



Somerville College, Oxford

Admissions interview information (for applicants to standard courses)

We hope you enjoy your stay at Somerville for admissions interviews. This document explains what you need to do before you arrive, and what will happen while you are here.

1) Before you arrive

The interview invitation email, which you should have received, specifies the date and time that you should arrive at Somerville for interviews. If you are concerned about being able to reach Somerville on time on the day specified, you would be welcome to arrive the night before. However, it will unfortunately not be possible for you to arrive before Sunday 3 December 2017, nor will it be possible for you to arrive on Saturday 9 December 2017.

You are provided with free accommodation and meals at Somerville throughout the time you are required to be available for interviews.

Please immediately complete and return an Interview Arrival Form, which you can download from the College Web site at [http:// www.some.ox.ac.uk/undergraduate-admissions/](http://www.some.ox.ac.uk/undergraduate-admissions/)

On the form, let us know:

- a) estimated arrival and departure dates and times (your arrival date is usually the day you have been called to arrive or the night before)
- b) dietary requirements (due to allergies, medical conditions, religion, etc)
- c) other arrangements required, such as accommodation or interview-related arrangements (due to disability, health condition, religion, etc)

Once you are at Somerville, you should not leave Oxford until you have been told you are no longer required to stay (please see below).

Please note that all Somerville premises, both indoors and outdoors, are non-smoking.

2) Arrival at Somerville

The College's front gate, on Woodstock Road, will be locked at 11.00 pm each evening. If you are delayed, and arrive after this time, you can ring the bell next to the front gate, and/or call the Porters' Lodge (the reception in Woodstock Road) on + 44 (0)1865 270600, and someone will open the gate for you. Please also call the Porters' Lodge as soon as you know you will be delayed, to give them an estimated time of arrival.

Information on how to get to Somerville is available on the College's Web site at:

<http://www.some.ox.ac.uk/contact-us/>

Please note that no parking is available at Somerville. If you have mobility difficulties or other access requirements, please let us know.

3) While you're at Somerville

When you arrive, you should go to the Porters' Lodge. If you arrive before 8.00 pm, you will then be directed to the Admissions Hub (in the House building), where you will be welcomed by a group of undergraduates who are there especially to look after applicants, and to help you feel at ease. When you arrive, you will be given the key for your room, and an electronic access card to open doors into buildings.

There is a map of Somerville on the last page of this document, to help you find the buildings you need to go to.

Undergraduate helpers

During your stay here, there will be approximately 20 current undergraduates here in the College who have stayed during their vacation to help make your time at Somerville enjoyable. They will help you find out when you have interviews and tests, and make sure you get to the interviews and tests on time. **Nandana Syam** (2nd year Medicine) is the JCR Undergraduate Admissions Officer elected by her fellow students, and will be organising the team. They are a friendly and open bunch, so don't hesitate to see any of them if you have any questions, concerns or just want a chat.

The undergraduate helpers are based in at the Admissions Hub, in the House building. On most days, they will be on duty from 08:00 to 20:00 hours. The Admissions Hub is where interview timetables will be posted. You should check there frequently to find out the timing of your interview(s), and to see if there are any timing changes or additional interviews scheduled. Notices will be posted at the Admissions Hub to let you know when you are free to leave Oxford. You will need to go to the Admissions Hub in advance of each of your interviews. The helpers will tell you how far in advance to arrive. They will take you to interviews, so you don't need to worry about being late or getting lost.

Meals

Meals, free of charge, are available from the College's self-service Pantry, and eaten in the Dining Hall (across the corridor from the Pantry), at the times below.

For interviews in the week beginning Sunday 3 December 2017:

- Breakfast 7.45 am – 9.00 am (Monday 4 to Saturday 9 Dec)
- Lunch 12.30 pm – 1.30 pm (Monday 4 to Friday 8 Dec)
- Dinner 6.00 pm – 7.00 pm (Sunday 3 to Friday 8 Dec)

Refreshments will be available in the Dining Hall from 10.00 am to 11.00 am, and from 3.00 pm to 4.00 pm, Monday 4 to Friday 8 December.

For interviews in the week beginning Sunday 10 December 2017:

- Breakfast 7.30 am – 9.00 am (Monday 11 to Wednesday 13 Dec)
- Lunch 12.30 pm – 1.30 pm (Sunday 10 to Thursday 14 Dec)

Dinner 6.00 pm – 7.00 pm (Sunday 10 to Thursday 14 Dec)

Refreshments will be available in the Dining Hall from 10.00 am to 11.00 am, and from 3.00 pm to 4.00 pm, Monday 11 to Thursday 14 December.

Lunch and dinner are both usually hot meals, with dessert available. Some soft and hot drinks are also available, in addition to drinking water. Confectionary is available from vending machines around the College. Our Catering department can accommodate a wide range of dietary requirements.

Accommodation

Your room will be available from 2pm on your arrival date.

Each applicant has his or her own single study-bedroom (free of charge), in an accommodation block on the College site. Bedding and a towel are provided. Bathroom facilities are shared between a number of bedrooms. Accommodation will be mixed (men and women may be in the same building but men are allocated bedrooms in a particular block or floor, with women allocated to other blocks/floors).

There are no rooms available with en-suite bathroom or toilet facilities, unless previously requested due to reasons of disability.

Some administrative offices and tutors' teaching rooms are located in the same buildings as sleeping accommodation.

Fire alarm and fire regulations

The fire alarm is a loud siren. We hope that there will be no fire alarms during your stay at Somerville. A fire regulations notice is posted in every bedroom; please make sure you are familiar with these instructions.

Telephones and Internet

If you expect any telephone messages, the number for callers to ring is + 44 (0)1865 270600. Internet access is provided for free by The Cloud. End-user help is available from The Cloud via <http://www.thecloud.net/free-wifi/join-the-cloud/>

Prayer room

A room suitable for prayer will be available to members of all faiths and none.

Entertainment

The student helpers will arrange social events for the evenings, which will provide you with the ability to relax a little bit before or after your interviews. The events will be advertised at the Admissions Hub and information will also be available from the helpers. There is a Junior Common Room in the Vaughan Building where you may go to relax, read or watch television. The helpers will give directions.

You are encouraged to bring study materials with you for the duration of your stay. We understand that you have to take time away from school to attend for interview so would

encourage you to bring any school work with you to complete whilst you are here. The Library is available for you to use from Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm.

Welfare

We recognize that admissions interviews are stressful and that the whole experience of coming away from home or school can be unnerving. The helpers will be on hand from 08:00 to 20:00 hours on most days, and for shorter periods at weekends, to help put you at ease and answer any questions you may have. We want you to feel comfortable while at Somerville, so we hope you will draw on these resources if and when you need to. The Academic Registrar is available to discuss any welfare issues and in an emergency, the Porters may be reached at + 44 (0)1865 270600. A Junior Dean will be on duty in the evenings and at weekends, and can be contacted via the Porters' Lodge.

Security

Oxford is no more dangerous than other large towns, but as a general precaution, you are advised not to go out of College alone late at night. While you are with us in Oxford, we have a 'duty of care' to take reasonable steps for your safety. In light of the responsibility we have, we restrict access to College and try and encourage you to keep as close to home as possible. The College's front gate, on Woodstock Road, is locked at 11.00 pm each evening. If you are delayed, and arrive after this time, you can ring the bell next to the front gate, and/or call the Porters' Lodge (the reception in Woodstock Road) on + 44 (0)1865 270600, and someone will open the gate for you. You are expected to stay in College for the minimum interview period for your subject, but if for any reason it is necessary for you to leave before this time, please let the porter know that you are leaving early when you hand in your room key, so that we do not become anxious about your whereabouts and can account for you in an emergency.

You will have received from the Porters' Lodge an electronic access card which will grant you access to the required buildings in College. It is important not to hold the door open to others when entering the building unless you know that they too have cards. It may seem rude, but tailgaters are a problem which can result in strangers gaining access and opportunities to steal. Your belongings are left entirely at your own risk anywhere in College and at any time. Please remember to lock your door and windows every time you leave your room.

Interviews

For most courses, you will have at least two interviews while you are in Oxford. For some courses, all applicants are interviewed at two different colleges.

For all subjects, except Engineering Science, you are asked to stay in Oxford for at least one night.

Your interviews will be with tutors in the subject(s) that you wish to study. Interviews will usually be held in tutors' offices, which are all around the College, and may be on any floor of a building.

No special preparation is required for interviews. They are primarily aimed at discerning whether you are likely to find the course suitable for your talents and interests, although there will also be an opportunity for you to find out about the course and the College. Different tutors have different ways of interviewing, but one generalization can be made:

your interviews will be academically based — that is, they will be about the course you wish to study at Oxford. Your outside activities and interests may be discussed, but they are of secondary importance.

The tutors want to know what you would be like as someone studying your chosen subject(s). They will not expect you to know a great deal (they are fully aware that you will probably be only in the final year of your schooling, and that you may be applying to read a subject not studied at school). They are primarily interested in your motivation and your ability to use what you know, and your potential to develop in your chosen subject. They may ask you questions to which you do not know the answers, but this is not done with the intention of catching you out. Rather, it is done with a view to finding out how you can think your way through a problem to which you have not been taught the specific answers.

For example, in a science interview, you might be asked to design a hypothetical experiment, or in an arts subject, you might be asked to discuss a book you have enjoyed or to consider an idea or a line of argument that is new to you. You may be asked questions arising from written work you have submitted or a test you have sat. You may also be asked questions about your studies to date, or your interest in your proposed course. Some tutors may ask you to read a short passage just before the interview, and then ask you questions about it during the interview. Others will start an interview by asking you what interests you most about the subject.

All this may sound intimidating (particularly being asked questions to which you do not know the answers!), but the interviewers are basically on your side — they want you to do your best and show your real abilities.

Every application to Oxford is considered very carefully and on an individual basis. Tutors read each applicant's UCAS application, and look at any written work or test, and try to take into account the level of work you have done at school, as well as the amount of preparation a school has (or has not) given. They *want* you to do well in the interview.

Please do not discuss your interview with other applicants whilst you are here at Somerville.

Interviews at other colleges

As noted above, there are some courses for which all applicants are automatically interviewed at two different colleges. When you arrive at Somerville, it will be clear from the interview timetables posted at the Admissions Hub whether or not this applies for your course.

In addition, discussions about applicants will take place among Somerville tutors and those in other colleges. All application materials and marks are made available to colleges other than Somerville, and it may be that one college has more good applicants than it can offer places to, whereas another has too few and may want to interview someone who has applied elsewhere. As a result of these discussions, further interviews are arranged. You might be called for interview at one or more other colleges, in addition to your initial interviews.

There may be some delay before you hear whether or not you have an additional interview at another college. We appreciate that this can be very inconvenient, and we are sorry to keep

you in suspense, but it helps to ensure that the best applicants get into Oxford. Details of other interviews will be available at the Admissions Hub and, if you are required to attend one, an undergraduate helper will accompany you there. (Any nights you are required to stay will, however, be spent in Somerville.)

You should not leave Oxford until you have been told you are no longer required to stay. We apologize for the fact that, because of the complex interview timetable, there may be long gaps between your interviews. No final decisions are made until after the interviews. Please don't leave until you are sure that you have no more interviews and a notice has been put up at the Admissions Hub saying that you may go.

4) Departure

Applicants are not permitted to stay in college longer than the day after the last interview day for their subject. You will be asked to vacate your room by **10.00 am** on your departure date. It is important to do this, as your room will need to be prepared for the next applicant. There are facilities for you to leave your belongings in and to freshen up if necessary. Please ask at the Porters' Lodge for details. Please return your **keys and access card** to the Lodge upon departure.

5) Outcome of applications

We will notify you of the outcome of your application on 10th January 2018.

If you wish the communication to be sent to you at **an email address other than that you have given on your UCAS form**, it is **vital** that you let us know before you leave Oxford, and preferably immediately. Please email admissions@some.ox.ac.uk with your full name, the course you are applying for, and your new details. This is particularly important for overseas applicants who are applying from UK schools.

Note that the outcome of applications will **not** be available over the telephone.

Good luck, and enjoy your stay!

The Academic Office

2nd November 2017

admissions@some.ox.ac.uk

