Study Abroad at Oxford

Information Packet

2015-2016 Applicants
Applying to study abroad at Oxford University is different than all other study abroad procedures at Barnard.

- Barnard students are required to study abroad at Oxford University for the entire academic year.

- Being accepted as a visiting student at Oxford is highly competitive. In the past, successful students have typically had a GPA of at least 3.7 on a 4.0 scale. Extra-curricular activities are not taken into account.

- Interested Barnard students rank their top choices and are nominated to apply to one of 5 Colleges at Oxford University:
  
  - Mansfield College
  - St. Peter’s College
  - Pembroke College
  - Corpus Christi College
  - Oriel College

- There is an internal review of all applications after which qualified students will be nominated to the appropriate college.

- Given the competitiveness of the programs and in order to help guide students, Barnard students must first submit application materials to Dean Young by early December prior to the year they wish to study abroad. Dean Young and the Barnard Study Abroad Committee will read through your application and determine if it should be put forth to Oxford and if so, to which College. If it is determined that an application be put forth, Dean Young will advise students as to how to fine tune and complete the application to their particular college. Final applications will be due to Dean Young in the middle of January (after winter break), and our Office will mail them on to Oxford. Oxford will then make a decision and students should hear back from them in late March.
Applying:

Each individual application for the Visiting Students program is judged on its own merits, taking into account a range of factors, including:

- academic achievement at the home institution
- strength of academic references and personal statement
- suitability for study at Oxford (understanding of the tutorial system)
- correlation between the course at Oxford and the curriculum at the home institution

You must indicate on your application the subject you intend to study. It is not possible for Visiting Students to take a subject unrelated to their major at their home university or a subject in which they have no university-level experience.

How do you describe what you intend to study:

Go to the main Oxford University website [http://www.ox.ac.uk/](http://www.ox.ac.uk/) and look at the departmental offerings and descriptions. You can be even more specific about your interests within the department, if you wish, but do not be too specific or obscure because you may not be accepted if they cannot identify a tutor who is a specialist on that subject.

  e.g.
  Victorian Lit – you may indicate who you’d like to study if they’re not too obscure
  PPE – would you prefer to focus on Politics, Philosophy or Economics?
  History - area/geographical region? Or time frame?

You should hear of your acceptance in early March. If you are not accepted you will still have time to apply to other universities in the UK.
**Academics:**
UK students “declare their major” before even entering university and they study only that subject for 3 years. You will take 2nd year courses.

Tutorial = meeting with tutor and approx 3 other students (one on two for some subjects, one on four for others); Tutorials meet 3 – 4 hours per week. Or for some schools 24-36 tutorial hours per year = normal load (one full course and one half course) full = 1 meeting per week and ½ = 1 meeting per fortnight;

You will write 1 essay /tutorial meeting. Some go by pages, some by words, some by how long it takes you to read it aloud. (3000 words, 15 minutes of reading, 5 pages)

While there is little directed work you should plan on 36 hours per week of study.

Lectures could be 5 hours per week.

Some courses have a required list of lectures, others you pick relevant lectures. It is possible (if you already know what you are going to study next term) that you might need to go to a lecture this term for next term’s topic. Lists of lectures are on the web and your tutor should point out relevant lectures.

You may have to go to another college for a lecture.

You should do “collections”- term exams - (not always required) yet it is a good way to judge your progress.

Advice from your peers: It can be isolating, mainly independent learning, you need to know time management, don’t take the criticisms of your tutor personally, defend your work not your person.

**Living situation:**
Usually live with first years, single rooms, sometimes en-suite (w/private bath) sometimes not, sometimes with common kitchen, “scouts” come to clean your room & take out garbage daily!

**Meals:**
Usually you have a choice as to whether you self-cater or eat in halls. Pay as you go.

Some colleges have formal dinners with gowns, candles, three courses, served at table...

**Social:**
Join the Oxford Union (weekly debates, lectures, parties etc) 100 pounds to join for the year.

All colleges have a Junior Common Room and Student-run Bar on main campus.

Sports teams are for anyone to join even if you are not an expert, Choirs, Drama groups, ballroom dancing groups etc... help you to meet people.

**Miscellaneous:**
October start – goes through late June.
**How do I rank the colleges?**

General advice from Oxford is “not to worry too much about choosing a college. The colleges have more in common than they have differences, and we find that students develop a fierce loyalty to whichever college they are in, and all believe their college is the best! All the colleges are alike in offering good computing, library, sports and music facilities, as well as in providing students with quality food and accommodation, plus a common room and a bar.”

“All colleges are very strong academically, and most colleges offer most courses. The structure of your course – lectures, practicals, exams and evaluations– will be the same regardless of your college.”

“So the main distinction is the departmental offerings. Your first step should be to [check which colleges offer your course](#) (subject).”

We also have special agreements with each college which determine which subjects you may study there. You may actually be at an advantage applying to study a subject that is not taken by a large number of current students.

Once you’ve checked which colleges offer your course, choosing your college is about choosing the community in which you are going to live. So you might consider:

- how many undergraduates a college has, from 200 to 450 (see [below](#) for details)
- how old or new a college is (an 800-year-old college looks very different from one built in the1960s)
- where the college is (some are in the city centre, others further out, though none is more than 15 minutes’ walk or 5 minutes’ cycle ride)
- what rooms it can offer and who lives with you (some provide accommodation – on site or in college-owned properties – for all students; others expect upper classmen to live off campus for one or two years)"
- also consider how many visiting students will be in your cohort (some schools have a tradition of hosting study abroad students others do not)
## Comparing Colleges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th># of Undergrads</th>
<th># of Visiting Students</th>
<th>Living Situation</th>
<th>Meals</th>
<th>Misc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mansfield</td>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Many</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Pay as you go, known for good food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Host formal meals as well</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Peters</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Many</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Live in annexes about 10 min walk</td>
<td>• Have option to eat or not at the hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Modern, all en-suite singles</td>
<td>• Huge kitchen in dorm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• All with huge kitchens and social room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oriel</td>
<td>1326</td>
<td>Many</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>• On main campus</td>
<td>• Meals are social events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Basic, some en suite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pembroke</td>
<td>1624</td>
<td>Many</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td></td>
<td>• On main campus</td>
<td>• Lunch pay as you go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• “price bands” can upgrade</td>
<td>• Dinner mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Formal meals eaten in gowns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corpus Christi</td>
<td>1517</td>
<td>English Classics</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>• On campus and across the street</td>
<td>• Once a week formal course meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Application to Attend

Oxford University

2015-2016

Please return to Dean Young
in 10 Milbank by

Friday, December 5:

- The attached application form

- 2 letters of recommendation from faculty members (ask your professor to write it for Oxford University in general, not to a particular college, unless only one college is applicable to your major). At least one recommendation should be from the department in which you hope to study (or at least the recommender should be able to speak of your talents/interest in this subject)

- An unofficial transcript (from my.barnard)

- A printout (from my.barnard) of your current program and your fall 2014 program.

- 1-2 paragraphs describing which subject you would like to study during your year at Oxford and why (use the attached list for ideas)

- A writing sample (should be a paper you submitted for a course, graded and with your professor’s comments) preferably for the subject you intend to study at Oxford and preferably only a few pages long.

- The Barnard Study Abroad Committee will meet to review all applications in December. We will inform you if we will be putting forth your application, and if so to which college, by December 21. You will need to tell us by January 12, 2015 if you accept your nomination. We will then advise you as to how to put together your application to your college.

Questions?
Email Dean Young at
gyoung@barnard.edu
APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION AS A VISITING STUDENT

2015-2016

FAMILY NAME ......................................................................................................................................................
FIRST NAME(S) ...................................................................................................................................................

NATIONALITY ......................................................................................................................................................
DATE OF BIRTH .....................................................................................................................................................

HOME UNIVERSITY ..............................................................................................................................................

HOME ADDRESS ................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................

SCHOOL ADDRESS ..............................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................

EFFECTIVE DATES FOR SCHOOL ADDRESS .................................................................................................

E-MAIL ..............................................................................................................................................................@barnard.edu

GPA ........................................

PROPOSED COURSE OF STUDY ..........................................................................................................................

NAMES OF TWO ACADEMIC REFEREES:
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
EXPECTED DATE OF GRADUATION (from Barnard) .................................

MAJOR ..................................................................................................................

MINOR..................................................................................................................

TOP TWO COLLEGE CHOICES (Mansfield, Corpus Christi, Oriel, Pembroke or St Peter’s)

1. ..........................................................................................

2. ..........................................................................................

Please write 2 paragraphs expressing why you have indicated these particular colleges as your top choices (1 paragraph for each college)

You must be willing to attend either of these colleges. Once the committee has decided the college to which we will put forth your application you may not dispute their decision, you may accept or decline. If you are accepted to the college to which we have put you forth, you will be expected to attend.