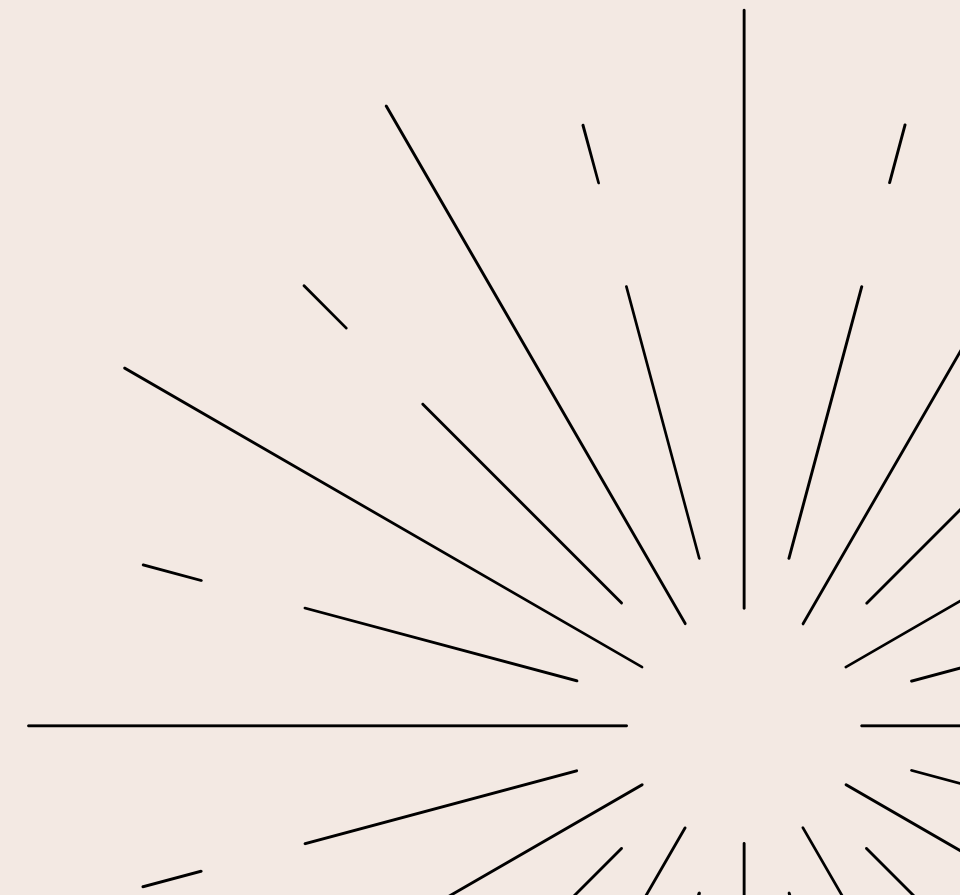




Welcome to Somerville

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Welcome



We are delighted to welcome you to the Somerville College. As new members of the Somerville community, you are joining an international group of scholars who are discovering and sharing knowledge.

This guide is intended to introduce you to our community, to help prepare before you arrive and to thrive once you are here. We look forward to welcoming you soon. Until then, please feel free to write to our Graduate Officer, Sapphire, with any questions.

I look forward to meeting you soon.

With warmest wishes,

Catherine
Principal, Somerville College

Our History of Welcome

Somerville College has a fundamental commitment to supporting sanctuary-seeking students and academics that dates back to the 1930s. More recently, our commitment to sanctuary has been renewed by our 2021 accreditation as one of the UK's first University Colleges of Sanctuary, alongside Mansfield College.

To rebuild a life following the trauma of displacement requires a lifeline. Building on our long tradition of inclusivity paired with academic excellence, Somerville is determined to extend that lifeline by making our college a place of welcome, safety and inclusion and through the establishment of Sanctuary Scholarships that will offer the brightest students a pathway to Oxford.

Somerville is proud to have established the new Sanctuary Scholarships as part of our efforts to provide a guaranteed pathway to Oxford for bright students from a sanctuary-seeking background.

To read more about our Sanctuary scholars click [here](#).





Get ready to come

Once you have been accepted on a course at Somerville, you will need to/can apply for a visa to study in the UK. The documents you need to make the application are:

- Passport
- University letter of acceptance
- Confirmation of accommodation
- Funding arrangements

Before you depart, check that you have all the correct documents to travel to the UK with you (not in checked luggage) ready to present to customs ie. Confirmation of offer, accommodation, funding letter etc.

See Visa Requirements [here](#).



Arriving at Somerville

You will arrive at Somerville via the lodge and be welcomed by one of our friendly lodge porters like Aga here. They will help you find your accommodation and way around College.



The Academic office will already have made contact with you to inform you of your accommodation and time of your induction meeting, but if you have any concerns about this please email [Saphire Richards](#).





After you arrive

1. Apply for a bank account

You will need a bank account so that Somerville can deposit your grant/funds and for you to be able to make payments for your rent etc. Previous scholars have found the best ones to apply for are currently is either HSBC International or Lloyds Bank.

What you need to apply for a UK bank account:

- An in-date passport
- A valid visa
- A bank statement from your home bank, from the last **three months**
- Proof of address in the UK or abroad (check with bank)
- Student ID or an acceptance letter from Somerville

The following link is a guide to help you with this process:

<https://www.savesthestudent.org/international-students/top-international-bank-accounts-uk.html>

Once you are settled you might like to open other types of accounts like Monzo to help with budgeting as they have clever “pots” you can allocate your money to.



2. Register with a doctor

In the UK the NHS is the system that residents use to access both physical and mental healthcare services.

You can register for the NHS by visiting the Jericho Health Centre which is 2 minute walk from Somerville.

The Somerville College Nurse is also available to offer healthcare advice and holds consulting sessions at Somerville every day during term time. Somerville has its own Welfare Officer, Jo Ockwell, and is there to help on all matter relating to welfare and disability.



Jo Ockwell



3. Academic Registration

College registration takes place in 0th week which commences on 2nd October. The Academic Office will already have contacted you by email to notify you of a time and date to register*

As a graduate student at Somerville, you will be a member of the Middle Common Room (MCR). The MCR is both a physical room in the College (with very comfy chairs, art supplies, coffee machine, and much more!), as well as the collective term for the graduate student body. Your department will obviously be a big part of your life in Oxford but in your College you will get a unique opportunity to make friends outside of your course with people that you might not meet otherwise. Shortly you will receive emails about upcoming fresher's week/social/welfare events.

We also have a 'Friends at Somerville' Scheme which seeks to match groups of new students with a current returning student at Somerville - a sort of family if you will! - so that they can meet each other. Returning Somervillians will be happy to informally answer any questions you might have and introduce you to the College once you arrive.

**Ask a member of the lodge team to help you find the room if you are not sure where to go. They are super helpful and always there to help.*

Social Dates for your Diary

You will have many opportunities to meet other Sanctuary Scholars and college members at special events, including breakfasts and teas. The Principal also hosts regular breakfast socials where you can spend personal time with her and other college staff for support and wellbeing.

Here are dates for your diary - there will be others to come!

- **2nd October 2025** - Oxford Orientation gathering with lunch at Somerville (organised by Refugee Studies Centre) 9.30 am - 3.00 pm
- **2nd October 2025** - 3.30 pm Sanctuary Welcome Tea
- **6th October 2025** - Graduate Freshers Dinner
- Week commencing 6th October, there will be an MCR welcome and an Academic induction programme - date will be emailed shortly





Catherine Royle
Principal



Steve Rayner
Senior Tutor

College Contacts



Sapphire Richards
Graduate & Tutorial
Officer



Jo Ockwell
Welfare Officer



Damian
Clements



Abdur Razzak
IT Officer



Accessing the University IT

The University's Single Sign-On (SSO) system means that you can use the same account details to log on to many different services. Your SSO details will let you authenticate to lots of systems (that is, prove you are you), as long as you have an account on that system. It is vital to register for your SSO number when you arrive. You will be automatically assigned and SSO number when you join. Some of the services you will need it for are:

- . Your Somerville email
- . To get your Bodleian Library card
- . Booking onto the meal booking system
- . Printing documents
- . accessing the internet

Contact IT Support if you need [help here](#).

Glossary

- Middle Common Room (MCR) - This is for all Postgraduate students. Members have access to all common and graduate areas of College, all College and MCR events aimed at College Postgraduates, are able to vote in all MCR elections and meetings, and can stand for any position on the MCR Committee
- Junior Common Room (JCR) - this is a student led committee that ensures that Somerville has a vibrant undergraduate community which welcomes everyone. See more information [here](#)
- Principal - Head of College
- Senior Tutor - Oversees the college's academic activities
- Formal Hall - During term time special dinners are held in hall where students and staff have a three-course meal and tend to dress smartly.
- Battels -this is an account you will have at Somerville to pay for your meals and money and financial awards will be paid into this account by the college. It is important to get a UK bank account.



Glossary Continued

- Lodge - - At the entrance to Somerville the lodge is front of house reception where the lodge porters can be found. They hold the keys to any rooms you might need to book, sort post, monitor security, and ensure you feel safe and at home.
- Dean - The Decanal Team handle non-academic disciplinary matters in the college, and additionally provide a 24/7 source of support to students.
- Hilary Term - this is the term from January – March
- Michaelmas Term - this the term from October – December
- Trinity Term - this is the term from April – July
- 0th Week - Terms are listed from 0-9.0th week. 0th is the first week you arrive before tutorials begin
- Bop - this is a student lead music/dance event
- SSO Number - The University's Single Sign-On (SSO) system means that you can use the same account details to log on to many different services



Student Discount Card

These are must haves because they offer discount on a huge number of services from restaurants, retail, travel, cinema and 10% off at the Co-Op Supermarket. You need to have your university email first to register.

Register for Student Beans and UniDays.



Transport Information

Getting to Oxford

Both Heathrow and Gatwick airport have a good bus service located outside the departure terminal that takes you to Gloucester Green in the centre of Oxford. Somerville is a 10 minute walk from there.

Student Rail card

This is useful to get if you want to travel in UK as trains are quite expensive and this offers you a third off rail tickets. See link [here](#).

Bus to London

Oxford has a fantastic bus service to London where the [Oxford Tube Bus](#) runs regularly during the day and hourly at night. If you have a student card the ticket is £16.00 return.

Bicycle

Many students get around the city on a bicycle and there are several shops that have fair priced new and second hand bicycles for sale.

[Cycle King](#) offers student discount and a free service. The MCR Chair will also be able to help with good sites to find second-hand bikes.

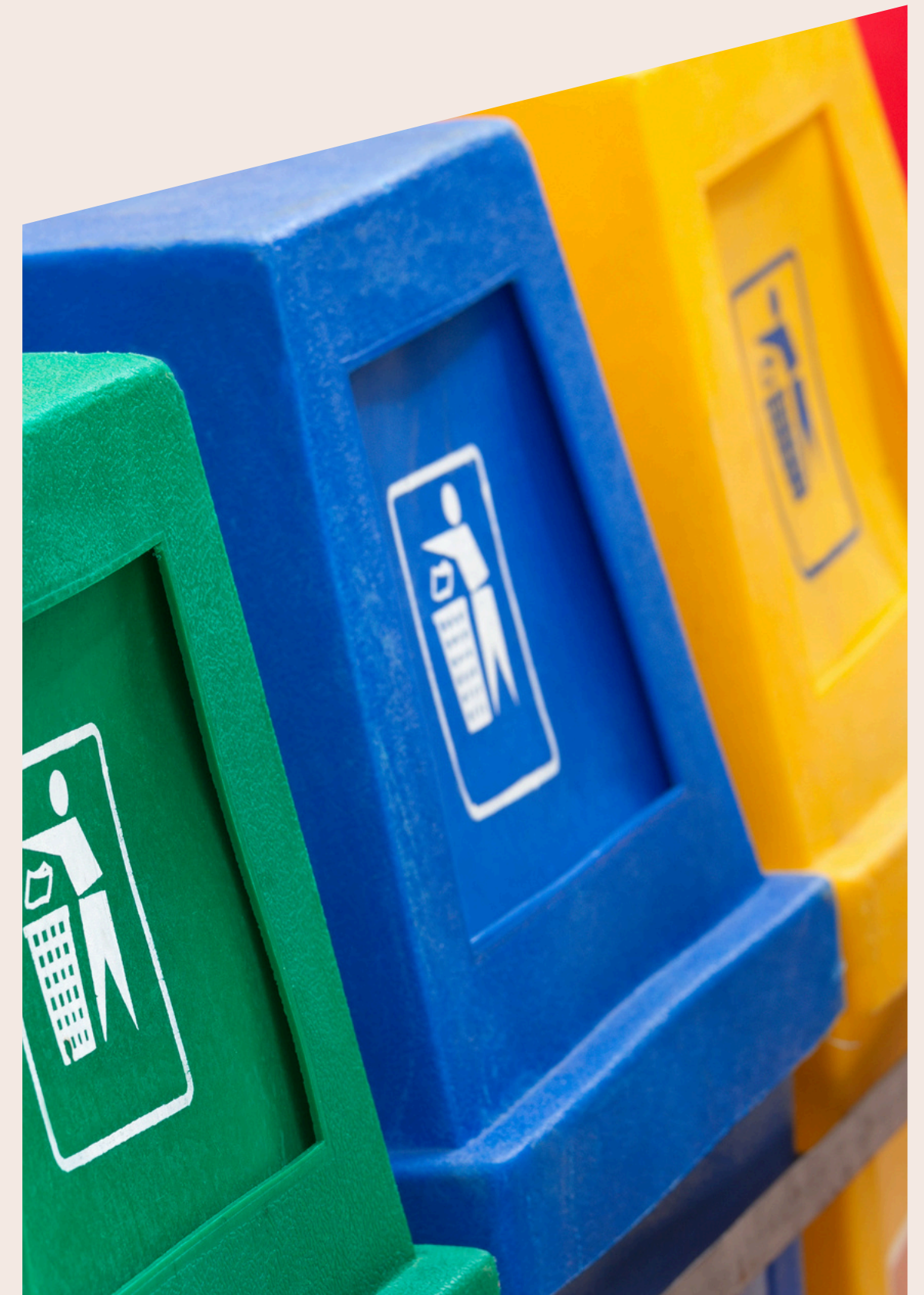
Oxford Buses

[Oxford Bus Company](#)

If your accommodation is not nearer enough to walk to Somerville it is more cost effective to get a [cityzone ticket](#)

Recycling

The UK takes recycling seriously and it is important to check your area and what the different recycling bins are for. Glass, paper, plastic that is recyclable, metal foil can all be recycled and if you are living outside of college then your accommodation will have a food waste bin (caddie) where any waste food can be placed in a green compostable bag which can be purchased from any supermarket. The Co-op general shopping bags also work for this.



Groceries

Most UK supermarkets have loyalty cards which offer discounts on purchases and all have apps that you can download to register.

Supermarkets near Somerville with these cards are:

- Tesco who use the Tesco Club Card
- Co-op has a Club Card (this also offers 10% off all purchases with a student card)
- Sainsbury's loyalty card is the Nectar Card

