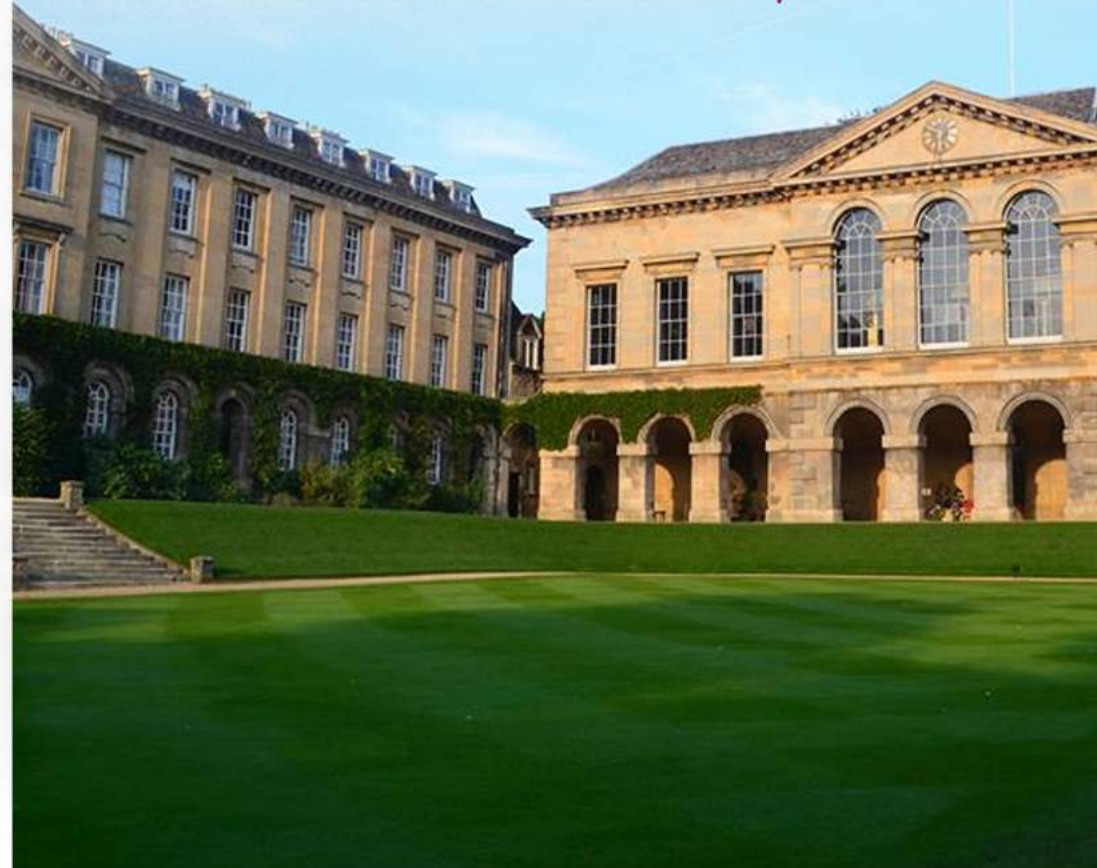




WORCESTER COLLEGE OXFORD

The Alternative Prospectus





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Welcome to Worcester!

Worcester College is a wonderful place to visit, live in and study at. It's comfortable, welcoming and so beautiful. We're very proud of our gorgeous and expansive college grounds and all the facilities in College, so please let us show you around!



"As a piece of simple decorative and beautiful art, [Worcester College Chapel] is perfect" – Oscar Wilde



The Hall, where we eat casual meals every day and formal meals four times a week



The JCR, where we currently play table tennis and host film nights, Motions Meetings, Tea @ 3 and other JCR events



The very photogenic spiral staircase leads up to the libraries. Worcester College has two libraries: the beautiful and historic Lower Library which contains the older collections and the modern Upper Library with the rest of the books.



Some of the facilities around College, including IT rooms, laundry rooms, cricket pavilion and the gym

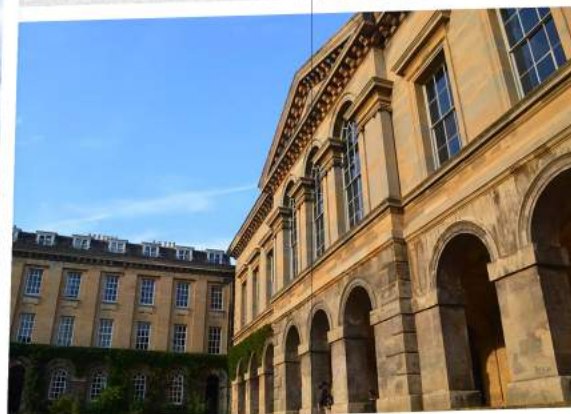




Our main quad is a unique blend of medieval cottages surviving from the predecessor college, Gloucester College, and eighteenth-century neo-classical buildings, including the Provost's Lodgings. The Provost, leading Shakespeare scholar Sir Jonathan Bate, and his wife, celebrated biographer Lady Bate, frequently invite students into their lovely home for cocktails, brunches, dinners and meetings with their lovely dog Coco.



Worcester has some of the most beautiful grounds in Oxford, with expansive green space and a stunning lake. Our wonderful team of gardeners works year round to make College look lovely in all seasons, and Worcester has won the Oxford in Bloom College Award every year it has entered.



The JCR

Hello prospective pals! Welcome to Worcester – my name is Hannah, and I have the dual role of being both a 2nd-year English student and Worcester's current JCR President (2016/2017). JCR stands for the Junior Common Room, and a number of things fall under this name. First of all there's the actual Common Room, which acts as a get together area for Worcester students. Because Oxford doesn't have its own central venue, each college has its own, of which all students become a member. There are comfy chairs, a table tennis set and a new TV and DVD player – creating a place for students to relax and get involved in all-college events. We are currently working towards getting step-free access to the JCR to make sure everyone can participate. The 420 undergraduate members of the student body who live in and around college and use the JCR common room are also known as the JCR.



A JCR Committee is elected to organise everything students have to do, from organising the bops (the big college parties in the bar) and sports teams, to putting on plays and arts festivals; from organising careers fairs and fancy dinners to making sure everyone is having a great time. At Worcester our committee places a huge emphasis on Equal Opportunities, Welfare and improving Access. We are unbelievably committed to actively supporting minority groups and expanding our minority community – every single one of you is so so welcome in our family, and our incredible welfare team is here to surround you with love once you arrive.

The JCR Committee consists of the President, Vice-President/Treasurer, Secretary, Welfare Reps, Access Rep, Ethnic and Religious Minorities Rep, Gender Equality Rep, Disabilities Rep, LGBTQIA+ Rep, International Students Rep, Charities Rep, Entz reps, IT rep, Environment and Ethics Rep, Freshers Rep, OUSU (Oxford Uni Student Union) Rep, Food and Bar Rep, Sports Rep, Housing Rep, Editor of the

Woosta Source (the student run college magazine) and an Arts rep. (All of these people are super passionate, kind and invaluable in making our voices heard and making Worcester home.)

We have JCR meetings four times a term (with free pizza!) where students can bring up motions with ideas for how to make Worcester JCR a better place, though

this is, of course, difficult in such a fantastic college! There is also a college bar for JCR use, not only for parties or watching sport on the big screen, but also for relaxing with a drink, playing darts or pool and chatting to pals. The best thing about the JCR is that everyone knows everyone else. You'll walk around college recognising nearly everyone you bump into. Worcester honestly has the best atmosphere; everyone is so lovely and chatty and it's an amazing place to make life-long pals over your three or four years here.

Essentially, Worcester JCR is wonderful. SO wonderful.

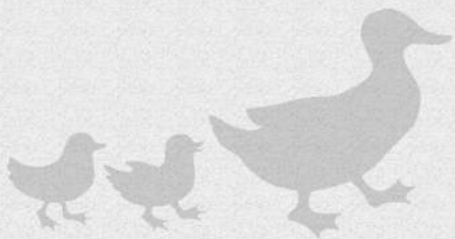
We can't wait to meet you and welcome you in!



Worcester students contentedly munching pizza at motions meeting

I would completely recommend applying to Worcester for the beautiful grounds, amazing accommodation and the incredible support of the JCR.





Equality

The JCR of Worcester College is committed to creating an environment which is inclusive of all its students – regardless of ethnicity, sexuality, gender, disability, religion or background. We are proud to have a college which is inclusive of all, and as part of our commitment to maintaining such an environment, members of the JCR are elected to represent different minority groups in college. We have a Gender Equality Rep, Disabilities Rep, LGBTQIA+ Rep, International and Overseas students Rep and an Ethnic and Religious Minorities Rep to ensure that minority groups are always given a voice within committee meetings and more widely in college, and that equality issues are always brought to attention. This shows that we are moving in the right direction and we are dedicated to further promoting a welcoming atmosphere and striving towards a fair distribution.



Tim, 2nd year
English student

from
Saints Peter
and Paul
College,
Cheshire

We urge you not to be deterred by things you might read about Oxford. Its typical representation in the media suggests that it is a place welcoming only to those from wealthy backgrounds and private schools. We can confidently assure you, however, that this is not the case. In recent years, there has been a higher ratio of state school students to

The general atmosphere at Worcester is one of welcomeness, support, and community, and this atmosphere exists in all areas of college life – be it the broad and diverse student body, the academic and administrative staff, or the informal and formal support systems that are in place to ensure students' welfare.

private school students – of the UK students accepted in 2015, 62% came from the State sector and 38% from the Independent sector.

As well as being regularly misrepresented by the media, many state schools misinform their students about Oxbridge in general. Recent reports published have suggested that around half of state school secondary teachers would not advise their bright students to apply to Oxford or Cambridge – most commonly due to 'not thinking they would get in' and 'not thinking they would be happy there'. This is an incredibly worrying statistic, founded on completely misguided claims. Oxford (and indeed Cambridge) want the best and brightest students, and the best and brightest students are not limited to those in independent schools (given that they make up only 7% of students in the UK). It is true that some schools offer far more guidance for things like interviews than others, but ultimately the interviews are there to test potential, and tutors normally give you exercises which don't allow one candidate to have an advantage in this respect. Moreover, to say that state school students simply wouldn't be happy at Oxford is a complete myth. It is just not true that almost half of Oxford's students coming from non-fee paying schools are unhappy at this university; many previously state-schooled students are massively engaged with access, and encouraging more people with backgrounds like theirs to come here. There is something for absolutely everyone to be found here. Regardless of whether you apply to Worcester, Oxford, or even Cambridge at all, please don't decide not to because of misleading information like this. If you think that Oxford is the place and has the course for you, then just go for it!



Lucy, 2nd year
French and Italian
student

from
Runshaw
College,
Lancashire

As student Access Rep for this year, I couldn't be more proud to be part of Worcester, whose students and staff are increasingly committed to the issue of outreach.



Student Thoughts on Worcester



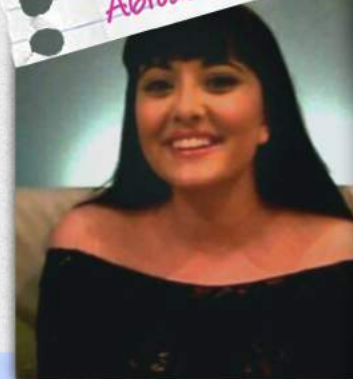
Femi, 1st year
English student

"Never experienced such a concentrated number of great people. Such a vibe."

I owe Worcester easily the best years of my life so far and I genuinely couldn't have asked for a more open, inclusive and fun environment.



Rosie, 3rd year
French and
Italian
student



Olivia, 3rd year
Law with Year
Abroad student

"Whoever you are and whatever you like there'll be something for you and Worcesterites will welcome you and make you feel at home. P.S. we also have great formal dinners!"

Dan, 2nd year
Economics and
Management student



There is such a wide variety of people at Worcester from all walks of life - you never stop meeting interesting people who are passionate about interesting things!



Rebekah, 2nd
year Modern
and Ancient
History student

Worcester is the best college. Good vibes, stunning grounds, fun people.

"Worcester is my home at Oxford, not just accommodation. The college feels like a family. Everyone is so friendly and there are enough students so you can always find someone with similar hobbies but it's small enough that I know everyone in my year."



Anna, 6th
year
Medicine
student

Ellie, 3rd year
Psychology and
Linguistics student



"It sounds so cliché but everyone in college becomes like family and I think that's something which will take a long time to fade, and is probably the best part of Worcester - the amazing college spirit you become a part of!"

George, 2nd
year Maths
student



The best thing about Worcester is the really accepting and friendly community. I know it sounds cheesy but it's true.

Student Profiles

Livia



Hi, I'm Livia and I'm a second year studying French and Linguistics. A typical day for me involves getting up at 5.20am (yes, every day) to go rowing, as I row for the

University Lightweights team. When I get back from rowing around 9am I usually do some admin tasks for the college boat club, like scheduling training or organising events. I then head to a French literature tutorial and discuss the essays that my tutorial partner and I have written. Then I head to library to fit in some work, go to a lecture, and then head to evening rowing training. In the evenings there are

usually a lot of social things on – a trip to the theatre, having a meal or drinks with friends, birthday parties, cheese and wine nights... always something to do! Or occasionally a late night in the library trying to finish an essay, which is less fun. It is totally possible to find a good work-life balance, even if it means occasionally sacrificing some sleep!

Natasha

Hey! I'm a third year Experimental Psychology student.

My week generally consists of a few lectures, labs and tutorials but when I'm not working (a lot of the time) I love chilling in Worcester grounds or playing croquet (badly) or punting in Trinity term. The cafés in Oxford are also great for catching up with friends from other colleges or a change of scenery when I'm working. I also love playing sport like college netball and hockey, and tennis for uni which is a great way to meet people outside the Worcester bubble. Probably too much of my time is spent clubbing (Worcester is very conveniently located!) and crewdates ('dinners' with other sports teams) are a fun way to pre on a Wednesday night. Of course going to lectures and tutorials hungover/still drunk the next day is all part of the experience!



Hi, my name is Kareem and I'm a first year studying Maths and Computer Science. My typical academic week consists of 10 lectures, 5 problem sheets, 5 tutorials and a 2-hour computing lab session. Outside of academia, I am on the Junior Committee of the Afro-Caribbean Society and the Chairman of the Cross Curricular Society. I know it seems hectic, but it really is possible to fit it all in. I don't really have a fixed routine, because you never know what the week is going to throw at you, but generally I go to lectures in the morning and then work through problem sheets and have tutorials in the afternoon. Then I try to get committee work done in the evening: in the ACS, I organise cultural and social events, so that usually involves contacting keynote speakers or club patrons. As for the CCS, I make sure that all of the student speakers are adequately prepared, and then chair the discussion during our weekly meetings. Amidst all this chaos, I've still made some amazing friends and manage to make it to football matches, dinners, club nights, and concerts every week whilst retaining some of my sanity!

Kareem



I am currently a third year physics student at Worcester College. I have really enjoyed the course so far and it has been great to live in a college full of such wonderful people. A typical week of physics includes around 10 hours of lectures, 7 hours of labs and two or three tutorials. Most of the work set by our tutors is problem-based which really helps to test understanding and to get through lots of material in a short space of time. One of the great things about studying here is the enthusiasm of students and tutors for the subject as well as the support we are given.

Amy



Beyond degree work there are so many events and societies to get involved with. There is a huge range in standard and time commitment so there really is something to suit everyone. I've played netball for Worcester this year, spending more time with the girls at Worcester who are lovely – a nice break at Thursday lunchtime. My main interest outside of physics is music. I have played violin at chamber concerts within Worcester as well as university-wide orchestras like OUPhil and OUSinf. It has also been a great way to meet people from different colleges and if you get a group of friends and some music together there are so many places to put on concerts.

Interviews

The interview process can seem quite daunting. However, it is best seen as an exciting opportunity to engage with a tutor who is an expert in their field about a subject you find interesting! The tutors are there to try and get the absolute best out of you, and decide whether you would be well suited to the tutorial-style teaching at Oxford. Coming to Oxford for your interview is also a great way for you to figure out if this is the right place for you! Most candidates will have at least two interviews, lasting around twenty minutes each; on some occasions, students will be required to go to an interview at another college. It is important never to make assumptions about your offer based on whether you are asked elsewhere for an interview or not – further interviews can happen for any number of reasons, and does not mean you haven't got in! During the admissions period, a dedicated team of student volunteers will be around to make tea and chat to you in the JCR – there will always be a friendly face around to help.

The application and interview process can be a bit stressful. My experience was unusual compared to most. I put down a different college as my choice on my UCAS form; the first news I heard from that college was that I had been reallocated to another for my interviews. I spent three days at that second college and had three interviews. On my final day, I was pooled to Worcester to have an additional two interviews here. When offers came out I got two letters through my door: one a rejection from the first college that interviewed me, and the other an offer from Worcester! Needless to say, I am delighted with Worcester and I wouldn't want to be anywhere else. My experience at interview is testimony to the fact that whatever college you could end up at, you'll be happy there.

Tom, 1st year
Chemistry
student

I study History and German so I had one interview for each subject at Worcester. For my German interview, I was given a poem about 15 minutes before the interview started and had time to read it through. The interviewers then asked questions about the poem and we translated some sections of it. I found it quite challenging as I had never done anything like that before but they really didn't expect me to understand the whole poem, just to have the ability to cope with something unknown and be able to work through it with their help. There were also some questions

about my personal statement and about five minutes of speaking German. I honestly thought the interview had gone terribly and that there was no chance of me getting a place which just shows that you shouldn't panic afterwards if you

think it went badly as you never know what they're looking for! My History interview was quite different and was entirely focused on my personal statement and the essay I had submitted. I was also interviewed at two other colleges but still got my place at Worcester, so it's not necessarily a bad sign if you're interviewed elsewhere. All the students who were assisting during the interview process were so lovely and helpful and I loved the atmosphere at Worcester so it really confirmed to me that I had applied to the right college! My top tips for interviews would be not to panic, don't let other people stress you with their horrific interview stories and don't read too much into what happens – you don't know what the other candidates are like or what the college is looking for.

Although many people worry about the interviews, they're really not too bad! I had two interviews when I was here, one in the morning, one in the afternoon, and in between there was plenty of time to eat (free!) meals and socialise with other candidates and current students. The tutors are really on your side in the interviews – they want to have a conversation about a topic everyone in the room is interested in. It's not about what you already know, but rather how you think through unfamiliar problems and material. The interview can essentially be thought of as a mini tutorial, and the tutors simply want to see that you are keen, that you can be taught, and that you fit well with the tutorial system.

Dan, 2nd year
Economics and
Management student

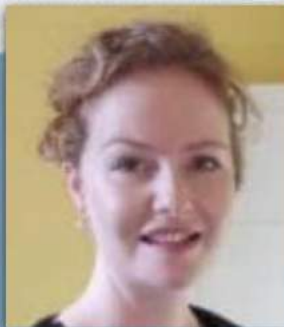
What Tutors Want

To get to know the tutors at Worcester and find out what they're really looking for in their students, we asked Dr. Kate Tunstall and Dr. J. Scott Scullion a few questions...

Kate Tunstall

Subject/Speciality: French Language and Literature
Education: Comprehensive School in South London, then Cambridge and Harvard.

Hobbies: Travelling; art exhibitions, theatre, movies, and fashion.



What do you look for in a student?

An open mind; an ability to build on what you know in order to take it to the next level; intellectual resourcefulness and curiosity; careful attention to detail; commitment to and enjoyment of the subject.

What is unique about your subject at Worcester?

The whole Modern Languages Team at Worcester is superb. You will be taught by tutors who are committed to diversity and equality, and who are both world-class researchers and deeply invested in teaching and learning. On the most practical level, Worcester is also located just two minutes away from the Modern Languages Faculty and Library, which is good for those 9AM lectures.

What one piece of advice would you give to potential candidates?

Go for it! You definitely won't get a place if you don't apply! Of course, we'll ask you difficult questions in the interview, we have to; but you don't have to get them right; you just have to be willing to give it a go and persevere. And we're trying to get the best out of you with our questions, to make you show us what you're really capable of faced with a difficult task. And so even if you don't get a place, our hope is that the test and the interview will be things that will help you with your A level studies. What have you really got to lose?

What's your favourite thing about your job?

Easy! Working with young people.

Scott Scullion

Subject/Speciality: Classics, with special interests in Greek religion and Greek literature, particularly tragedy.

Education: BA in Classics from Trinity College, University of Toronto; PhD in Classical Philology from Harvard University.

Hobbies: Reading literature, listening to classical music.



What do you look for in a student?

Above all for potential: inclination and ability to think incisively, subtly, and creatively about the subject and to participate in fruitful dialogue about it.

What is unique about your subject at Worcester?

Our diversity of backgrounds and enthusiasms on the one hand, and our strong sense of community on the other.

What one piece of advice would you give to potential candidates?

Relax – try to relax – and be yourself. In interviews we're not trying to discover what you don't know yet, and we're not measuring you against some fixed, abstract ideal. We're trying to get a sense of what you're capable of at your best, and whether tutorial teaching is something you'd thrive on, so listen hard to the questions, throw yourself into the dialogue, contribute and react, be exploratory, think aloud.

What's your favourite thing about your job?

That we get to know our pupils – and they get to know us – not just as talking heads on this or that tutorial topic, but as rounded individuals of varying experience developing in our own ways, intellectually and otherwise. It's an education in itself, and it can also help us understand our subject.

Tutorials

Like most other universities, teaching for the majority of courses will include lectures and seminars; however, the thing that makes Oxford and Cambridge unique is the 'tutorial' system.

Tutorials are a sit-down between usually one to three students and a tutor for an hour or occasionally more. For humanities students, tutorials tend to be an academic conversation where you chat about the essay you've written that week, using it as a basis for further discussion about the ideas or topics involved. For a science or maths subject, you would be going through a problem sheet, discussing the finer points of a particular problem, or guided towards a derivation of something extra that pops neatly out of what you've been doing. You'll have between one and three tutorials per week, usually one for each problem set or essay. As long as you have done the work and understand what's going on, they tend to be a very enjoyable way to learn, with a tutor who will often be an expert within their field. They encourage you to think critically, push your knowledge further and develop your interests within your subject.

Isabel, 2nd year
German and
Philosophy student



The tutors are incredibly attentive. There's a real sense that the tutors want to help and support you; there's also a certain measure of freedom (particularly as a second year) – if there's a topic you like, you can run with it and still seek help every step of the way.

The tutors at Worcester were wonderful, and always eager to discuss their subject. Each one treated me as a serious scholar in my own right.

Ezra, Junior Year
Abroad English
student



Sean, 2nd
year
Chemistry
student



Tutorials are like a sit down between two to three students and a tutor for an hour or occasionally more. For humanities students, tutorials tend to be an academic conversation where you chat about the essay you've written that week, using it as a basis for further discussion about the ideas or topics involved. For a science or maths subject, you would be going through a problem sheet, discussing the finer points of a particular problem, or guided towards a derivation of something extra that pops neatly out of what you've

been doing. You'll have between one and three tutorials per week, usually one for each problem set or essay. As long as you have done the work and understand what's going on, they tend to be a very enjoyable way to learn, with a tutor who will often be an expert within their field. They encourage you to think critically, push your knowledge further and develop your interests within your subjects.



Example tutorial (image from
University of Oxford website)

Accommodation

At Worcester, we are lucky enough to be guaranteed accommodation for three years of our degree. This means for three-year courses (or four-year courses with a year abroad), you will always be able to live within college.

- Most of the accommodation is on site, with a few accommodation blocks in neighbouring streets.

- 70% of accommodation is ensuite with shared kitchen facilities.

- Rooms range from those in 15th-century buildings to those built or refurbished in the last few years, and rents reflect differences in size, access to kitchen and en-suite; grade 1 is the cheapest, and 6 the most expensive.

- Every bedroom has a bed, a desk, a desk chair, an "easy" chair, wardrobes, a desk lamp, and a telephone (which allows free calls within the university network). Most rooms also have a small refrigerator.

- All rooms have WiFi access.

- You will need to bring your own bedding, and kitchen supplies if you have a kitchen.

- Storage space is offered to international students over the vacation.

- Rents are payable termly in advance via battels (college accounts).

The kitchens at Worcester are amazing – they make great social spaces for parties and group dinners!



Camilla, 2nd year
Classics student



1st year: All Worcester students live in college for their first year. You can make a request for a particular grade of room, according to your budget, and other special requests for rooms may be made

if you have an illness or a disability. First year rooms are dotted around college, in main quad, pump quad, over by the sports fields, and over by Nuffield Lawn, and there is a wide variety of rooms. Most will have kitchen and ensuite, some of the older (arguably more beautiful) rooms have shared bathrooms and no kitchen facilities (but you get cheaper food in hall!)

2nd & 3rd year: In second and third years, you may "ballot" for preferred rooms, quite often as a group (normally 4-6). Accommodation for second year is all on site and for third year there is some accommodation in neighbouring streets.

Food and Drink

Worcester has an extremely good and well-deserved reputation for the quality and reasonable price of its food. Unlike some other colleges, no money is charged upfront for meals – you simply pay as you go, topping up your Bod card online so that you are only charged for what you actually eat. While much of Worcester's accommodation includes kitchens, hall is still a popular option for many students who want a delicious meal without going to the effort to make it themselves. From Monday through to Saturday, breakfast is served from 8-10, lunch from 12-2 and dinner from 5.30-6.30; on Sundays, a very popular brunch is served from 11-2. Those who do not have a kitchen of their own are offered a subsidy on their evening meal. There is always a creative and delicious vegetarian option available too – recently Worcester was voted the second best college in Oxford for vegetarian food!



Four times a week, Worcester has 'formal hall', which is a sit-down, three-course meal served to you. You would normally wear smart dress, as well as your gown over the top. It is cheaper than any three-course meal you could buy from a restaurant at £5-£6 per formal (prices may change in future years) and

Worcester has dank hall food. Formal hall is actually so bomb.

Becky, 2nd year
Ancient and Modern
History student

probably more delicious! You can bring your own drinks and guests with you if you wish, and it is a great and relatively inexpensive way to enjoy a nice meal with friends. We book into formal using the online system, and

the formals you go to are charged to your battels (college accounts). You can follow the Worcester College Kitchen on Instagram to look at some of the delicious creations we are lucky enough to try at formal!



Victorious quiz winners, with their roast dinner ingredients

with some friends. You may either pay in cash or using the same card you would to pay for dinner in hall. There is also a quiz every few weeks on a Sunday evening, where you have the chance to win yourself all the food for a roast dinner!



Heirloom Tomato, Roasted Beetroot and Feta Salad - starter from formal hall, taken from Worcester College Kitchen Instagram



Pot roast chicken with chorizo and garlic beans, recent formal hall main course - taken from Worcester College Kitchen Instagram

After formal (or before a night out), the bar is a popular hang-out spot for Worcesterites. It is located in Pump Quad, and run by our barman Colin. The college BOPs will normally take place here, but it is regularly full of students, whether that's just to have a sit down and relax or to enjoy a pint (or the infamous Worcester sting)



Welfare

Although there is an enormous amount of fun stuff going on in Oxford, there will always be times where we need some support. If talking to a friend or relative about it isn't enough, then Worcester has many support structures in place to help you if you need it. Firstly we have the Peer Supporters – a group of students trained to help others around them – and within the more formal college structures there are your tutors and the Dean Team. Support is always at hand if you should ever need it, and positive mental health and self-care is regularly encouraged within Worcester.



Interview with Tom Gardiner, a Peer Supporter and former Male Welfare Rep

Who are the peer supporters/welfare reps? Who do they help and why?

The peer supporters are a group of students in Oxford, both undergraduate and graduate that are trained by the professional counsellors at the University Counselling Service and our job is twofold. One responsibility is to run drop-in sessions to support our fellow peers with whatever welfare concern they might have, however trivial they might think it is. And also to do that informally outside of drop in sessions, we're

always willing to talk to people whenever. And then the second part is being to help host events, such as ice skating, throughout the year to promote a positive moral and a nice welfare ethos around college. We help anyone that wants our help. Peer supporters have applied for those positions and are chosen on the basis of that application, whereas the welfare reps are chosen like other JCR committee positions, so they write a manifesto, go along to hustings and get elected. All welfare reps are peer support trained, and on top of being a peer supporter, the welfare reps are involved in talking to other members of college like the Dean Team, whether to organise certain events, or to think about how college deals with welfare as a network.

What other forms of support are there for students in Oxford?

I think Oxford is really good in the welfare provisions. I mentioned earlier the University counselling service. Any student can go to get support from them. In

college there's the dean team, including the Dean himself and the Junior Deans. Worcester college also has its own professional counsellor. There's also things like the Disability Advice Service and the Student Advice Service, so there are other bodies around. The good thing about the peer support service as well, is that in addition to the peer supporters in college, there are extra peer support networks throughout the university; there are the Rainbow peers for LGBTQ students and a peer support network for BME students. You don't have to see a peer supporter in your college, and that applies to anyone, and that's what's good about having a university wide peer support network.

What have you learnt from being a peer supporter and/or male welfare rep?

Doing the peer support training was really awesome, I didn't think it'd be nearly as good as it was. I think the fact that we're trained by counsellors was hugely advantageous. I think the ability to listen in a way that makes the person you're speaking to feel comfortable and at ease. Learning to ask the right questions, that before I hadn't really thought about, not in a scripted way. Taking the time to think about what's been said without jumping in. And for welfare rep, in addition to peer support, hosting events like T@3, ice skating, film nights – this meant I got to meet people around college I wouldn't have otherwise met. And also the ability to negotiate with college, who are very reasonable and co-operative, which is great.

What are the peer-support drop ins?

Worcester has a weekly peer support session, run by a different peer supporter each week. The idea is that there's a room in college, with tea and biscuits, and it's just a time for a chat, to be honest, so you can talk to a peer supporter about how things are going, for example for freshers, how settling in is going, and how the experience can be made better, and also for more specific welfare concerns too. It's really just a chance to have a confidential one-on-one chat with someone trained by the counselling service in a welfare capacity. It's completely confidential, once the door is closed other people know not to come in. So it's a good way to have a relatively low-level, not intimidating chat with a fellow student.





What is T@3?

T@3 is fantastic, I love T@3. Its Worcester's weekly welfare tea, so once every week the two welfare reps get tea and snacks. It's a time to come and have a catch up with friends from various years – I think that's one of the nicest things about it, that all years go. It's a good chance to meet people. And catch up with people you don't see so often, play a bit of table tennis. And get some free food, fantastic.



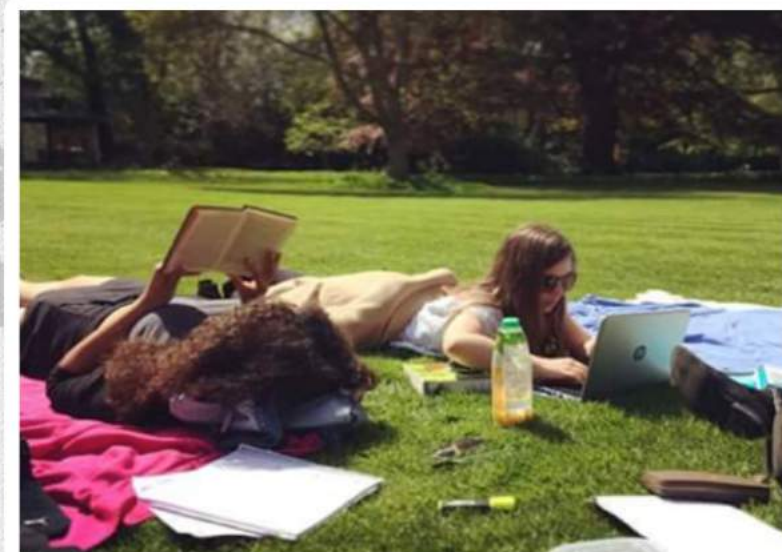
What are your favourite things about Worcester?

I'll start with the soppy one – I think the community in Worcester is awesome. I've had so much fun in the last three years, and I've got another three to go, which is exciting. Hosting events like T@3 and going to other Entz events, like the Garden party and bops, you can tell everyone just gets along so well. And everyone looks after each other as well, I've found, it's not just about having lots of fun, when someone's not having fun and is feeling a bit down, there's such a great support network, and that's not just across the welfare roles, it's across the whole college. Having events like T@3 encourage that positive welfare morale, to make sure people look after each other. And on a more material basis, I definitely think Worcester is the prettiest college by far. I know that everyone thinks their college is the best, but I do actually think Worcester is the best, though I don't expect that to actually have any weight. The gardens are lovely. All the freshers are going to have a lovely time, chilling out on Nuffield lawn in the summer.



*Isabel, 2nd year
German and
Philosophy student*

The welfare system is ever-present around college, and even those not involved in welfare will go out of their way to help you or generally brighten your day (viz. Worcester Compliments and anonymous pidge fairies!)



Yes, Oxford is affordable!

Money can be a huge concern for students, particularly if you are from a family with a low household income. At Oxford, we are lucky enough to have an incredibly generous system of financial support available for those who need it, and Worcester has its own sets of grants on offer too.

University financial information:

The university makes available numerous non-repayable bursaries to help with living costs and to enable students from lower income households to make the most of their time at Oxford. Up to date information can be found at www.ox.ac.uk/funding.

Scholarships and Prizes:

Worcester awards a scholarship of £200 p.a. or an Exhibition of £120 p.a. to students who achieve First Class or Distinction in University examinations. Prizes are also awarded for good work in College exams, for academic progress, and for outstanding practical work.

Book Grant:

A generous book allowance of £100, spread over the length of your course, helps you buy key literature for your course, whilst the college library can buy books otherwise unavailable to you.



Clare, 2nd year PPE student, travelled and volunteered in Peru and Bolivia with the help of the travel grant



Travel Grants:

Grants are available for vacation travel and academic work outside Oxford.

I used my Travel Grant money to spend three weeks WWOOFing (volunteering on an organic farm) on Les Jardins De Coursiana, which are beautiful botanic gardens situated deep in the south of France. I lived with the family that own the gardens, and worked for them in return for my accommodation and food. My jobs included weeding, collecting fruit, making jam and sorbet, and serving customers on reception. I absolutely loved every aspect of this trip, as it not only gave me a huge confidence boost in my French speaking, but was also just a fantastic life experience that I will remember for a very long time!

Katie, 2nd year
French and History
student



Financial Hardship:

Apart from the normal student loan (available to UK students), there are two main sources of funding available to students affected by unforeseen financial difficulties: grants from the Access to Learning Fund, and College and University hardship funds. If you would like more information about these funds, contact our Hardship Officer, Dr Conrad Leyser, on conrad.leyser@worc.ox.ac.uk

Funding for International Students:

Some awards are available for overseas undergraduate students. For details, go to <https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/international-students>



Cheryl and Hannah, 2nd year English students, visited Copenhagen with the help of the travel grant

At Oxford part-time jobs aren't generally allowed during term time, with the exception of some in College, for example at the college bar. However, there are many opportunities for vacation work in Oxford. You can stay on as a scout, helping clean bedrooms and kitchens; you could participate in the UNIQ+ summer schools; you could get involved with the Oxford and Cambridge Student Conferences, or help with other summer conferences at Worcester. With so much financial help available, the expenses of life at Oxford shouldn't be unmanageable, leaving you free to focus on your course, and there are many opportunities for paid work here during the vacation should money ever become an issue.

Coming from Abroad

It's enough of a dramatic change adapting to university and living independently for the first time, but international students may have different concerns – not just with practical matters, but the transition to living and studying in a completely new country and using a different language. We asked International and Overseas Students Rep Ana Olendraru a few questions about her experience transitioning to Oxford from home, to give you her perspective on many common worries international students have.

What worried you the most about applying to Worcester as an international student?

I was worried about quite a few things before coming here, however small and easy to solve some of those things were, which I think is normal seeing as moving to a new country and (for most people) a new system of education can be really daunting. Some of the things were practical, such as opening a bank account, getting a SIM card, buying plug adaptors, or fitting the necessary amount of stuff in the limited suitcase-space. But I think the thing that most worried me was whether I was going to fit in and adapt to life in the UK and

at Worcester, which involved a lot of new things, and how I would manage being so far from home in a place I didn't know well at all.

What helped you overcome those worries?

On the practical side, every worry I had was easily solved in the first few weeks. I either got advice from International students already at Worcester or figured things out together with other International students in the same position, or by asking UK students about the way certain things worked. As for the fitting in, Worcester is a really welcoming college and people were extremely friendly very early on, so adapting and making friends turned out to be really easy. Besides, most of the things relating to work at Oxford are new to all students, not just Internationals, so everyone is always very supportive and happy to help each other out!



What was your experience of Worcester like in the first few weeks?

As is the case for most people, my first few weeks were somewhat stressful. This was because of being faced with a new and fast-paced approach to work, and due to the additional worry of having to settle into a new country. However, it was a lot less stressful than it could have been. As I said above, everyone is extremely supportive and helpful as far as the work is concerned, and there were international students around who could relate to the other issues. UK students were also very eager to help when it came to anything related to the culture, or to life in the country, which made me feel welcome and more at home than I thought I would feel. This help from both the UK and the International communities made everything feel manageable, much easier and less daunting.

What was the transition to being taught in English like?

I wasn't educated in English in school, and suddenly doing absolutely everything in English, including having to work using the language was really different from what I was used to. It was a bit daunting and I had a little bit of trouble in the first week, finding it easier to think about issues in my native language, and then having to translate that in English in writing, which took some time and effort. But, because of how fast-paced Oxford is, I got used to the language a lot quicker than I initially thought I would, as did every other International student I've spoken to. So, although it does seem a bit scary, the language should definitely not be a source of major worry, as it's a lot easier to get used to than it may seem at first!

American Visiting Students

A JYA Perspective from Ezra, JYA English student

Before I came to Worcester I was worried that I would feel like an academic tourist, tolerated but generally ignored by the student body. Luckily, Worcester does a really wonderful job of incorporating JYAs, from completely enrolling each JYA, Bod Card and all, to giving each JYA a college family (Hi Moms!). Worcester students will be excited to talk to you, and they will generally reach out. College families are a good entry point – you'll have two student advisors who introduce you to college life. From there, be sure to get in touch with tutors, they'll usually love it if you show an interest and want to meet outside of your tute. Otherwise, enjoy! Most of the libraries are gorgeous, the tutes are a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and everyone wants you to succeed. Also, if you're feeling homesick, there are plenty of familiar US burger joints around town!

Getting involved!

Charities



Hi, I'm Rosemary, current Worcester Charities' Rep. Being involved with charities at Worcester has been a huge and really enjoyable part of my experience here – I hope this page will give you a taste of all of the opportunities to volunteer and fundraise for charities at Worcester and in Oxford. Every year, we vote on which charities to support during the year. Over the course of the year a range of charity events are held, which this year have included:

- **Great Worcester Bake-Off** – timed to coincide with the Great British Bake Off final, but better because we could eat the cakes!
- **Christmas fair** – a chance to wind down and get into the festive mood just before the end of term.
- **Charity dinner**
- **Charity auction** – in which we auctioned prizes donated by local businesses and 'promises' donated by Worcester students, including a hand-painted portrait, home-cooked cakes and even magic lessons!
- **Cake sales**
- **'Worc in the Park'** – a music festival held outside with music, Pimms and **on a good day** sunshine!
- **A student-produced Worcester calendar and Christmas cards** featuring photos taken in and around Worcester.

There's a chance for everyone to get involved – helping to organise events, helping out on the day or just coming along and having fun! There are also events aimed at discussion and promoting awareness, including talks and information nights run by speakers from charities.



The amazing chocolate dream baked by college's very own Elizabeth Smith, for the 'guess the name of the cake' game!



A Worcester crest gingerbread creation entered into the Great Worcester Bake Off 2016!

Worcesterites also get involved in charities in Oxford more widely... Many local, national and international charities have student groups – their activities vary but might include speaker events and fundraising. As well as that, there are heaps of opportunities to volunteer whilst at Worcester – to give some of your skills and time to organisations who'll greatly value them. As well as being able to make a real difference, it can be a lot of fun, a really good change from academic work and a chance add to your own skills or CV... Many current Worcester students are involved with a wide range of organisations – whether teaching and tutoring, growing food, visiting elderly people in Oxford or running campaigns on social issues!

Environment & Ethics

Hey, I'm Naomi, the current Environment & Ethics (E&E) rep. Worcester is such a good platform to become involved in environment and ethical schemes, as you can bring about genuine changes in college life, from ensuring college becomes a Living Wage employer to promoting university campaigns such as the Veggie Pledge and the Student Switch Off. More generally there's a lot of

exciting stuff happening across Oxford – foodbanks, volunteering schemes, funding for student engineers who think they have (and often do have) the next big thing in climate change reduction, and many more. Most importantly, within Worcester's extensive green grounds there lies an Edible Garden – where you can grow and pick to your heart's content!



Hannelore's Basil plant, from a recent herb-planting session as part of Welfare Week!

Naomi in her natural habitat, hugging a tree

Sports

Hey I'm Ant, the current Sports Rep! We are incredibly lucky at Worcester to have one of the best and most inclusive sporting communities around, perhaps owing to the proximity of our sports fields to our accommodation. Many students find that throwing a ball around on our beautiful grounds is the perfect way to relax and socialise in Oxford's often demanding environment. Worcester sports has so many varied opportunities to offer, including:



Badminton, Basketball, Cricket, Darts, Men's and Women's football, Men's and Women's Hockey, Mixed Lacrosse, Netball, Rugby, Rowing, Volleyball, Ultimate Frisbee, Yoga

Most college sports consist of weekly training sessions, weekly league matches, regular socials (called crewdates) and the annual inter-collegiate coppers tournament. Worcester has a rather sporty reputation – regularly appearing in coppers finals and bringing home all kinds of trophies. In the past, we have won the men's football league, men's football reserve league, women's five-a-side football coppers, men's hockey league, men's hockey coppers and the women's netball league! Worcester sport is not only intercollegiate – we have internal tournaments, such as mixed netball and touch rugby. Towards the end of Hilary there is a sports dinner to celebrate all of the achievements and efforts teams have put into Worcester sports across the two first terms.



All the training and hard work is put to the ultimate test in late Hilary (second term) when we face our biggest rivals and sister college, St. Catharine's, Cambridge. We take it in turns to host each other for a huge battle of the colleges, known as College Varsity, to commence on the sports pitches, at dinner and on the dance floor, to see who will be crowned the greatest!



Nikki, Women's Rowing Captain

Worcester sport is so inclusive and learning to row here was one of the best decisions I made.



Arts



Hi, I'm Elspeth, current Arts Rep. Worcester is home to a lively and diverse arts scene – there is always something going on! October is the month of the Halloween Pumpkin Carving

Competition: the student who carves the best pumpkin receives the prestigious role of PumpQueen, PumpKing, or Gender Neutral PumpMonarch. Every term there is an Open Mic Night in the bar: this is an opportunity for students to play live music in front of peers. Past acts have included rock bands, swing bands, singer songwriters, rappers, and so on.



The winning pumpkin of the Carving Competition by 2016's PumpQueen Tash

Worcester has its own drum kit, amps and PA system which are available for students to use at any time. In Hilary Term there is an Arts Week: in the past this week has hosted an art exhibition, dance classes, poetry slams, and baking classes. Every Trinity term there is an outdoor charity music event called 'Worc in the Park'. This is a charity event that takes place on the Nuffield Lawn, which includes live musical performances from students in Worcester and from other colleges. The provision of fresh Pimms and cakes makes this an event not to be missed!

So how can you get involved?

Chapel Choir:

Worcester College Chapel has a long history of excellent choral music. The musical set up of the chapel is unique in Oxford in that it maintains a choral tradition of two choirs. Four choral services are sung each week during the University term in the College's beautiful eighteenth-century chapel: two by the undergraduate mixed choir, and two by the choir of boy trebles. All services (Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday) are open to everyone, both inside and outside of college. Worcester College Choir has a particular affinity for contemporary music, and is proud to

The music opportunities and events in Worcester are so much fun. Worcester College Music Society is so sociable and encourages everyone to get involved!



Gabby, 1st year Music Student

be part of a rich heritage of composition in College, whose Music fellows have always been distinguished composers. The choir is auditioned, and to find out more information visit www.worcesterchapel.co.uk.

Worcester Voices: Worcester Voices is the college non-auditioning secular choir. It is open to any voice type and any musical ability, no sight reading skills necessary! We meet once a week for an hour and perform in the last WCMS concert of each



Worcester Voices performing in the Chapel

term. Repertoire from last year included classics from Les Mis, the Lion King, as well as songs by the Beatles and some Christmassy tunes in Michaelmas. This is the ideal choir for anyone who likes singing but doesn't want the commitment of the chapel choir.

Worcester Swing: WSB is the coolest and craziest ensemble in Worcester! If you play a jazz instrument and have swingin' inclinations, come and join us - no audition, any standard. We rehearse just once a week for an hour (and food is provided). Last year the newly-formed WCSB had their debut performance opening the annual Worc in the Park - second only to Glastonbury - with classic hits such as *In the Mood* and *Fly me to the Moon*.



WSB performing at Worc in the Park

Worcester College Orchestra: The Worcester College Orchestra is a friendly, relaxed, non-audition group which performs a concert at the end of each term. Recently we have enjoyed playing Beethoven's Egmont Overture, Borodin's Polovstian Dances, and Schubert's 'Unfinished' Symphony. We are always looking for more players, and rehearse once a week on Monday evenings.

Buskins: Drama at Worcester is very popular with lots of great opportunities. The Buskins society is a funding body and a great place to start. They put on a Worcester College Gardens Shakespeare Play every summer as well as

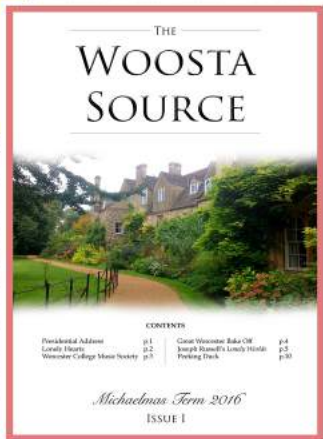
supporting projects throughout the year. Last year, we put on *Twelfth Night* in the Provost's Gardens, which was an enormous success, and even managed to give the Provost's dog Coco a starring role. Also, in the first term Drama Cuppers (inter-collegiate competition) is great to get involved in. University-wide, OUDS is the drama society. They send out a mailing list each week with information on auditioning and production opportunities. All productions are totally student-run so there is something for everyone to get involved in.



Twelfth Night performed in the Provost's gardens

The Woosta Source

Hi, I'm Cheryl and I'm the current editor of Worcester College's official undergraduate student-run magazine, *The Woosta Source*. It is published every two weeks during termtime, and it's the perfect platform for members of the JCR to show off their creative talent, through journalism, photography, poetry and much more. A staple feature of *The Woosta Source* is the famous Peeking Duck, an anonymous student who delivers college gossip through the masterful use of puns and wordplay. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to contribute!



Religious Societies

Christian Union

Hi there! I'm Luke, one of Worcester's CU Reps for this year. Worcester has a Christian Union that is a friendly, diverse and welcoming community that seeks to bring the exciting and life-transforming news of Jesus's life, death and resurrection to our college as well as growing in our personal knowledge and love of God and His word. It forms part of the larger Oxford Inter-Collegiate Christian Union (www.oiccu.org) and, along with a collection of vibrant and faithful churches, this makes Oxford a really exciting place to grow as Christian or to explore it for the first time.

Other Faiths

Those of other religions can find a variety of different societies university-wide, and places of worship central to Oxford, or nearby in Cowley and Headington. Muslim students have a dedicated prayer space in the University's Robert Hooke Building, on Parks Road; there is an Oxford Jewish Chaplaincy team available for Oxford and Oxford Brookes students. The



Worcester's CU Reps for 2016

Chapel in college is also open to be used as a space for quiet reflection or worship, with Evensong taking place each week. To find out more information about religious centres and societies in Oxford, this is a useful starting point: <https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/religionandbelief/faihtsocietyesgroupsorreligiouscentres/>

Entertainment (a.k.a. Entz)

Worcester has always got something fun going on in college, organised by the Entz rep and subcommittee each term. Here are just a few of the events we have:

Bops: Bops are parties held in college, they happen at the beginning, middle and end of each term and each one has a different fancy dress theme. They're loads of fun and a chance to mingle with other year groups as well.

Oxmas: Every year we hold a Christmas Party in Hall, otherwise known as Oxmas. There's live music, food, a photo-booth, drinks and everyone gets in the Christmas spirit!

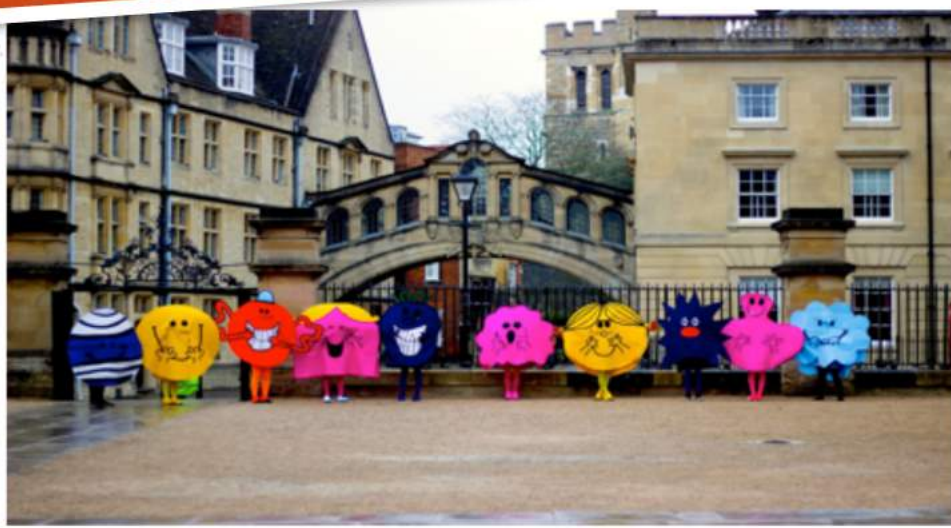
Garden Party: In the summer term each year, we hold a garden party in the lovely Worcester grounds. There's normally a whole bunch of fun activities like a bouncy castle, sumo suits and giant connect four. Not to mention loads of food and drink!



Pink Drinks: Once every term, the infamous pink drinks is held in our college JCR. You pay £5 and get unlimited drinks (all of them pink, our college colour!) and the money from the tickets goes to charity.



Midway: In your second year at Worcester, we celebrate being halfway through our degrees (both scary and fun) and it is originally termed 'Midway'. We have a whole year group photo taken in fancy dress, people put in loads of effort to create amazing group costumes, like the Mr. Men, Toy Story characters or Astronauts to name a few. We also take a nice formal photo and have a special dinner in hall in the evening.



Your first few weeks at Oxford

Hi! I'm Caitlin, this year's Freshers Rep. Fresher's week is your first week here at Oxford. During the week, you have introductions to the libraries, your tutors, the city of Oxford and what life is like here at Worcester. We organise events such as a huge fancy dress party in hall, a sports tournament and rowing introductions, a black tie dinner, a theatre trip, a taster of music at Worcester, a board games night, a quiz, film and club nights! Your week will also be an introduction to how important welfare is to Worcester. This includes safety talks and mandatory sexual consent workshops as well as an introduction to the amazing welfare and dean teams who will support you throughout your time at Oxford. During the week there is also the whole JCR committee and peer supporters who will be here to help you at any point and there are events for everyone (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic) all of which are always a huge success.



Oxford Terminology

Lots of universities have their own vocabulary, although Oxford has more than the average number of strange-sounding terms that would baffle anybody unfamiliar with many of the university's traditions and quirks. The following list should help to de-mystify lots of Oxford's 'language' and familiarise you with some of the different traditions here.

College Parents: Before you arrive at Worcester, you will be assigned two current Worcester students to be your 'college parents'. They will be in the year above you (so just finished their first year) and normally one of them will be studying the same subject as you. Their job is to help you settle in at Worcester and answer any questions you might have about your subject or life at Worcester. You'll also have college siblings and college grandparents, so before you even arrive you'll have a whole family waiting for you! Once you've got your results, you'll receive a letter from your parents introducing themselves to you, and giving you some helpful tips and advice before you arrive (this letter will come in your 'freshers pack' sent to you by college). During your first week at Worcester, your parents will be there to help you settle in and at the end of the week you'll join them for a tea party with a bunch of their friends and their friends' children. It's a great way to meet people from other years and a lot of families continue to look out for each other even after your first few weeks at university.

Formal Hall: Formal hall is (to put it simply) a fancy dinner. It costs around £5-£6 for three courses of delicious food, served to you by the wonderful catering staff. At Worcester, formals happen on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday. Most people dress quite formally (a dress, smart trousers or suit) and gowns are



College family photograph, featuring Grandma on Facetime from her year abroad!

also worn. They are a great opportunity to enjoy some high quality food with great value for money and get dressed up with your friends!

Gowns/Subfusc: At Oxford, we have a funny little tradition of wearing gowns and what's called 'subfusc' (white shirt, black trousers/skirt, black bowtie) to exams. But apart from exams and Matriculation (see below) you won't ever really need to wear subfusc, and the gowns are only worn for formal hall. Another tradition is wearing different coloured carnations attached to your gown depending on how far through your exams you are: white for the first, pink for the ones in the middle, and red for your last. Your college parents will provide you with carnations for your first year exams as a little symbol of support.



Matriculating students wearing subfusc

Pigeonholes/Pidges: Everybody in college has a pigeonhole (or pidge), and it's basically where your mail gets delivered. Some tutors will use it to pidge you work or for you to pidge them work, and you can even send things to other colleges via 'pidge post' (just give whatever you're sending to the porters and it'll arrive at its destination in a day). Most importantly though, you can pidge your friends chocolates and treats and vice versa.



Matriculation: Matriculation is just a fancy name for when you officially become a member of the university. Everybody wears their subfusc and heads over to the Sheldonian (a theatre in Oxford) for a short ceremony (some of it is in Latin) and some words of welcome. There is a group photo of everyone in your year at Worcester as well as individual photos.

Michaelmas, Hilary, Trinity: These are the names of the three terms at Oxford – Michaelmas being your first, Hilary your second, and Trinity the last!

Scouts: We are lucky enough to have people we call 'scouts' look out for us at Oxford. Your scout is not only responsible for helping keeping rooms, kitchens and bedrooms clean (within reason!), but also have a welfare role, and will keep an eye on how you're getting on through your time in Oxford. They are valued members of the Worcester family.

Trashing: It's tradition to 'trash' your friends after they come out of their last exam. It basically means spraying them with the cheapest prosecco you can find, shaving foam, glitter, confetti and a whole number of other things until they're no longer recognisable. This may sound horrible, but it is a really fun way to celebrate finishing exams (with a bang) with your friends.



Happy trashed students after finishing first-year exams!



Rosie, 3rd year French and Italian student

There's a huge effort made particularly (but by no means only!) at the beginning of the year to make you feel welcome. Worcester very quickly becomes home.



Worcester Haunts in Oxford

Should you ever be visiting Oxford, you would be bound to find Worcester students in some of the places listed below. These are a few of our favourite spots to hang out, when we emerge from the beautiful grounds of our College!

Combibo's

Combibo's is so well-loved, so close to college and so perpetually full of Worcesterites that it might as well be an official part of the College. It is great for a quick tea/coffee or brekkie/ lunch etc. The brunch is amazing (the bacon pancakes, or honey and raisin porridge if you're veggie, are particularly great) and the place is so cosy and great to hang out in that our 'short' Combibo's breaks are often way longer than intended! And to top it all off, it has a fab student discount too.



Liv, Hannah, and Olivia enjoying a Combibo's trip

Branos

Branos is the favoured eatery for Worcester students; in fact, we go there so often we have our own off-the-menu meal: the Worcester Special! Chicken, cheese and chips for only £3.50. What more could you want? (A particular favourite after a night out or an essay deadline.)



Gloucester Green Market

Gloucester Green is a favourite place in Oxford for many students and is less than a minute's walk from Worcester College. There is an amazing market on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday. Wednesday is best for fruit and vegetables, meat, and cheese, whilst Thursday is the day for exotic and exciting street food, and Saturday is the best day for antiques, edgy second-hand coats and jeans. Make an effort to speak to the stall-holders and be prepared to haggle and ask for a student discount.

G&D's

A favourite of students not only from Worcester, but across the university, G&D's is an absolute must visit. Famous for its unbeatable ice cream, it also provides delicious sweet treats, bagels and coffee. G&D's can be found on Little Clarendon Street, just a short walk from Worcester, or near to Christ Church on the other side. Wherever you are in central Oxford, amazing ice cream is never far!



Port Meadow

A magical place, especially at sunset, with the river running through it and horses grazing. Perfect for a picnic or walk/run and you can even swim in the river when it's warm enough!



Beautiful wintry photo of Port Meadow taken by Bryony



Credits and Disclaimer

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All uncredited written content by: Lucy Buttler and Alice Campbell

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