if you're struggling to keep up, don't be afraid to ask for help or advice from them with managing your time or workload. Your college parents and classicists in years above you will also always be happy to answer questions or provide help, and you can always rely on your classmates (they're your teammates, the only enemy is the exam!). Whatever happens, make sure you still see friends and make time for hobbies even when you can't finish all your work- living your life and staying sane is the best way to keep everything on track, and that one essay deadline isn't worth it. It's definitely a step up, but we're lucky to do a course that leaves time to do other things!

Congratulations on your offer- getting in at Oxford and Magdalen is such an achievement and worth a celebration!

See you in October!

ENGINEERING SCIENCE

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/engineering-science/>

Welcome to Magdalen and congratulations on your admission to study Engineering Science! Magdalen is a beautiful college with a friendly and diverse community – you will feel at home in no time.

The Engineering Science course at Oxford is structured over four years, culminating in a Master of Engineering (MEng) degree. In the first two years, you'll cover core subjects that provide the essential building blocks for all engineering disciplines. The subjects are mathematics (P1), thermodynamics and fluids (P4), structures and dynamics (P3) and electrical and information engineering (P2). From the third year onwards, you have the chance to choose from a variety of specialist options, allowing you to tailor your studies to your interests. Each week, you will have two sets of four, hour-long lectures where you will learn about two of the different subjects, which is nice because it feels like you always have some variety. You will also have a lab that lasts all day each week, on one of these above subjects and a few more such as computer science and CAD.

Expect the workload to be pretty heavy. Each week there are 2 tutorial sheets which make up the large majority of your work. These will usually take anywhere from 10-15 hours, and you will have a tutorial on each of these sheets during the week, taking about two hours. Labs last from 11-5pm one day a week, and each one requires around 1 hour of prep work. The labs are organised by the department and are an excellent opportunity to work with people from other colleges, whereas the tutorials are in college – you become very close with your fellow Magdalen engineers over time!

Balancing your time effectively can be tough but is certainly possible. The academic year is divided into three eight-week terms, with prelims (end of year exams) at the end of Trinity (the last term). I have managed to have a thriving social life, compete for Magdalen rowing, take part in music societies, and still complete my work – so can you! Don't stress about the amount of work – you will figure it out eventually – everyone does.

If you have any questions about engineering or life at oxford in general, feel free to get in touch – jamie.sills@magd.ox.ac.uk. I look forward to seeing you in October!

ENGLISH (AND JOINT HONOURS)

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/english/>

Hello and welcome to English Language and Literature at Magdalen (the best choice you could have made, by the way!)

In first term (Michaelmas) you'll take the Old English and Victorian papers. For Victorian, you'll most likely have one tutorial a week, where you'll discuss that week's essay (we're usually set 1500-2000 words). Twice a term, instead of an essay, we write presentations for a group seminar, which I actually prefer – it's a real chance to do some group discussion and hear different perspectives. Old English is taught in group classes in Michaelmas, and might seem scary or completely unreadable, but the tutors will teach you from scratch, so don't worry! In Hilary (second term), you'll start Old English tutorials. The summer reading list and guidance will ask you to do some reading for both of these papers, but don't stress yourself about reading everything. Your first Victorian essay will be less intimidating if you feel more prepared for it, but your main focus should be on settling in and taking in the new experience that uni brings, not worrying about your first piece of work!

Alongside Victorian and Old English, you'll also go to literature classes that discuss literary theory and critical approaches, replaced by language classes in Hilary. Whilst classes and tutorials happen in college rooms, lectures are uni-wide, and happen in the English Faculty building or Exam Schools. We have lots of different non-compulsory lectures, so it's exhausting to attend all of them; you'll figure out which topics are most helpful for you to continue with, as you try out different lecture series in the first few weeks of term.

The Victorian paper is replaced by Modern in Hilary, and literature classes with language, whilst Old English continues. The timing and selection for joint honours works slightly differently, as I'm sure the joint students will explain, but the whole English cohort do have some classes together, so you'll get to know everyone doing English in your year.

You'll receive some summer reading, but again, *don't burn yourself out* with this! Enjoy your holiday and well-deserved A Level success. My best tip is to figure out which areas of Victorian lit you're personally interested, be it nonsense poetry, scientific writing, melodrama, or a classic chunky Dickens novel.

Feel free to email me at madison.howarth@magd.ox.ac.uk if you have any more questions. You could also ask your college parents when you get their letter; we're all here to help you. Enjoy your holidays, and we'll see you soon!

EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/experimental-psychology/>

Hi again freshers, Hawwa here! Hope you're enjoying this handbook so far and it's getting you excited to start studying here. If you're reading this section, welcome to the wonderful land of Experimental Psychology! I've been studying it for a year now and I have absolutely no regrets about my choice of course. The content is just so fascinating and the tutorials really get me thinking. The psychology cohort at Magdalen is really small, there are only two of us in first year, me and Lina, and there are only around 8 of us undergrads here. But we found that the older years were really welcoming and supportive when we first arrived, so even though we're a small cohort, that makes us quite a close-knit community.

To tell you a little about the degree, in first year, we do three "courses", Psychology, Neurophysiology, and Statistics. Psychology is your typical psych course, what you'd expect to do as part of a psychology degree, such as developmental, social, and cognitive psychology. They are all very interesting, we are taught by some of the leading researchers in the field like Paul Azzopardi (yes I am guilty of googling my lecturers/tutors and being shocked by just how many papers they've published and citations each one has). The psychology course prelims (the exams at the end of first year) are open book and can be done in your rooms, so they're pretty decent.

Neurophysiology is more biological, it's more about brain functions and sensory pathways, such as motion, vision, etc. I really enjoyed the lecture and tutorial we had about sleep in Trinity term! I loved biology at A-level so I loved neurophys, probably more than the average psychology student here, but a lot of people do find neurophysiology really confusing and difficult, even if it is interesting so if it takes you a while to get to grips with the content, absolutely do not worry about it, sometimes you just have to go over it a few times. The exam for neurophys is closed book, so it will just be a lot of memorizing but honestly sometimes closed book is easier than open book because writing from memory is faster than looking at notes – it is advised to revise for open book exams as you would for closed book instead of neglecting it, and I would definitely agree, try to memorise as much as you can even for open book exams.

Statistics, like neurophys, is something people tend to either love or hate. If you enjoy maths and coding, you'll probably love it. The lectures are very theoretical and mathematical, while the tutorials (which we do in bigger groups than normal tutorials) involve us coding based on what we covered in the lectures. The great thing about the statistics exam is that it is also open book, so I'd definitely recommend creating a big cheat sheet from the start where you can compile all the pieces of code that you will need, which you can then use in the exam. Like neurophys, don't feel too worried if you need to go over the concepts a few times, they can take a while to make sense and that's completely fine!

We have around 4-5 lectures a week, and 3 tutorials a week (including the stats tutorial group). There are always two psychology lectures a week, on Monday and Tuesday, while lectures for neurophys and stats vary. The lectures are around a 15-20 minute walk away, we had them in the Medical Sciences Teaching Centre and the Sherrington Building this year, but a new psychology building is being built right opposite these buildings and should be opening this year (very exciting!), so all our lectures should be there this year.

Overall, I absolutely love the Experimental Psychology course and I really hope you do too! Feel free to contact me (hawwa.hussain@magd.ox.ac.uk) or Lina (lina.vergopoulos@magd.ox.ac.uk) if you have any questions about the course or even just life at Magdalen! I'm also a frep, so you'll see me around during Fresher's week as well. Congrats again on your offer and welcome to Magdalen!

FINE ART

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/fine-art/>

Congrats on your offer to study Fine Art at Magdalen! You're in for an unreasonably excellent, and rather bizarre, time. There aren't a lot of us here, but honestly, it's a benefit. It makes the first week conversations of "What are you studying?" significantly more interesting as you are a rare creature and absolutely no one understands your course. Be prepared for people to mishear and think you do finance, or be shocked that they even offer art at Oxford.

As for the course, the majority of your time is devoted to independent studio practice, just making *stuff*, guided by a meeting with your personal tutor every other week. You can talk about anything in these sessions, and you change tutors every term. The portfolio and exhibition you submit at the end of the year from this is 60% of your grade. Other than that there's History and Theory, and Anatomy. For History and Theory, you have lectures and seminars and write two 2000-word essays per term for the first two terms, and one in the first holiday. You submit one each term and the holiday one to your final exams for the year and that makes up 25% of your grade. Anatomy, for the first term, is a series of relaxed lectures and interesting activities like life drawing and random stuff involving charcoal and blindfolds (deeply bizarre but absolutely brilliant). In second term, we go to the science department and draw from the specimens there which is an unbelievably unique experience and then over the second holiday and third term we create a couple of pieces based on a prompt, and a portfolio worth 15%.

It's hard to speak to workload as you are mostly self-driven. I can say people love to make fun of the fact we have barely any lectures/ tutorials until they get to final term and have to revise under their own steam, then you get to be really smug. It is excellent to be almost entirely in control of your own time and projects, but don't worry if it takes you a while to get used to it. If you feel unsure there are plenty of lovely people to talk to at the Ruskin, and you can also ask the older years for advice. Also, feel free to email me with any questions! (phoebe.birch@magd.ox.ac.uk)

WELL DONE, GOOD LUCK AND ENJOY!

HISTORY (AND JOINT HONOURS)

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/history-and-joint-honours/>

Hey! Massive congratulations for your offer to study history, you should be so proud (especially for choosing Magdalen). I'm Tim, about to finish my first year of reading History, and we cannot wait for you to join us.

Oxford is such an incredible place to be studying history. The course itself is a flexible one with such a wide range of topics, regions, and periods to explore; in Year 1 you cover four papers including British History, European and World History, Historical Methods, and an Optional Subject. I would recommend exploring papers that are unfamiliar to you as this will allow you to really delve into what you are passionate about. There are three time periods which you are required to cover each at least once - further details around this can be found on the history faculty website, a great place for university information.

Magdalen has a fantastic history department and tutors. Tutorials are one of the most special parts of studying here. They give you the opportunity to really delve into your topic, experiment with ideas, and discuss with an expert in the field. These can definitely be daunting at times, but just know that you deserve to be here and the tutor want to hear your views. You learn so much interesting content in quite a short term and are really given space to develop your thoughts and style. The University libraries and Magdalen's Longwall library are great places to study in, with a huge range of historical resources to dig into. Examination schools are just across the road from Magdalen, this is where lectures for history take place and where you will take your future exams. It is only a three minute walk from college and is a really beautiful building.

In terms of the workload, you will likely be set three essays over a fortnight, which sounds intense but you will quickly get used to. Contact hours with tutors are quite limited so you will have time to explore the other exciting things the University and College have to offer such as the wide range of sports, societies, and social events. Each essay is focused on a brand new topic each week so you will cover so much content and really be able to delve into your special interests.

Again, huge congratulations! It is completely understandable for you to have nerves but just know that everyone feels the exact same as you and I promise that a space for you is waiting at Magdalen :)

Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns by email, timothy.bidlake-corsier@magd.ox.ac.uk.

Enjoy the holidays! We can't wait to meet you all and welcome you to the history community at Magdalen.

HISTORY AND POLITICS

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/history-and-joint-honours/>

Hello incoming HisPol undergrads,

You have probably heard this said about a thousand times now, but having your offer confirmed here is an amazing achievement, especially because Magdalen is the most applied to college in the whole university – not only are you an academic weapon, but you're one at one of the best colleges.

The History and Politics community at Magdalen is relatively small compared to other degrees. In my year, there's three of us, me (Molly), Amelia and Emily. Because of that, though, we are quite a tight community,

and you'll find that a lot of the older years are willing to support you – so feel free to reach out! We also benefit from sharing tutorials with other students doing History and PPE, so the degree is great for interacting with other people in your year.

First year requires that you study four papers – two compulsory History papers (a British or European outline paper and a historical methods paper), one compulsory paper in the 'Introduction to the Practice of Politics', and another politics-themed paper (which is a choice of the 'Introduction to the Theory of Politics' or the 'Theories of the State' History paper). There's a great range of options available in first year, and the only requirement you have throughout your whole degree is that you do one pre-1800 History outline paper. If you don't already know what you want to study, I recommend trying as varied a mix of modules as you can – the great thing about first year is that you can try different papers and figure out what it is you are interested in!

In Hilary term of first year, you also get to cosplay as a STEM undergraduate for a bit because you do a Data Analysis course for politics, where you go to coding labs every two weeks, and then produce an essay at the end. (Don't worry – the coding isn't too complicated, and it can actually be quite interesting if you get into it!)

Depending on the term, contact hours vary massively. At most, we had five lectures a week in exam schools, but most of the time this number would be a lot less. First term tends to be the busiest in terms of workload for HisPol (which sounds intimidating, but do not worry – the workload does go down massively whilst a lot of subjects tend to go up); this all varies depending on the outline paper you choose to do. The average HisPol student does 1-2 essays a week, with tutorials for each one. However, some weeks can be rougher than others in terms of workload, but if that happens, just let your tutors know – they're really understanding!

Where tutorials take place and who your tutors are can also vary quite a bit – for instance, in first term, whilst Amelia stayed in Magdalen for the British Isles paper, Emily and I had our tutorials in Keble college – it was a bit of a walk but was actually a really nice opportunity to explore different colleges and get to know Oxford more.

I also wouldn't worry about pre-reading too much – enjoy your summer as much as you can (it's so deserved!). If you wanted to do some though, I would recommend some introductory politics reading like *Patterns of Democracy* and a few chapters *Principles of Comparative Democracy*, because they are a good starting point for a lot of the politics you do throughout the year. For history, just read about the topics you find most interesting, or try to familiarise yourself with the general timeline of your first term outline paper if you haven't studied the period before (this isn't completely necessary, but it can be quite helpful!) However, whatever you decide to read, keep it light and don't stress about having learnt everything before you get here – pre-reading is only ever a helpful starting point.

That's my summary of History and Politics for you! If you have any questions about anything, do let me or any of the other HisPolers know – our emails are molly.chesterman@magd.ox.ac.uk, emily.bryan@magd.ox.ac.uk and amelia.lee@magd.ox.ac.uk. Looking forward to meeting you in October!

HELLO HUMAN SCIENTIST!!! A HUGE congratulations on getting into the best course at the best college in the universe - you should be incredibly proud of yourself. Human sciences (humsci) is a wonderful degree to study at Magdalen, as you'll be supervised by the incomparable Laura Fortunato (she probably interviewed you), who is great to talk to and super organised.

At college, you will be part of a small group of 2 or 3 humscis with whom you'll have all your tutorials and an overall uni cohort of somewhere near 30 people. Very small, I know, but it makes for a warm and friendly environment, where you can get to know everyone really well.

1st year is made up of 5 papers: Physiology and Genetics; Sociology and Demography; Society, Culture and Environment; Ecology and Evolution; Quantitative Methods. These are all assessed at the end of 1st year so don't worry about exams just yet. The tutorials you'll have will be based on these papers, and the essays you write for them will be good practice for your exams. The workload is pretty good for humsci, averaging out at about 1-2 essays and 5-8 lectures a week, which you'll quickly get used to. Tutorials will be located all over the university, some at Magdalen and some at other colleges. Lectures are generally in the sciences area on South Parks Road, or in the Pauling Centre. These are 15 and 25-minute walks away, respectively.

Aside from lectures and tutorials, you'll also have a coding class every week, and some labs (these only happen in Hilary and Trinity term).

As you can see it's a very varied course! Even if it seems overwhelming now or when you first get here, I can assure you you will settle into a good routine. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions (aparna.shankar@magd.ox.ac.uk), and get in touch with your college parents!

Look forward to meeting you in October!

LAW (JURISPRUDENCE)

Hi and welcome to Magdalen! Congratulations on your offer – it's a fantastic achievement, and we're all so excited to meet you! Law at Magdalen is an incredibly close community (we're quite well-known for it), so despite the subject's reputation for being tricky, there's no need to worry. We're all here to help, and you'll get into the swing very quickly.

There are about 10 law students every year at Magdalen. Each of us is a member of the Atkin Society - a society only for Magdalen 'lawyers'. The Society organises several events throughout the year, from moots (like a mock court, but competitive) and talks to crewdates (social evenings out) and even a Christmas dinner. I can honestly say that the society is such a fun group of amazing people.

At Magdalen, lawyers are incredibly lucky. Alongside the Atkin Society, we also have our own law library inside college. While it does make us quite a valid target for superiority complex allegations, it also gives us a great space to discuss our work and means we all have great friendship across year groups, something that most other subjects lack. It's also very useful to have all the textbooks, law reports and resources you might need in one place.

In first year you will study three subjects – Roman, Constitutional and Criminal Law – in the first two terms (Michaelmas and Hilary) then sit exams known as Law Moderations on these at the end of Hilary. You'll study one and a half subjects each term. While you'll sit exams a term earlier than other subjects, it means

you get a stress-free summer term which is definitely worth it when you get to sit on the lawns and not in the library!

We have 3 (mostly paired) tutorials every fortnight, which works out to 1.5 essays a week. Alongside this, in our first two terms we had 1-2 weekly classes in college and lectures at the law faculty throughout the week. Magdalen is only a 5-10 minute walk from the law faculty, which is very useful. The workload is pretty heavy in law, but you'll surprise yourself with how much easier it seems after just a term, and every fresher will be in the same boat.

Tutorials might seem scary, but since you'll be paired up you can always rely on each other. They're so great for your learning and you'll quickly get the hang of them. The tutors at Magdalen go above and beyond to deepen your understanding of the law and to make the tutorials fun and interesting.

Law can be a little intense, but (I might be biased) it's also one of the most interesting, varied and useful subjects you can study here. There are a lot of ways to meet law students at other colleges if you're interested, whether through the university-wide law societies or through taking part in moots, which are definitely a big favourite at Magdalen. Despite the heavy workload, there's definitely also time to go out, do things you enjoy and have fun as a fresher!

Finally, do not stress about the work or the pre-reading! You don't need to read every single book perfectly, and it's important to get some good rest and enjoy your summer. Once you get here, we'll all be more than happy to help.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to email me at zoe.rawlings@magd.ox.ac.uk

MATHEMATICS (AND JOINT HONOURS)

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/mathematics-and-joint-honours/>

Hello, I'm Iqra! I'm one of the second-year mathematicians here at Magdalen. We are a great college for Math with a tight-knit math community, amazing tutors and stunningly beautiful grounds. Congratulations on your offer – just getting to this point is no mean feat!

Maths is both a work and contact-hour intensive subject. In the first year, I found that my typical week of contact hours was divided between 10 hours lectures (9-11 am, every day of the working week) and tutorials (2-4 a week, each between 1h and 2h), and, in the first term, computational labs (an hour per week).

The remainder of your time is allocated for independent study, allowing you to complete your problem sets, usually around 5 sheets per week, each of which is meant to correspond to between 2 and 5 hours of work. However, although this may sound very intimidating, particularly in the first term, the work is very manageable, so try and use your free time. Michaelmas term is a great opportunity to meet new people and try loads of new things outside of your course – personally, I picked up rowing and sports; many people start a new sport such as football or rowing – do whatever floats your boat (or punt)! There are so many interesting societies and people out there in Oxford, do make the most of it!

Your tutorials should usually be held in College or in one of the departments and will be directed by a tutor, usually a DPhil student or a fellow of the college. You should try and complete as much of the problem sheets as possible - getting stuck is an important part of the process- but not being able to solve a sheet is

completely normal and everyone gets overwhelmed with the workload once in a while, so don't fret, the tutors are usually very accommodating.

The Woodstock math building is a 20 minute walk from College. Walking to the maths department with fellow mathematicians is a great opportunity to talk through the material (or anything, really) before starting the day, but many people also opt to bike. Although lectures are recorded, I'd strongly recommend you attend them, there is definitely a social component to them as well and building good habits (Anki or equivalent) early on will save you a lot of work. Magdalen does not set summer work in mathematics and Maths here is really built from the ground up, so you needn't prepare if you don't wish to. If you really want to get a sneak peak, the Oxford Maths Moodle features all of the lecture notes and problem sets from the previous years, so you can get a sense for what will await you in the fall.

Our college's facilities, from our JCR to the dining hall, are amazing. College is also incredibly close to amazing walks – our very own Addison's walk, university park or Christchurch meadows – and is near restaurants and supermarkets along Cowley road and High Street; and isn't far from Iffley sports grounds and the Magdalen bear pit if you're interested in sports. When you arrive, there will be plenty of opportunities to explore the different societies and clubs the university has to offer and chances to visit all the museums, galleries, and colleges dotted around the city.

We look forward to welcoming you in October! If you have any questions of any sort, not limited to only the course, feel free to reach out to me (iqra.taher@magd.ox.ac.uk) and I'll try to answer any and all of your questions!

MATHEMATICS AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/mathematics-and-joint-honours/>

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/computer-science/>

Welcome to Magdalen! Huge congratulations for making it into this amazing course and the best college in Oxford. You are probably already aware that your subject(s) are not a piece of cake, but I am here to tell you that they are absolutely manageable and to give you a brief introduction to what you will have to face in the upcoming year.

You will have 6 courses in Michaelmas (Intro to Complex Numbers, Intro to Uni Maths, Analysis I, Probability, Linear Algebra I and Function Programming), 5 courses in Hilary (Analysis II, Linear Algebra II, Groups, Imperative Programming, Continuous Mathematics and Algorithms) and only 3 courses in Trinity (Analysis III, Groups and Intro to Proof Systems). For me personally, Functional Programming and Continuous Mathematics were the hardest ones, but it varies, so you might have a different take on it. What matters is that even if you find something hard, your tutors and peers will be there to help, and you will be fine. Speaking of tutors, they are truly amazing. Most of them are experts in their fields, having experience in both examinations and research, so all your questions will be addressed.

Your typical work-week will consist of around 10 lectures, which you definitely SHOULD ATTEND, especially in the beginning of each courses, (all of them start in the morning, so every single day you are done with them by no later than 12 – which is super helpful in terms of time management), a few hours of practical programming sessions in Michaelmas and Hilary, one problem sheet per subject and one tutorial per subject. It seems like a lot, but if you just go straight to the library after the lectures and work for a couple of hours,

then you can have basically every single evening free, which is a luxury even humanities students do not often get.

Both Mathematical Institute and Computer Science department are around 20 mins away on foot, which is a little walk I personally highly recommend you take every single day – it is excellent for both physical and mental health.

I believe that is enough of this not-that-necessary information, enjoy your holiday, rest, do not worry about the course too much. There is nothing better you can do right now than just recharge your batteries. If you do have any questions, feel free to email me at praveen.balakrishnan@magd.ox.ac.uk. All of us will be happy to have you here from October, see ya!

MEDICINE

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/medicine/>

Hi Magdalen Medics! Firstly, congratulations in getting into medicine at Oxford, it is no small feat, and you should all be very proud of yourselves! We can't wait to meet you when you get here in October.

Medicine is a challenging degree, and the volume of content can be intense, but we are also very well supported, both by college tutors, lecturers and especially by the older medics (AKA us!). If you ever need any help with an essay crisis – we've all been there – or need some advice on how to prepare for exams or just need to talk to someone, please reach out, we're all more than happy to help.

Our course is split into three main sections in first year: Biochemistry and Medical Genetics – this is looking at the synthesis of biological molecules, alongside metabolism, subcellular organisation, and the basis of genetic diseases (DNA and RNA); Physiology and Pharmacology – how the tissues in the body work, the receptors and chemicals involved as well as the drugs used to impact these processes; and Organisation of the Body – mostly anatomy but also the histology of tissues, embryological development, and endocrinology. There are also a couple of smaller sections throughout the first year including: Medical Statistics (Hilary), Medical Sociology (Hilary) and Learning from Patients (throughout the year). This last section gives you an option to talk to GP and to patients about some of the conditions you have been learning about and put them into a clinical context – a helpful reminder of why we are all here.

Each week consists of around 10 hours of lectures, a couple of practicals and a Demonstration Room (DR) session, as well as potentially some online bits set by the medical school. Lectures tend to last one hour and tend to start at 9am but don't tend to go beyond 3pm. The lectures are recorded and uploaded to Canvas so that if you are ill or unable to attend a lecture or just want to go over it again you can watch it from home – we do still recommend going to every lecture though as you may otherwise fall behind quickly. Most lecturers will also upload their slides before the lecture so you can read through them beforehand. This can help with understanding the lectures but remember it's ok if at first the lectures seem quite intense because they can be, but you quickly find out what works best for you in terms of notetaking and understanding. Practical are compulsory (unless you are ill) and you must scan into them to mark your attendance. They usually happen once or twice a week and tend to be a light-hearted and fun way to apply some of the knowledge you have learned in lecture. They vary from learning histology in the microscope lab to muscle

physiology from shocking your friends with electrodes. You will also be paired up with students from other colleges, so it is a great way to meet other people and get to know the other students on your course.

There is also the DR which is where you will be able to look at prosected specimens to see what the anatomy looks like in real life as opposed to the fairly cleaned up diagrams you tend to get in lectures. It is a great chance to look at all the structures within the body and gain an awareness of where things actually are in relation to each other. We would recommend doing some preparation for these as it really helps if you already know what you are looking at but there will also be demonstrators there that will walk you through the specimen and are more than willing to answer any questions you may have and share some useful acronyms.

In the afternoons, we tend to have tutorials 2-3 times a week. You are usually asked to write an essay due in 1-2 days before the tutorial, and they are a great opportunity to solidify your knowledge on a topic and ask any questions you may have. Don't be worried if the tutorial topics don't match up perfectly with the lectures, the tutors know this! Also, if you're having a hectic week and can't get the essay done in time usually a quick email to the relevant tutor can get you an extension but try not to do this every week.

Finally, make sure you enjoy it! It can be a lot of work and sometimes it may be stressful or overwhelming but all of us current fresher medics (your college parents) are here for you and will be helping wherever we can. Remember, if you are feeling stressed or have imposter syndrome, it is normal, we are all here to support you and remember, the tutors chose you for a reason.

If you have any more questions, feel free to email me over the summer (isabella.taylor@magd.ox.ac.uk) or come and find us once you're in college. We cannot wait to meet you all and hope you are all having a good summer! If you haven't already try and find your other Magdalen medic freshers on group chats etc, that way when you move in, you're sure to have someone to find.

MODERN LANGUAGES (AND JOINT HONOURS)

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/modern-languages-and-joint-honours/>

Hello and huge congratulations on securing your place at Oxford to study Modern Foreign Languages at Magdalen. You should be so proud of yourself; the OKB and the deer park welcomes you!

A typical day as an MFL student usually involves morning lectures, followed by an afternoon tutorial or two, and then maybe some grammar/speaking classes too. You'll have both literature and language work to complete independently including essays and commentaries for literature and translations and grammar exercises for language. At A-Level or GCSE level, you will have only studied one film/book and grazed literature at a surface level whereas here, there is a huge focus on literature! Please also be assured that they do not expect you to be fluent immediately; this first year is all about ironing out the kinks in your knowledge and realising what your strengths/preferences are!

Most MFL subjects involve 3-5 tutors at any given time, each supporting different aspects of your studies—some focusing on literature, others on language. This is very different compared to other subjects who may only have just one or two tutors, but I prefer it this way because you get to experience a range of different

teaching styles. For French or German, you'll be placed into smaller groups to refine vocabulary and pronunciation, also offering a great opportunity to explore fascinating cultural topics beyond the core syllabus. In Russian and Czech for example, you may have larger grammar/speaking classes with people from all different colleges; this degree is honestly an amazing way to meet new people! Deadlines in MFL are generally manageable, often designed to take around an hour or the length that you would spend in the respective exam (though this may vary early on as you adjust). Tutors are always supportive and happy to help you settle in! Lectures take place in the Taylorian—which, I may be biased, is Oxford's finest faculty building. I would highly recommend visiting the Taylorian in the summer or as soon as you arrive; it's stunning!

First-Year Syllabus Overview:

French:

- 4 commentaries on short texts + 4 essays on set novels (spread over Michaelmas & Hilary)
- Regular language work: grammar exercises, translations, and oral classes

German:

- 4 plays/films + 4 longer texts (novellas/novels spread over Michaelmas & Hilary)
- Regular language work as above

This is the same framework for other languages such as Spanish, Russian, Czech etc but the number and variety of poems/novellas/memoirs are subject to change.

All in all, first-year MFL is an incredibly rewarding, engaging, and enjoyable course that sets you up for an amazing degree! If you have any questions at all, feel free to reach out at grace.daly@magd.ox.ac.uk.

MUSIC

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/music/>

Hi musicians! Congratulations on getting into Magdalen College! We're really looking forward to welcoming you to one of the most beautiful colleges in Oxford to study one of the best subjects :)

Music is a super interesting and thought-provoking course which helps you to develop a really broad skillset. Teaching mainly takes place in the first two terms (Michaelmas and Hilary) through the form of tutorials (small groups teaching, usually 2-3 students with a tutor), lectures and occasionally seminars. Most of the work we produce each week is for the tutorials – this often involves reading around a subject and then writing an essay which we then discuss with our tutor in the tutorial. The vast majority of tutorials tend to take place in college whilst lectures and seminars are down at the Music Faculty – only a 10-15 minute walk away through Christ Church meadows which is a lovely commute!

The syllabus is made up of a combination of compulsory and optional modules. Everyone studies SCART (Stylistic Composition, ARrangement, TTranscription), Analysis, Critical Listening, Foundations in the Study of Music and Topics. The Topics paper change every year but in my year we've looked at Musical Nationalisms, Music and the Sounds of Protest, the Schumanns and Machaut (a 14th century French composer and poet) – all of which have been really fascinating! We also choose 2 option modules too – I

ended up choosing performance and ethnomusicology but you can also pick composition, musical skills (conducting and keyboard skills) or an extended essay – there's plenty to pick from!

One of the best benefits of being a music student is accommodation – the 5 of us studying music in my year live in rooms with piano or keyboards which is great! Most of us are in an annexe on the corner of Longwall Street which is really close to college and also means we can walk out right onto the High Street. I often practice in my room (it's quite a musical house so people often tend to do this) but there are also practice rooms at the faculty that are more soundproof! As music students we also get a grant from the faculty to cover the cost of instrumental lessons.

There are so many fabulous opportunities to get involved in music beyond your degree too. Magdalen has an active Music Society and there are so many uni-wide ensembles, both auditioned and non-auditioned. (Bear in mind that auditions happen early on in term). I've really loved playing in the uni Wind Orchestra and getting involved in a period-instrument ensemble this year (The Bate Collective). There are great opportunities to perform solos in amazing venues too, such as in Christ Church cathedral or in Holywell Music Room.

Some final tips from me – try and find a bit of time to go through the harmony work you've been set in preparation for starting here as this will really help you to gear you up for SCART work which can be pretty fast-paced. I'd also recommend trying to cover some of the pre-reading list before you get here. Whilst it may seem like a lot, you're not expected to read everything and it's good to get into the practice of skimming and summarising texts – this is a skill that will really help at Oxford! But most importantly, please make sure you have a well-deserved rest this summer! Take time to do things you enjoy and make the most of this post-exams period. If you've got any questions at all please don't hesitate to get in touch – my college email address is alexander.kwon@magd.ox.ac.uk.

See you in October,
Alex

PHILOSOPHY AND MODERN LANGUAGES

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/philosophy/>

Dearest fresher,

First of all, congratulations on getting a place to study here at Magdalen – it's a great environment and you should be proud of the work it has taken to get here. I'm Prity – I study French and philosophy and I will do my best to explain how philosophy and modern languages works. It might be best to refer to the college parents or entries for other languages to see exactly what you will be studying if you aren't studying French because my entry is rather French focussed (that being what I know), though there is some language overlap. Sorry about that!

From my experience, you will study eight texts – there is no reason to needlessly inflate the wordcount here (nor would there be in any essay of course) by reciting and describing them all but do feel free to email me about them. Four of these texts will be for a commentary (a focussed analysis on a section of the text) which work as a portfolio. The other four are examined at the end of the first year. I got one piece of written work

to do every two weeks (amounting to one on each text) and a class every week. Alongside this, I had one grammar sheet (twenty sentences to translate) and two translations (French to English and vice-versa) weekly and a summary every two weeks. For all of these, I got a weekly class (usually an hour) and an oral class on top of that. Finally, there were two lectures every week in the Taylorian (the modern languages building), a fifteen-to-twenty-minute walk from Magdalen. I promise it is all manageable.

As for philosophy, there were three main topics in first year, namely ethics, logic and general philosophy. All of the lectures for these occurred in the first term – which meant three lectures a week – and that meant that there were no philosophy lectures in the second two terms. All of the lectures were in exam schools which is about five minutes from Magdalen. The first term of in-college teaching was split (with alternating weeks) between ethics and logic. In the ethics weeks I had to write an essay and, in the logic ones, I had a set of problems to complete; I then got a one-hour tutorial (a small class) on each. The second term was entirely focussed on general philosophy with an essay due each week alongside a one-hour tutorial. The third was dedicated to revision. Whilst I shared logic tutorials with people studying PPE, you might share the tutorials in the other two with people who study PPL. The philosophy course for PML was structurally identical to that for PPL and I think that the same is true for most philosophy joint honours (though some philosophy and stem options do more logic). If you're looking for more information, entries on those should be relevant to you too.

If you have any questions, please feel free to get in contact! You can email me at prity.laloux@magd.ox.ac.uk.

PHILOSOPHY, POLITICS, AND ECONOMICS

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/philosophy-politics-and-economics/>

Congratulations! You have got into Oxford, and in my unbiased opinion with the best college and subject. This is a great achievement, and you should all be proud of yourselves.

For your first year your weeks will be mostly structured around tutorials and lectures. You will have two tutorials a week on average and around nine lectures. Normally both tutorials and lectures will be an hour long but this may vary. This will leave you with lots of unstructured time compared to some other subjects. This isn't completely free since you will have tutorial work, lecture revision, and society business to do. Therefore, you can structure much of your days how you want. Whether you are working in the evening or throughout the day I recommend you keep your schedule consistent and try your best to attend regular meals in hall throughout each day.

In your first year you will have an equal amount of work for Politics, Philosophy, and Economics. The three of these are then further split into three modules each. For politics you have practice and theory of politics and Q-Step. For philosophy you have general, moral, and logic. For economics you have microeconomics, macroeconomics, and probability and statistics. Logic is a kind of mathematical language that is used to formalise arguments. Q-step is a coding project where you write an essay using data analysis.

You will be sent a reading list that will help familiarise you with each of these topics. I would recommend trying your best at some logic before you get here as if you have no idea what it is then it can be quite the

shock first thing in Michaelmas. You can look up questions for the logic manual online or try exercises in the book. Other than that, try to read as much as you can but don't get too stressed about reading everything, you don't have to.

In Michaelmas we had a Microeconomics tutorial each week and alternated between practice of politics and logic tutorials. This meant a problem sheet and an essay one week and two problem sheets the next. In Hilary we covered practice and theory of politics as well as moral and general philosophy, one tutorial from each subject each week. In Trinity we did macroeconomics each week for the first few weeks and got to choose a combination of different philosophy topics before eventually we moved on to revision sessions for all three subjects. Probability and stats classes were spread throughout Hilary and Trinity. Q-step was due week two in Trinity and we had to do the work over Easter vac. You will have collections at the start of Hilary and Trinity which are some informal exams you sit in hall and Prelims which are more serious at the end of Trinity. Prelims don't count towards your final degree grade but are still important and you have to pass them.

Over the summer, do any reading you can but mostly try to have a good time! I found reading 'The Social Contract' by Rousseau and Mill's 'On Liberty' and 'Utilitarianism' useful and would recommend doing as much of chapters 1-5 of the 'Logic Manual'.

All this work can sound somewhat intimidating but trust me when I say that if you made it this far you will be fine with the workload. Don't let the long reading list get to you and do your best to enjoy the rest of your holidays!

PHILOSOPHY, PSYCHOLOGY, AND LINGUISTICS

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/philosophy/>

Hi, I'm Tamsin, a fourth-year studying PPL (no one has done PPL after me!). Congrats for getting into Magdalen and choosing a (very) cool subject! PPL is a small, but supportive community, as there'll probably only be one or two of you at Magdalen, and only about 10-20 people studying your specific combination across the university. This also means that you'll have tutorials in other colleges, and (especially for linguistics) in the department with students from different colleges.

I've included some information about each of the subjects, but I only study Psychology and Linguistics, so the information about philosophy comes from my college dad, so I cannot confirm how accurate it'll be for you, but hopefully it'll provide a rough guide of what your first year will look like. As a quick aside, your exams will be at the end of trinity term.

Philosophy:

There's three parts to philosophy in first year: General Philosophy, Moral Philosophy and Logic. Lectures are in exam schools, which is a 5-7 minute walk away. General philosophy is with one of the three philosophy tutors, Bernhard, Paul or Ralph, all of whom are lovely. Moral philosophy (probably with Paul Elbourne) focuses on John Stuart Mills Utilitarianism- so it may be useful to take a read through this beforehand, or look at Jeremy Kaplan's lectures on youtube. Logic (also likely with Bernhard) involves doing problem sheets which you'll go over in tutorials. You'll take 2 papers: general philosophy and moral philosophy & logic (both are closed book, in person, 3 hours long).

Linguistics:

The linguistics prelims (first year) course can be divided into 4 main parts: general linguistics (GL) (divided into general linguistics, historical linguistics, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics) phonetics & phonology (P&P) (think IPA), syntax & morphology (S&M) (think syntax trees) and semantics & pragmatics (S&P). You'll probably have one tutor for S&M and S&P, one tutor for P&P and one tutor for GL, as well as an organising tutor. In Michaelmas term, you'll have 4 lectures and 2 tutorials on GL; 8 lectures and 8 tutorials on P&P; 8 lectures and 4 tutorials on syntax and 4 lectures and 2 tutorials on morphology, and 8 lectures on historical linguistics. In Hilary term, you'll have 8 lectures and 4 tutorials on S&P, 8 lectures and 4 tutorials on syntax and 8 lectures and 8 tutorials on P&P. In trinity term, you'll have 4 lectures each on psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics and 6 tutorials on GL. You'll take 2 papers (linguistic analysis and linguistic theory), both closed book, in person and 3 hours long. For each tutorial, you'll have to do a problem sheet or essay- these can be tricky but if you don't understand something you'll go over it in the tutorial so there's no need to worry. Lectures are in the Taylorian Institute (a 20 minute walk from Magdalen), and tutorials are generally in department buildings.

Psychology:

There are 5 modules: development, perception (Michaelmas), psychobiology, social psychology (Hilary) and cognition (Trinity). You'll have 3 tutorials and 6 lectures for each module, and will probably have the same tutor (who's based in Magdalen, so you'll have psychology tutorials in Magdalen) for all of the modules. You'll have an essay to do per tutorial. Lectures are in the medical sciences teaching centre, which is about a 15 minute walk from Magdalen. You'll take one 3 hour long open book online exam.

Statistics:

You'll take your two chosen subjects along with statistics. This involves 6 lectures and 6 tutorials in the first 2 terms, and 3 lectures and 3 tutorials in trinity term. Statistics mainly consists of learning some basic code in python, as well as learning how to interpret the results of this code. It may sound challenging, but from my experience you pick it up quite quickly and if you're struggling your tutor is always there to help. You'll have some coding exercises to do before the tutorial each week. Lectures are a 15 minute walk from magdalen, and tutorials are a 25 minute walk away. There is one 3 hour, open book, online exam for stats.

I know this is a lot of information to take in, so please email me (tamsin.white@magd.ox.ac.uk) if you have any questions or want some more details on what you'll study. PPL is intense (especially in Michaelmas), but incredibly interesting and rewarding, so most importantly stay on track and please don't be afraid to reach out for help.

PHYSICS

<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/considering-magdalen/undergraduate-study/courses/physics/>

Dear Physics Freshers,

Congratulations not only on making it to Oxford, but getting into it's best college! Physics is a very rewarding and exciting degree, and although it can sometimes be tough, if you've made it this far then I have no doubt that you're capable!

Below, you'll find the lecture timetable for an average week in Michaelmas 2024, giving you an idea of what your schedule will be like. We had approximately 11 lectures a week during all of Michaelmas and during most weeks in Hilary, and in Trinity term this year lectures were wrapped up by week 4. All the lectures are recorded and able to be accessed online. For Michaelmas and Hilary you will also have 1 lab a week (the timetable shows two days, but you will only have to do one of them!) where you will spend the day doing experimental work, usually with one of your fellow Magdalen physicists as a lab partner. The lecture buildings and the labs are a 15-20 minute walk from college, or a 10 minute speed-walk if you're running a bit late (not talking from experience...)

5	Monday	Special Relativity	Vectors & Matrices	Calculus	Circuit Theory	
5	Tuesday	Special Relativity	Vectors & Matrices	Calculus	Circuit Theory	
5	Wednesday	Calculus				
5	Thursday	Vectors & Matrices	Practicals	Practicals	Practicals	13.00 - 17.00 Practicals
5	Friday	Vectors & Matrices	Practicals	Practicals	Practicals	13.00 - 17.00 Practicals

Alongside lectures and labs you will have tutorials in college. This year, we had about three tutorials a week. In each tutorial ('tute') we go over problem sheets which are set the week before; the tutorials are an opportunity to get feedback on your work and ask any questions you have about the course material. I encourage you to use your tutors and your peers as much as you can during tutorials, as they can be integral in building/deepening your understanding of the material. Most of your tutorials will be take 60-90 minutes in groups of 2-3, though one of our weekly tutes this year was a longer "class" consisting of all the first year Magdalen physicists. The weekly workload will likely feel overwhelming to begin with, and this is completely normal! It can take a while to find your rhythm, but alot of first year is about figuring out how to manage your time and your work - and don't hesitate to ask any of the older physicists/tutors for advice.

The first-year maths topics include: Complex numbers, Vectors and Matrices, Calculus, Ordinary Differential Equations, Normal Modes and the Wave Equation, Multiple Integrals and Vector Calculus. The first-year physics topics include: Classical Mechanics, Special Relativity, Circuit Theory, Optics, Electromagnetism. There are also short options, of which you will choose one in Trinity term. Our short options this year were Quantum Ideas, Astrophysics and Functions of a Complex Variable.

If you feel like trying to read ahead on anything - though this isn't necessary - then I would recommend the 'Vectors and Matrices' (also known as Linear Algebra) part of the course, which is an important mathematical course taught in Michaelmas that underpins alot of what you do later on in the year. It may feel quite different from other maths topics that you would have learnt in school, but if you have a proper understanding of it you will be well set up for other parts of the course. However, you will also have plenty of time during the term and during the holidays to learn and review content, so there's no need to stress about "getting ahead" (I know that I certainly didn't!)

Finally, there are a small number of computing practicals that you will do during Michaelmas and Hilary, which consist of coding projects done in MATLAB. If you are interested, it may be worth looking into the basics of using MATLAB before coming, though again you will have time to get to grips with it during the year.

In conclusion, I hope that you're excited to start studying physics here! I found Oxford to be quite different from my school experience, but for me it has been very interesting and fulfilling. Enjoy the rest of your

summer, and try not to stress too much about work - I think that all of us felt a bit out of our depth when we started but I hope that you can prove to yourself that you're meant to be here, because you are! If you have any questions or would just like to say hello, don't hesitate to send me an email at albert.knights@magd.ox.ac.uk. Looking forward to meeting you all!

- Albert (one of last years physics freshers)



Thank you for reading this handbook - I hope it has helped!

Text: Hawwa Hussain

Images: Adam Grassly and Kian Burgess

All information is correct as of May 2025 .