



Lincoln College Freshers' Guide

INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS



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Welcome!

Lincoln College is thrilled to have you and we hope that your experience at Oxford will be the most unforgettable times of your life! As vibrant and exciting as life at Oxford can be, there are bits and bobs that you have to hammer out before you can truly feel at home. Hopefully, this guide will provide you with all that you need to know!

University Resources



The University offers a comprehensive set of resources to ensure that all students, either from home or other corners of the world, have a smooth transition to life at Oxford.

These can be found on the University website at the following links:

1. [University welcome page](#)
2. [New students](#)
3. [International students](#)
4. [Coronavirus updates](#)

If you need any assistance with navigating the University-wide or College-based systems, feel free to reach out to Lincoln College MCR/JCR members, admin staff or your supervisors. You can contact Lincoln College [here](#).



Food

WHERE TO FILL YOUR TUMMIES IN OXFORD?

Lincoln College is extremely lucky to be located in the centre of Oxford so there are lots of options available for all dietary preferences and budgets. From the Covered Market to Westgate, there's always something new to discover!

As first-years, you won't have much opportunity to cook as there is no kitchen access. Your grocery shopping will hence be limited to snacks, fruits and amenities. This is a fantastic opportunity to try some of the classic British snacks that you might not be able to find in your home country!

Supermarkets

There are six main sites for you to do your shopping efficiently and reliably. Their distances to Lincoln College, as well as the price and quality of the goods that they stock vary. Fret not as there is always an option for every budget!

(\$) Tesco / Tesco Express

Location: Magdalen Street

Distance: 4-minute walk from Lincoln

Good for: Everyday groceries, amenities, snacks (there's always something on sale)

It is the biggest supermarket in Oxford's centre and very popular across the UK.

Pro tip: Get a Tesco Card to accumulate points and get occasional cash vouchers.

The Tesco logo is displayed in a white circle. It consists of the word "TESCO" in red, bold, uppercase letters, with three blue horizontal lines underneath.

(\$\$) Sainsbury's

Location: Westgate Shopping Centre; Magdalen Street (next to Tesco); St. Aldate's

Distance: 7-minute walk from Lincoln to Westgate; 4-minute walk to the other two branches

Good for: They are open for longer hours than Tesco on Sunday (many shops close early on this day, beware!); the variety is similar but with slightly higher prices

Pro tip: These chains often coordinate their discounts so there will rarely be overlapping items on discount

The Sainsbury's logo is displayed in a dark green circle. It consists of the word "Sainsbury's" in orange, lowercase letters.

**(\$\$) The Co-operative**

Location: Walton St. in Jericho

Distance: 15-minute walk from Lincoln

Good for: Ethically traded and sourced food; they also run donation pledges so shopping here helps the community at large

**(\$\$\$) Marks & Spencer**

Location: Queen St. (beside Westgate)

Distance: 5-minute walk from Lincoln

Good for: When you want to treat yourself to some premium snacks, meal kits, or wines.

Pro tip: Get the Sparks card to stand a chance to get your shopping for free (it actually works!); the home section offers good value-for-money amenities

General tips for grocery shopping

- Loose fruits and vegetables need to be weighed at the cashier
- You pack your own groceries (so just go to the self-checkout counters)
- Aubergines are eggplants and courgettes are zucchinis
- BYOB: Bring Your Own Bags because plastic bags are not free (save the planet!)
- Loyalty cards are mostly free so just sign up for them!
- Go to Tesco to experience the Tescalator (top 10 most cinematic locations in Oxford)

Specialty Stores

If you are craving some artisanal goods or just a taste of home, these specialty produce stores will definitely hit the spot!



Covered Market

Location: Right outside Lincoln

Distance: Hop over in a minute

Opening times: 8am-5:30pm

Good for: Freshest local produce available, flowers, fashion, ice cream, artisanal cheeses, butcher, seafood and specialty cuisines

Recommendations: iScream, Sofi de France, Brown's Cafe, Oxford Cheese Company



Gloucester Green Market

Location: Gloucester Green Square

Distance: 7-minute walk from Lincoln

Opening times: Weds & Thurs 9am-4pm;

Sats 10am-5pm

Good for: International food booths, fresh fruits and veggies, flowers, vintage jewelleryes, artisanal cheeses and chocolates



Seoul Plaza

Location: Cowley Rd

Distance: 15-minute walk from Lincoln

Opening times: 10am-8pm

Good for: Asian specialty produce (not limited to Korean produce despite the name) such as pot noodles, mochi, condiments

Pro tip: There are many amazing restaurants like Oli's Thai in Cowley so kill two birds with one stone by going there for dinner and heading to Seoul Plaza for other snacks afterwards



Euro Supermarket

Location: Cowley Rd

Distance: 18-minute walk from Lincoln

Opening times: 9am-9pm

Good for: Eastern European produce such as Semechki, Milka chocolates and Polish sausages



Il Principe

Location: Cowley Rd

Distance: 17-minute walk from Lincoln

Opening times: 10am-3pm, 5pm-10pm (closed on Mondays and Tuesdays)

Good for: Italian deli meats, cheeses, wines and other gourmet foods from Italy

Pro tip: The owner is also serving traditional Italian dishes!



Household items

WHERE TO FIND HOUSEHOLD AMENITIES?

There are many options when it comes to shopping for household amenities. From bedsheets to hair-dryers and hangers, we have recommendations for everything!

Sometimes shopping online or buying second-hand will save you more cash than you can imagine, so don't limit yourself to physical stores.

Online Shopping

The **College Lodge** and the friendly porters will take care of any small or medium-sized parcels that you order. Helpfully, the **Lodge** will also send you emails to notify you that your parcel has arrived. However, be mindful that the Lodge is not able to handle large parcels due to space limitations so please refrain from buying anything bigger than a mini fridge online (It is also not fun to haul a chonky box around)

Amazon

It is a ubiquitous option for homeware items and pretty much everything you could possibly want. Amazon also offers a **6-month free Amazon Prime subscription** for UK students so if you and your friends take turns exploiting it, you could have a Prime subscription for your whole degree! The delivery and return process is also very streamlined and hiccups are incredibly rare. We are not promoting Amazon but their value proposition is undeniable, especially when budgets are tight.



Argos

This retailer is **affordable and big on homeware**. The shopping is done online and you proceed to the store to pick up your order when it is ready or you can also opt for delivery. The biggest advantage to shopping at Argos is that many items are available for immediate collection and the **collection point is in the city centre** (New Inn St, a 7-minute walk from Lincoln College. If you need anything urgently, this is the go-to option.



M&S Home

If you are looking for some quality bedding, kitchenware, or even pyjamas, M&S offers a good price-to-quality ratio for a wide range of products. Don't forget about the Sparks card and the possibility of getting your shopping for free.



John Lewis

If you happened to come across some family inheritance or received a shady wire transfer from a prince somewhere, you can consider splashing out at John Lewis. They stock products from most international luxury brands which spans across the four floors of their Westgate store. We cannot, in good conscience, recommend anything there because our measly student budget has created a strong repulsion force away from John Lewis and that most things there do not offer high price-to-quality ratio.



Primark; H&M Home; NEXT

These remain the best option if you are looking for a stopgap solution or budget homeware.

Although their ethical standards

are questionable, the prices are pretty unbeatable (even when compared to Amazon). Primark is the cheapest and NEXT is the slightly more premium option. Interestingly, if you are looking to adorn your room with some of the British icons, Primark has collaborations with brands like Greggs so you can have a pillow case with sausage rolls on it.

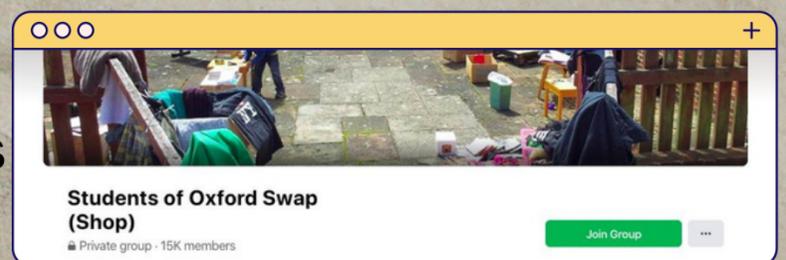


Alternatives

Buying second-hand items here is a fantastic option in Oxford especially since the stock of items available is pretty consistent with students constantly moving in and out of their residences. This also reduces waste and the strain on your wallet, so do consider it if you are not too fussy.

Students for Swap

This is a **Facebook** group that is **exclusive to Oxford students**.



It is one of the most efficient channels to quickly sell and buy items (both used and unused) since meet-ups can be easily arranged. However, we recommend choosing a public place, such as on a big street, to make the transaction **safely**. DO NOT enter a stranger's residences alone, especially if the deal seems too good to be true.

SU Swap Shop

This is the second-hand items shop run by Oxford's Student



Union (which is different from the Oxford Union). Similar to the Facebook group above, you can find amazing deals here, but the difference is that you have to visit their shop at Worcester St. to find out what is in stock.

Oxfam

This is one of the biggest charity shop chains across the



UK, one of which is conveniently located just in front of College (although this one only stocks books). At other branches, you can find a wide range of pre-loved items from clothes to kitchenware to vintage cameras! You can also shop online and arrange for pick up or delivery.



Laundry

WHERE TO GET LAUNDRY DONE IN OXFORD?

This is probably your first time living away from the comforts of home and having to do all your laundry on your own. The process might seem daunting especially when you realise that you have run out of clean briefs halfway through the week.

This guide will give you some tips on how to manage your laundry and where to get them done.

Circuit Laundry

All College-provided accommodation have on-site laundry, but this is an outsourced service from Circuit Laundry. Prices are as follows (£1.50 for washing, £1.70 for drying) and each machine can take 1-2 weeks worth of clothes. The activation process for the machines can be quite iffy but this is generally how it is done:

1. Purchase a **laundry card** from the Porters' Lodge (if you are living in Lincoln House / Stc 15) OR download the **Circuit Laundry App** if you are living in College.
2. Top up your laundry card [here](#) or pay on the app. Select "**University of Oxford**" as the accommodation provider if you are using the site (note that you have to also use the top-up machines in the laundry rooms to complete the top-up process)
3. Follow the instructions in the Laundry Rooms to use the laundry machines (pro tip: do your laundry in the middle of the night when no one else is using the machines)

Dry-cleaners & OxWash

Being at Oxford means that you will most likely attend a ball, dinner, or formal function at some point. If alcohol or partying is involved (happens more often than you'd expect), your formal clothing might end up in a less-than-presentable state. Knowing where the **nearest and cheapest** dry-cleaning service will definitely come in handy!

Regency Dry Cleaners / Wash & Sew are our favourites.

OxWash is the eco-friendly option. You can also track your cleaning order and arrange for delivery on their app!



Essential Services

WHERE TO GET IMPORTANT SERVICES IN OXFORD?

Administrative work might grow to become the bane of your existence because they are such a time sink. Hopefully, the recommendations below will help you streamline the process and save some valuable time which could be spent on truly enjoying Oxford.

Do keep note of all the services that you have signed up for and their contact methods as you don't want to be scrambling for important information when you might require their assistance urgently.

Opening a Bank Account

General Tips

- Visit the bank **as soon as possible** to make an appointment to open a bank account.
- However, this might not be possible as the following banks require you to **complete an online form** first before you can head to a branch to complete the registration. (NatWest, Barclays, HSBC)
- Bring **sufficient cash for at least a month**; it won't take a month to open a bank account but you might run into some issues verifying your identity and address.
- Use **Neobank** services like Revolut, Wise, Monzo etc. to get access to online banking faster than a classic bank account. These banks also offer **real time exchange rates** for most major international currencies

BANKS LISTED IN DESCENDING ORDER FOR THEIR EASE OF OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT

EASIEST



LLOYDS BANK



NatWest



HSBC



Santander



BARCLAYS

HARDEST

Essential documents before you can register:

- *Accommodation agreement* (licence to occupy)
- You will need to download an *enrolment certificate* from the student self-service portal.
- *Passport* and its photocopies (or EU national identity card)

Pro tip:

- If you already have an HSBC account at home, you can easily open one in the UK through that account

Bank Account Types

- **Current accounts**

- These are "service accounts" which do not offer any interest for the deposited balance
- Withdrawals within the UK are free but a administrative fee of £5 - £7 for overseas withdrawals (the same fee is charged for accepting any transfers from overseas accounts)

- **Basic current accounts**

- These are a limited form of current accounts
- You won't receive a cheque book so, where possible, open a current account

- **Savings accounts**

- Basic interest is paid for the deposited balance
- However, the funds deposited here have to be transferred to a current account to be accessible
- Only open these if you plan to deposit large enough amounts of money as they often charge an annual fee

* Do note that some banks have more rigorous AML/KYC rules so do bring along a letter that explains your source(s) of funding if you are depositing large amounts of money

Telecommunications

General Tips

- Most Telco companies will require you to have a **UK bank account** to conclude a contract
- **Temporary SIM cards** are available for purchase but they offer **poor value** for their prices
- Using Neobanks like Revolut, Wise and Monzo will allow you to purchase SIM cards more easily, **bypassing** the need for a **UK bank account**

Types of contracts

- **SIM - only:** These offer the best value if you only need mobile data and call minutes. Contracts can be renewable monthly or require a minimum lock-in period. Make sure your device is not region-locked to utilise this
- **Fixed contract:** Higher monthly fees are charged but these go towards lowering the price of your next phone. Only opt for these if you plan on purchasing your next phone in the UK (note the high VAT charged in the UK)

BANKS LISTED IN DESCENDING ORDER FOR THEIR EASE OF OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT

BEST VALUE



by  **vodafone**

Simple, honest mobile
SMARTY

LEBARA

giffgaff



WORST VALUE

* Note that the companies on the left are SIM-only; shop around to see if there are better deals

Medical Care

General Tips

- If your condition does not require urgent care / examination, it is generally easier to obtain help from the College Nurse
- If you need to have any medical documents certified for DSA, exam arrangements, or any other administrative purpose, do arrange an appointment early in advance as the waitlist to see a GP is usually quite long
- Always have the number for the GP, Oxford University Hospitals and College Porters on hand in case of any emergency

What kind of medical care are you entitled to?

If you are an EU/EEA student, you will be entitled to medical care under the NHS if you have evidence showing that you were a resident in the UK prior to 31st Dec 2020. Students from outside the EU are also entitled to NHS treatment as part of the fees paid for the student visa (if the full-time course lasts for 6 months or more).

How to register for medical care

King Edward Medical Centre is the designated GP for Lincoln College so please register [here](#). The practice is just a few minutes away from Lincoln but note that you have to make an appointment before being able to see the GP. While you don't need COVID-19 vaccines to enter the UK, it is highly recommended that you get your shots in, if you haven't already done so, to protect both yourself and your friends. You can be easily vaccinated at most pharmacies.



COVID-19

HOW IS OXFORD RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC?

Oxford has a comprehensive range of arrangements available for students to weather any illness or hardship suffered as a result of COVID-19. Rest assured that your safety and comfort is the University and College's priority, and they have had two years of experience dealing with the pandemic.

However, as restrictions are easing across the country, many of the preventive measures are becoming optional, so do check with your tutors and tutorial-mates on what they are comfortable with.

Overall, COVID-19 will likely not impact the smoothness of your academic year.

General Advice

- If you have had a close contact with someone who has contracted COVID-19, do monitor your condition for subsequent few days and use ART tests should you develop any symptoms
- ART test kits are not provided by the University anymore but it is highly recommended to test before attending any event and test weekly to ensure everyone's safety
- If you happen to test positive for COVID-19, please inform your tutors so that they can make the appropriate arrangements for your academic work (tutorials, work deadlines etc.); inform your close-contacts as well

Where to get updates?

The University: [here](#) Lincoln College: [here](#)

If you need any more information

Should you have any specific questions or need some special arrangement, there are a variety of people that you can get in touch with. We are all here to help you stay safe, healthy and comfortable.

- **Academic administrators** are always really helpful and happy to aid with your academic arrangement. They can be reached at lincaa@lincoln.ox.ac.uk
- **International representatives** (us) can always help you relay any specific concern or request that you have to the college. Contact: zirui.chen@lincoln.ox.ac.uk
- **College parents** are always here to help and make the transition to University life as stress-free as possible!



Freshers' Week

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR FIRST FEW WEEKS

As with any new environment, it could be very nerve-wracking to have to adapt to the different culture and people, while balancing your academic work.

Freshers' Week is here to help you ease that process. To help you make the most of it, here are a few tips that you can use!

At the end of the day (or the first few weeks), you will come to realise that everyone is in the same boat, so go out there and make loads of friends and memories!

General Advice

Drinking

There is no shortage of club/drinking events in your Freshers' Week but do not feel pressured to attend these as there are always alternatives that are equally fun. Alcohol may be a social lubricant for some but rest assured that you will find your crowd with or without it (since many people don't remember much after these drinking events anyways).

Freshers' Flu

Freshers' flu is the absolute worst virus out there (for students) and could be coughing from it for months. Taking preventive measures like flu vaccines could lower your risk of contracting it but stock up on some flu medication to aid your recovery when it inevitably hits.

Consent Workshops

This is one of the most important workshops to attend. University life can be quite messy so it is crucial to know where boundaries lie. Especially as you'll be meeting people from all walks of life and culture, appreciating these differences and how they modulate verbal and non-verbal conversation cues is an absolute necessity.

Commitment

There is an unending list of activities that you can attend at Oxford, especially during Freshers' Week. While getting as wide a range of exposure as possible is great, note that you will need time to yourself and your studies. Do not over-commit and think that you can catch up on your academic work. (this is a recipe for disaster and I can testify to it)

Matriculation



The quirky beauty of Oxford

If you were not aware, Oxford is a place filled with traditions that can be traced back to centuries prior. You are walking the same steps that some of the world's greatest minds have walked. It is a profound feeling that is unmatched and unique to Oxford (ahem, we don't talk about the other side).

Matriculation is one of these traditions. As you dress up in your sub-fusc and walk into the Sheldonian Theatre, you will truly feel like you've stepped into the doors of Oxford. After an opening address, you will be bombarded with a barrage of latin, which constitutes the hallowed speech that will formally mark your matriculation into Oxford.

Photos

Many people will be rushing to take photos at the Radcliffe Camera so you might want to consider taking photos at the Bodleian Libraries or many of the historical sites around Oxford. These are memories that you will look fondly upon in a few years so now is not the time to be shy!

Meeting New People



International

Oxford has truly attracted people from all walks of life and from all corners of the world. Not only will you have the chance to navigate the idiosyncracies of British culture, you'll also be thrown into a melting pot of cultures. Keeping your mind open to new ideas and perspectives will be key in negotiating some of these cultural differences.

However, rest assured that it is this multiculturalism that keeps the Oxford community strong and the Oxford experience unique. Take this once in a lifetime opportunity to make friends from all around the world and you might get invited to visit their home countries during the holidays.

Respect

This should come as no surprise to you; respecting others is the key to building the foundation for lifelong friendships. Regardless of where everyone is from, we are all human,, and we all share similar emotions and vulnerabilities. There is always more room for love and compassion so

POSITIVE VIBES ONLY

End of Term

Term Lengths

The term dates listed on the Oxford University website spans the **Monday of 1st week** to the **Friday of 8th week**. However, most people will move in to Oxford in 0th week (the week before the start of term). If and when you have public examinations (faculty-wide examinations as opposed to college-based collections), your **exams can extend till 9th week** (the week after the official end of term).

There are two things that you need to take note. Firstly, book your vacation residences with the College early, as the accommodations manager will not be aware of your examination schedules. Having examinations in 9th week does not automatically qualify you for vacation residence to book it early to secure your accommodation. Secondly, ask your tutors for the examination schedules so that you know when to book your flights back home.

Facebook

One last thing. Unlike most other people our age, students at Oxford use Facebook on a daily basis to announce events, communicate information to their society members, etc. Make sure that you have your Facebook account set up and that you have cleansed it of all the embarrassing posts from when you were younger. (or don't, then everyone can know how quirky you are) Facebook will also be a great way to reach out to other Lincolmites or seniors in general in case you have any questions about how to study for certain subjects or how much commitment a certain society requires.



Final Words

THESE WILL BE THE
MOST MEMORABLE
YEARS OF YOUR LIFE

Oxford is truly special. The people you'll meet, the events you'll attend and the memories that you'll forge will not only be formative, but transformative.

Your experience is, in the fullest sense, what you make of it -- radical freedom, as Satre would say. The wealth of opportunities available enables you to craft your own journey and tailor it to your interests. What is required from you is but an open heart and a curious mind.

We look forward to meeting all the international freshers, and do look out for the upcoming events that you can attend to meet other international students!

If you have any other questions, you can reach me at zirui.chen@lincoln.ox.ac.uk

