



Somerville College

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



Welcome to Somerville

Whichever Oxford college you choose, you will be studying for the same degree. But your choice of college matters.

A tutor at your college will supervise your work. And while your teaching will be shared with the university department, the college will be the place where you live, eat and study for the next few years.

These pages will give you a sense of what life will be like if you choose Somerville.

Somerville has over 400 undergraduate students. We are a close-knit community of students and academics, dedicated to world-class teaching and research. Our tutors are leaders in their fields, with interests that range from social networks to the British Empire. If you are successful in winning a place here, our academics will help you get the most out of your subject.

We also have one of the biggest undergraduate libraries in Oxford, with over 100,000 books, so you will always be able to find the information you need quickly.

We believe that no-one should be deterred from studying here for financial reasons. One in five of our undergraduate students receives a bursary. We offer some fully-funded scholarships, awarded on merit, that allow students to graduate debt-free. In all, we spent just under £500,000 last year supporting students.

There is plenty to do when you're not studying. We offer a wide range of sports, from rugby, netball and squash to men's and women's football. If you love music, there's an orchestra and a choir. We're close to an arthouse cinema and the Jericho Tavern, the famous music venue where Radiohead played their first gig.

We combine a progressive history with a strong sense of community. We welcome applicants from state schools.

If you have done well in your GCSE (or equivalent) exams, and have a deep interest in your chosen subject, then we would love to hear from you.

Jan Royall
Somerville Principal



If you want to change the world come to Somerville



“

Definitely one of the more diverse Oxford colleges, Somerville has a proud history of including the excluded and it shows through the general atmosphere of the college.

Everyone you meet here is friendly and that sort of everyday kindness is crucial in what can be a hectic kind of life here at Oxford. You want university to feel like a home away from home and the atmosphere at Somerville, and the people here who have created it, made me feel at home as soon as I arrived in Freshers' Week. I haven't looked back since.

Emmanuel Amissah-Eshun

Law undergraduate & JCR President 2018-19

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“

I hadn't visited Somerville before I applied, but when I arrived for interviews I knew immediately that it was the right decision.

I felt at home and I loved the relaxed atmosphere. The welfare system is fantastic and I've always felt well taken care of.

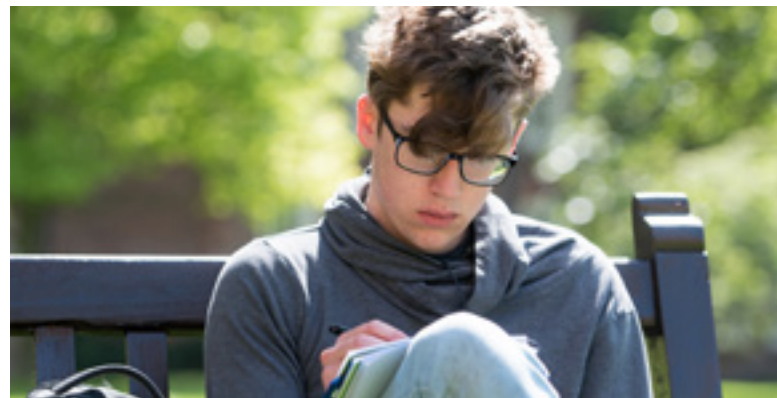
There are also so many things you can get involved in. The university itself has many societies, but if you want something on a smaller and less intense scale, then Somerville has a lot of great options too.

”



Ilona Clayton

Undergraduate (History & German)



2018/19 PRICES

£4000 - approx. annual cost of accommodation in Somerville

£4.25 -non-vegetarian main and two sides in the Hall at lunch or dinner



Living at Somerville

Somerville students will tell you that the moment they walked through the door here, they felt at home.

There are lots of reasons why: it's a beautiful place, and one with an extraordinary history. But mostly, it's because Somerville is such a strong community. We offer places in almost every subject you can study at Oxford, and we're proud to be one of the most diverse colleges in Oxford, with students from every kind of background.

Accommodation

Come to Somerville and you'll be able to live in high-quality, affordable accommodation on our site in the centre of Oxford for the whole of your course.

Welfare and Facilities

There are student societies doing everything from debating to baking, and our welfare support

is second to none, with access to professional counselling, trained peer supporters and dedicated provision if you have special needs.

At Somerville, The JCR (which stands for 'Junior Common Room') is a sort of mini student union, arranging everything from political discussions to sports fixtures. We also have an on-site gym which can be used for a small annual fee.

Living in Somerville means that you get to know people quickly and easily, and everyone has interests in common. Studying for a degree is hard work, so it's important to be somewhere you can relax, and where you can find a helping hand if you need it.



Agnieszka Rzad
Deputy Lodge Manager

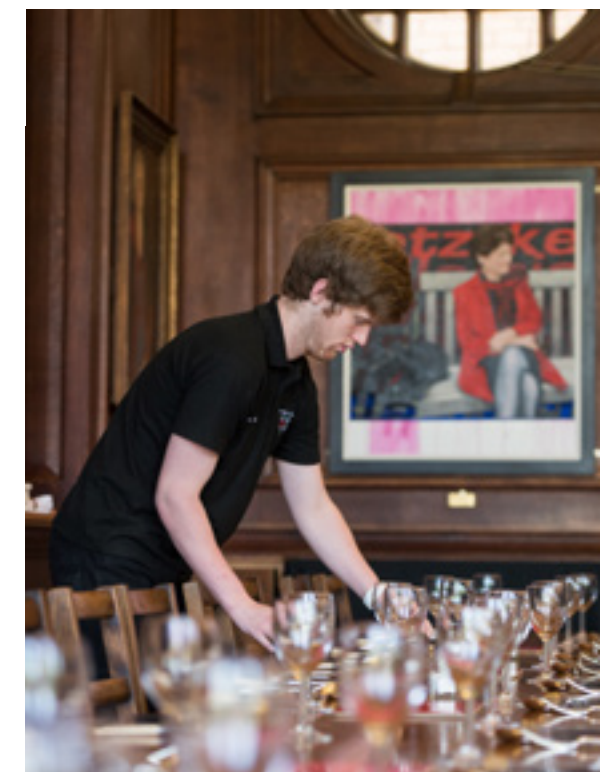
“The Porters' Lodge is the first point of contact for everybody - students, staff, and visitors alike. It's a vibrant and busy environment. In general terms, we are the operational centre of the college - well-known for our friendliness.

”

Food

We have famously good food: The College hall gives you the option of low-price meals (relaxed cafeteria-style except for formal dinners), and all student rooms are also near self-catering facilities.

The Terrace bar is a great place to meet up and also a popular place to study. Put it all together, and you'll find Somerville gives you the ideal blend of independence and support.





The Library

Somerville has an exceptional library. It is one of the biggest college collections in Oxford with over 100,000 books and other items, which means you may never have to buy your own course books.

The library occupies the entire north side of Somerville's main quadrangle. There are comfortable spaces to work, with plug points and access to WiFi. It is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for whenever you'd like to work

There is no limit on the number of books you can borrow and you are allowed to keep a book on loan for a term or across a vacation. We will also purchase additional books for our collection if you request them.

The library has received donations of books, pictures, artefacts and papers from distinguished figures such as John Stuart

Mill, John Ruskin, Vera Brittain and Amelia Edwards. Our John Stuart Mill collection contains around 2,000 of his own and his father's books, with their annotations in the margins.

As a student at Oxford University you will also have access to the Bodleian Libraries, which is the largest university library system in the UK with over 13 million items in its collections. The central site Bodleian Library buildings are a ten minute walk from Somerville.



Learning at Somerville

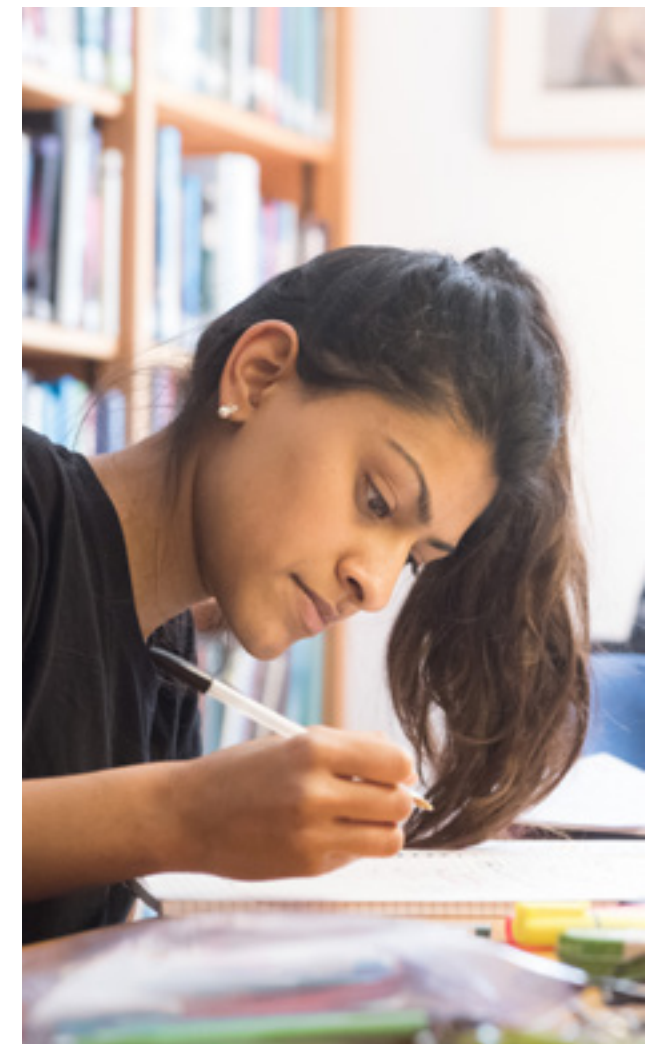
It's all about learning to work and think independently, giving you the skills you'll need to succeed in life.

Oxford offers you a real intellectual challenge. To make the most of it, you need to be someone who likes to push themselves hard when it comes to academic work. The reward? Not just finding out about a subject you love, but also learning how to think at a whole new level, with critical focus and a sharpness of approach.

Our tutorial system is world-famous, and for good reason. You'll have at least one tutorial every week, usually meeting your tutor with just one or two other students in your subject. If you're in the humanities or social sciences, tutorials are usually based around an essay you'll have written that week. In the sciences, you'll often work from problem sheets. Whatever your subject, tutorials give you an in-depth forum for discussion and a true grasp of what you're studying.

Oxford degrees have some fixed elements, but there's a wide range of choice too, and because the tutorial system is so personalized,

you can tailor your learning to your strengths. Your tutors really get to know you and you'll work with them to develop your interests and hone your skills. Alongside tutorials, you'll also have a mixture of lectures, lab work and seminars, depending on the subject you're studying. You'll have a dedicated personal tutor who's there to talk to you about your course and who'll arrange for you to be taught by tutors inside and outside Somerville who are world-class experts in your degree subject.



“ You don't need to know Greek or Latin already to study Classics at Somerville.

Somerville is one of the few colleges to have a classical literature expert (that's me), an ancient historian (Beate Dignas), an ancient philosopher (Karen Nielsen), and an archaeologist (Charlotte Potts), all on site. The Classics Centre and the Sackler Library, home to much of Oxford's classical material, are both five minutes' walk away.



Luke Pitcher

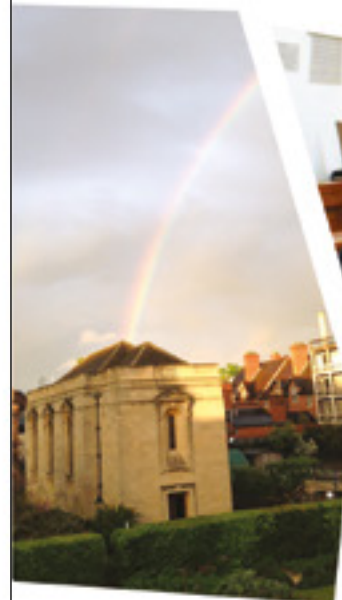
Fellow and Tutor in Classics

College Life

There's much more to college life than study. Our students combine their education with sport, music, volunteering and more.

The Orchestra

Somerville Orchestra is an informal, non-auditioned group which rehearses once a week. The average level is around Grade Five and above, but players of all levels are welcome. The orchestra puts on a number of concerts every year, with repertoire ranging from Beethoven to Bernstein.



The Choir

Made up of choral scholars and volunteers, the excellent College Choir plays a strong role in college life, giving regular concerts, and performing in the weekly service of choral contemplation on Sunday evenings.

As our choir sings in a non-denominational chapel, their repertoire is considerably wider than other college choirs, including the Bach St John Passion, folksongs from the UK and US, and works by composers such as Randall Stroope, Eriks Esenvalds, and Cecilia McDowall. The choir regularly goes on tour, including trips around Europe, to the US and India.

Formals

Every week in term-time there is a formal dinner in hall, when students are expected to dress smartly. Twice a term, there are special nights when there's an extra course and students wear black tie.

Every year, there is a formal dinner for your subject. This is a great opportunity to meet fellow students of your subject from different years. There's often a theme, and diners wear fancy dress.



Bops and Balls

There are bops (parties) every term organised by the Junior Common Room (JCR) the student-run organisation that provides support and entertainment for our undergraduates. Somerville also hosts a ball every three years.



“One of the personal highlights of my time at Somerville was being president of the college Baking Society, which not only allowed me to create friendships in different year groups but also meant I had a supply of baked goods every week. My three years at Somerville felt too short, and I count myself incredibly lucky to have been granted the opportunity to study here.”

Angela Matheickal Alumnus (Biological Sciences, 2015)

Sports

There is opportunity to represent Somerville in a wide range of team sports, including men's and women's football, rugby, rowing, netball and squash.



Arts Week

There is an arts week every year, bringing together literature, theatre, music and visual arts. The arts week features performances and inspiring talks from visiting speakers. In past years, we have heard from the film producer Christine Langan and the playwright Nina Raine.

Jericho

The college is handy for Jericho, a vibrant neighbourhood of pubs, cafes and an arthouse cinema, and we're close to all the clubs and bars of central Oxford so there are plenty of places to go for a drink or a dance.



Societies

We have a Christian Society which is famous for their 'text a toastie' service that brings free toasted sandwiches to the door of your room. There is a popular baking society, which makes delicious treats and organizes regular baking sessions.

Port Meadow

Perfect for morning runs, evening strolls or summer swims in the Thames, Somerville is lucky to be one of the closest colleges to this beautiful patch of wilderness.





Funding your studies

Oxford is one of the most generous universities in the UK in terms of its financial support packages for students.

Bursaries and scholarships are available for UK students from lower-income households and there are also individual scholarship schemes you can apply for if you get a place at Oxford. One in five Somerville students receives a bursary. Your meals and your accommodation are heavily subsidised, reducing the overall cost of your time here.

Thatcher Scholarships

Somerville offers Thatcher Scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students, which are awarded on the basis of academic merit. These scholarships cover all of your fees as well as providing a generous grant towards living expenses and travel, allowing students to graduate debt-free.

Development Awards

Every year, we provide funding to students to pursue their personal and intellectual development. Our students have found innovative ways to put this funding to good use, from taking a comedy sketch to the Edinburgh Fringe to pursuing conservation research in Guyana.

These projects will enable you to strengthen your CV, enhance your academic development - and hopefully allow you to have some fun too.

There are emergency funds available if you find yourself in financial difficulties at any point.

If you're not sure how your finances will work when you're at Oxford, get in touch with our Access team and we can talk you through it. You can reach us on: access@some.ox.ac.uk

The one thing you need to know is that Oxford doesn't cost any more than any other UK university.

In fact, our terms are shorter than most other universities, so your accommodation costs will be lower and because the whole city is set up for student life - with great libraries, cheap transport and a really affordable social life - your money goes further.



So how do I apply?

You apply to Oxford in the same way as you apply to other universities, using the UCAS system. The only difference is our earlier deadline, and the option to nominate a college of preference if you like. You don't have to choose a college (though we hope you'll want to choose Somerville): you can make an 'open' application and you'll then be allocated a college which will look at your application first. Oxford has systems in place to shift students between colleges at different points in the application process, to make sure that you've got the same chance of winning a place at Oxford, no matter which college you choose, or whether you don't choose one at all.

When can I apply?

You can apply before you've done your final school qualifications, or afterwards, and we also welcome applications from those taking a gap year. For some of our subjects, you'll need to be studying specific subjects in order to qualify, and for all of our degrees, you'll need an excellent academic record. If we make you an offer, this will either be conditional (if you haven't yet taken your final school exams) or unconditional.

Tests

You may be required to sit an admissions test and you should check the requirements for your course before applying. This isn't anything to worry about: our tests are designed to show us your intelligence and aptitude, and they're deliberately structured so that they don't require

special preparation. In some subjects, you might also be asked to submit samples of your schoolwork.

Interviews

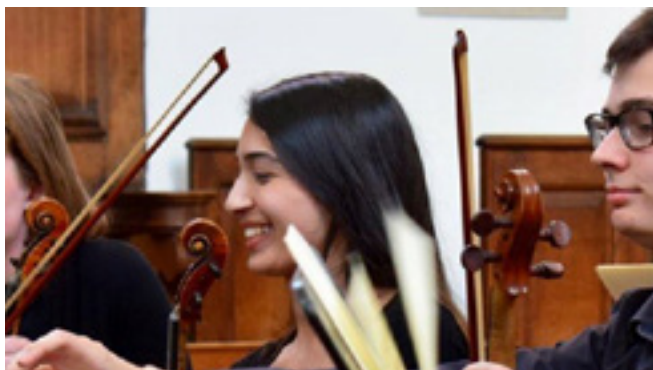
After that, if you're shortlisted, we'll ask you to attend one or more interviews (in Oxford – with free accommodation while you're here – or by Skype if you're outside Europe). You don't need special teaching or preparation for Oxford interviews. Our tutors will talk to you about areas of your subject, and perhaps work through a problem or scenario with you. In fact, an interview at Oxford is a lot like a tutorial – an academic conversation with someone who loves your subject as much as you do, and a chance to exchange ideas and develop your thinking.



“To study biochemistry at Oxford it's really important that you are able to manage your time effectively, and work and think independently - though you can always ask your tutor when you need help. Good science often starts with a good question and I love discussing biochemistry with our students.”

Elena Seiradake

Organising tutor in Biochemistry



Sade Clarke

Undergraduate (Classical Archaeology and Ancient History)



“I love being at Somerville. Here, students are given a platform for their views to be heard and they are supported well, whether it be pastorally or academically.”

During my time here I have made an effort to make Somerville and the Classics Department more inclusive by creating Access Days catering for BAME students from non-selective state schools.

Somerville is not just a college, it's my home and I've loved my two years here.”



Next steps

When you graduate from Somerville you will have skills and knowledge that employers value.

Whatever you study, we can assist you with your next steps. Somerville works closely with the university's careers service to help you develop your professional skills and strengthen your CV.

Our graduates benefit from an active and supportive network of former students who can provide valuable mentoring.

Former Somerville students have gone on to successful and well-paid careers in many fields, from banking and journalism, to teaching, consultancy work and law.

Some have gone to the very top of their chosen field. Our most famous former student is Margaret Thatcher, Britain's first female prime minister, who studied chemistry here.

Sacha Romanovitch, who also studied chemistry at Somerville, became chief executive of accountancy firm Grant Thornton in 2015.

There is a strong tradition of public service. Many of our graduates have gone into politics and the civil service. Sam Gyimah, who studied PPE here, was appointed Universities Minister in 2018.

Many students go on to do further study, acquiring qualifications that will deepen their knowledge, sharpen their skills and boost their attractiveness to potential employers. Others have been inspired to start their own businesses. There is a substantial financial

bonus for studying at Oxford. Over your lifetime, you can expect to earn £46,000 a year, on average*.

“ My time at Somerville changed the course of my life. The relationships I built with my professors and peers helped shape my understanding of what I wanted from my career. And while doing this, I also happened to make over a dozen lifelong friends. ”

Anthemos Georgiades
Alumnus, entrepreneur

*That compares with an average of £23,000 for those whose education ends with their A-levels. Based on calculations by Boston Consulting Group in 2015.



“ My time at Somerville played a major role in my career. I was reading chemistry as an undergraduate but had a greater interest in biology and genetics. The environment, which focused on developing the individual, and the support of my tutors gave me the confidence to change fields and follow the subject I was passionate about. ”

Professor Kay Davies
Alumnus, geneticist (Chemistry, 1969)



Get in touch

Come join us for an open day or contact us using the information below.

Taking part in one of our open days is a good way to find out more about life at Somerville.

You can take a tour with one of our current undergraduates, and drop in on informal sessions with tutors. They can give you specialist advice on applying for their subjects.

For details of forthcoming open days, please visit our website at: www.somerville.ox.ac.uk

There is more information about applying to Oxford at: www.ox.ac.uk/admissions

We welcome state school applicants. If you're from a state school and would like advice on how to apply, or what subject to choose, you are welcome to contact our Access team:

access@some.ox.ac.uk

Admissions Team:

Email: admissions@some.ox.ac.uk

Telephone: +44 (0) 1865 270619

Academic Office:

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Woodstock Road

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“My time at Somerville set me up for every challenge and goal that has happened since. Forging lasting friendships, and the demanding but fascinating academic work are the strong foundation for me from moving half-way around the world, to working in finance (with a History degree no less), to joining a tech start up. I am a keen member of the alumni networks, which show the breadth of choices that a start at Somerville can lead to.”



Cordelia Witton

Alumnus, product manager (Ancient & Modern History, 2006)

Undergraduate subjects*: Ancient and Modern History

Biochemistry
Biological Sciences
Chemistry
Classical Archaeology & Ancient History
Classics
Classics and Modern Languages
Computer Science
Engineering
English
English & Modern Languages
European & Middle Eastern Languages
Experimental Psychology
History
History & Economics
History & English
History & Modern Languages
Law
Law with Law Studies in Europe
Mathematics
Mathematics & Computer Science
Mathematics & Philosophy
Mathematics & Statistics
Medicine
Modern Languages
Modern Languages and Linguistics
Music
Philosophy, Politics & Economics
Physics
Psychology, Philosophy & Linguistics



Who was Mary Somerville?

Mary Somerville (1780-1872) was a Scottish mathematician, scientist and science writer, famous for her skill in explaining complex topics in an accessible form.

Her research explored subjects such as magnetism and light and her writing ranged across the sciences, from astronomy and physics to geography.

The college was named in her honour in 1879.

Credits

Design & artwork © Dominique Vassie 2018

Photography:

Kate Asquith - pages 11, 13

John Cairns - cover photo & pages 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 15

Vance Tan - page 9 (rugby)

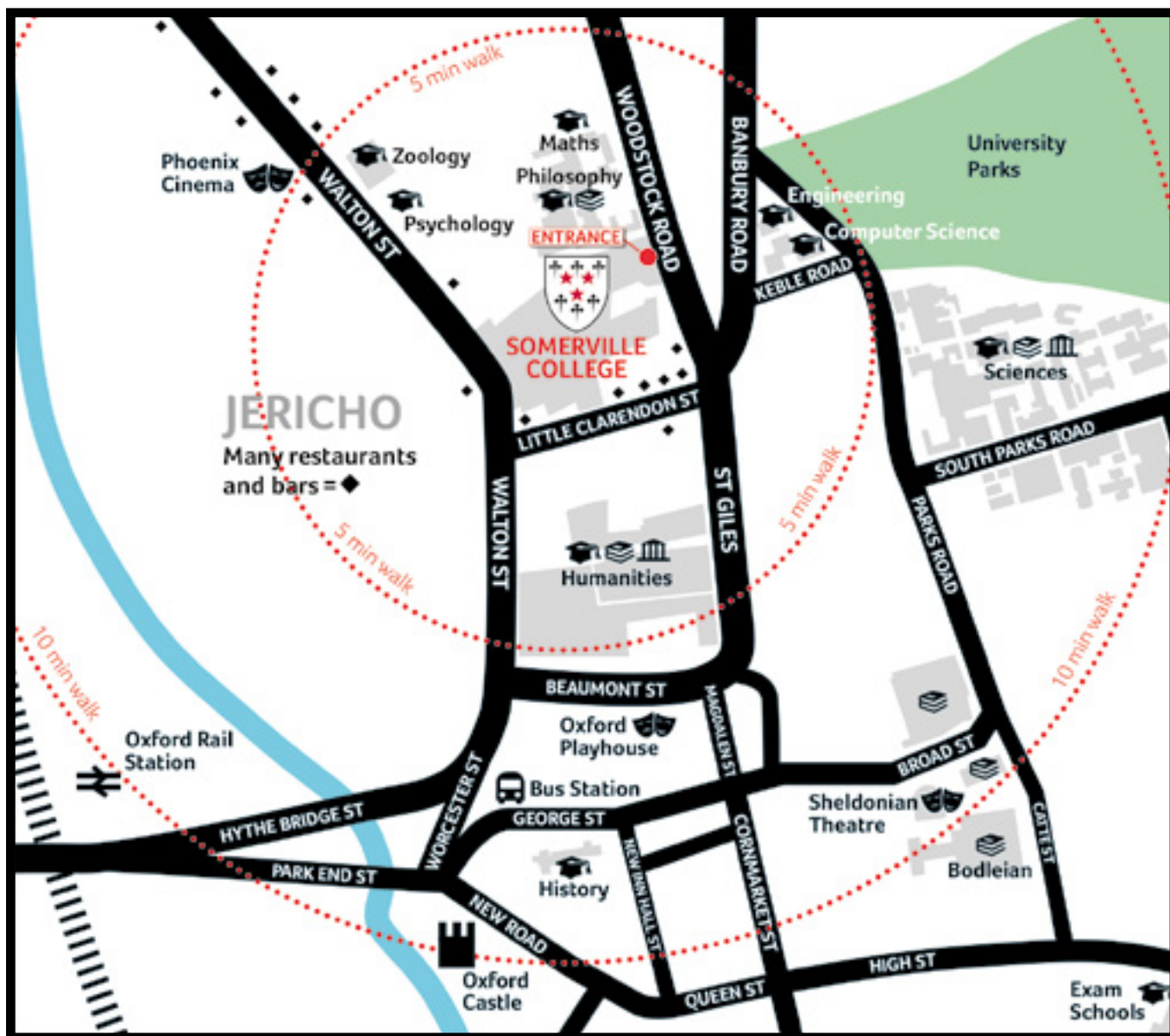
Andrew Wood - page 9 (bake)

Christian Vassie - page 15 (graduation)

Suzan Yavuz - page 8 (music)

*Correct at time of going to press. Somerville admits students at graduate level to study a very broad range of courses, including some disciplines not covered in our undergraduate course list.

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