

NDCN Student Club information for prospective and first year students

Introduction

NDCN is a diverse department, made up of many sub-departments that are spread across the John Radcliffe Hospital and the city centre. So although you are part of NDCN, you can be based at any of these sites. We are also from all over the world, part of different colleges and have different interests, so our experiences of post graduate life are all very different, but we have tried to be broad and cover a range of things so hopefully something matches your interests.

International Student Experience

- The University of Oxford has a very international student and staff body, so it is usually not too difficult to find people from your home country in the department, your college, or university clubs if you wish to do so. There are also plenty of national societies, e.g. the Swiss Society, French Society, which put on events for you to socialise with people from your home country.
- If you need to get a British bank account, make sure to book an appointment with a bank soon after your arrival, because they fill up quickly. Also do read up on which documents you will need to have with you at the appointment.
 - Tipp: the bank Monzo is a fairly new and modern bank, which does not require you to make an appointment or to show any documents. Setting up an account is very easy and quick and you can manage your account conveniently through a smartphone app.
- Non-EU students
 - College, NDCN, and the central university will have information on Tier 4 visa
 - You will need to pick up your BRP card before you will be able to finalize your college registration, open a bank account, etc. (this can only be done in person)
 - If you need to register with the police, do not worry if your appointment time is significantly later than your arrival date. Just notify College and your Department and go to your appointment when scheduled
 - Verify how many hours/week you are allowed to work (differs in term vs not)
 - Make sure you ALWAYS travel with your BRP card when you LEAVE the UK
 - Do not carry your BRP card around with you for daily activities
- EU students/Brexit

- Due to Brexit, you will need to apply for the UK settlement scheme if you are an EU, EEA or Swiss citizen. You can find out about the scheme and how to apply here: <https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families/what-settled-and-presettled-status-means>
- You can find additional information on how being a European student at the University of Oxford will change after Brexit here: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/oxford-and-the-eu>
- Generally, if you start your degree this year (2020/21), your rights and student fee status in the UK will not be affected by Brexit. Those that start in the year 2021/22 will have the international fee status and you will need a student visa

Housing

College

- Easiest way to find housing, trustworthy, and has good operations in terms of fixing any issues
- College can fill up due to capacity, but many colleges offer housing outside of college.
 - Check where you will work. Is it at JR? Old Road campus? South Parks road? Don't be like me, who misunderstood my PI and got housing by the JR when I work in South Parks.
- Will usually be single or double beds. Some places have shared bathrooms and kitchens. Some places have individual bathrooms. See what fits you best.
- Once you sign a lease, it is extremely difficult to change tenancies, so be sure to be happy with your choice
- Occupancy length varies so be aware of that. A sensible choice is to sign a contract until the end of August/start of September

Renting in Oxford

- Start looking early! February is a good time generally. You can look on websites such as zoopla, rightmove, or directly through agencies like Taylor's. Facebook is also good if you are looking for a spare room: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/160632823948859>
- Places with more bedrooms will usually be cheaper per person
- Cowley is good place to look for a flat. There's lots of cute restaurants, supermarkets and a lively nightlife. Jericho is also nice but a little more posh and expensive. Flats in the city centre are pretty rare

Post Graduate Life

Sports

- Oxford has over 80 different sports teams
- Not all require extensive time commitments or tryouts

- Good way to try out more niche sports
 - Most teams have a free taster session in the beginning of term
- Very common UK sports (ex. rowing) can also be found at the college level, where you compete against other colleges

Student Club

- Group of students from different years and areas within NDCN who come together to help bring students together and facilitate the spreading of important information.
Have different committees within that allow us to have direct conversations with admins, so students can bring up issues for the club to relay to appropriate admin.
- Great way to meet students, admin from NDCN, and organize events.
- If you would like to join us then send us an email

Lab/Department

- You will probably have two labs and two supervisors - this is a great way to meet people who are interested in the same research as you as soon as you come to Oxford.
- Departments organise LOTS of events (both subdepartment e.g. WIN or wider department e.g. NDCN).
 - Talks (internal speakers, external speakers, student presentations)
 - Socialising (food and drink receptions)
 - Celebrations (e.g. opening of new buildings, christmas parties)

Talks

https://talks.ox.ac.uk/browse?count=20&start_date=2018-07-02&include_subdepartments=True&page=1

- As mentioned above, there are lots of talks at Oxford these can be hosted by
 - MSD - e.g. talks on writing papers, transfer, using referencing software
 - NDCN - invited speakers talk about clinical neuroscience topics
 - Cortex club - a student lead organisation that invite speakers to talk and chat with students afterwards
 - Sub-department - e.g. Wellcome Centre for Integrative Neuroimaging (WIN) organise many talks that focus on neuroimaging topics and the interests of WIN (including inclusivity and diversity)
 - Colleges - colleges also often host speakers and invite other colleges to attend, e.g. a recent symposium at Teddy Hall on synesthesia
 - Other departments - if you can find out about them you're more than welcome to attend!

Social life events

- College will be the epicenter of your social life. The Middle Common Room (MCR) is the student body of graduate students within a college. This includes both Masters and DPhil students. The MCR committee organises regular events ranging from formal dinners, to talks, cocktail parties, and bops (themed nights). You will get to learn more about these during freshers week but if you have any question you could also always ask your MCR committee members.
- Colleges also organise exchange dinners where you get to visit and have dinner at another college. This is a great opportunity to visit as many places as you can and make friends across the university.
- After work drinks are typical for most groups, but even if this doesn't suit your needs and schedule then feel free to organise something with other fellow labmates. For example I have Tuesday lunch with some friends from my journal club, Monday dinner with my old flatmate and on Thursdays I usually go out for lunch at the Gloucester Green Market.
- There's lots of cool places for lunch in Oxford and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. From Sasi's Thai and the Alpha Bar in the Covered Market, to Edamamé and Will's in the city centre, and Red Star on Cowley Road.
- In terms of fun activities, Oxford has several cinemas, a mini golf course (Junkyard golf club), regular comedy shows (Jericho comedy, the old firehouse etc.), and plays.
- Sadly Oxford doesn't have the most vivid nightlife. Plush on a Tuesday is good and relatively cheap. The Bullington hosts a number of decent nights, and Sandy's piano bar can be nice. Then we have the Bridge, ATIK, Fever, and Hank's.

Milestones

Transfer (1st milestone)

- Completed by end of the 4th term (i.e. after first year)
- Oral and written report
- Milestone is in place to ensure that your DPhil project is feasible in 3 years and that you are getting properly supervised
- Can be challenging - idea is for this to be tough, so you don't spend 3 years going down the wrong path and then can't fix the mistakes

First Year Expectations

- 1st year is nicknamed the 'trash year'
- A substantial portion is spent on settling into Oxford, getting your project off the ground (ex. Applying for ethics), getting a good grasp of the literature, and learning the required techniques
- It may feel that you are not doing anything, but you are actually learning a lot - there is just no tangible metric like when you take classes because there are no exams or assignments
- Take the time to settle in and enjoy living in Oxford!