

SARAH LAWRENCE
COLLEGE
AT OXFORD

2023–2024

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INTRODUCTION

We are delighted that you are joining the Sarah Lawrence Programme at Oxford (SLP).

This handbook has been designed to help you prepare for the year ahead. Please read it thoroughly and be sure to bring it with you to Oxford.

You are about to embark on one of the most rewarding and challenging years of your life. We hope that you will enjoy it immensely.

Best wishes,

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2023–2024 CALENDAR

Oxford terms run for eight weeks ('full term'). The weeks either side of full term are known as Noughth and Ninth Weeks. Noughth Week is used to set up the term's work, and Ninth Week is used for completing the term's tasks and for consultations about the following term. We also run Programme events in Ninth Week in all three terms.

Students are expected to be in College for Noughth Week, We strongly recommend that students also remain in College for Ninth Week.

Students arrive, orientation begins:	Wednesday, 27 September 2023
Michaelmas Term begins:	Sunday, 1 October 2023 (beginning 0th Week)
Michaelmas Term ends:	Saturday, 2 December 2023 (end 8th Week)
Ninth Week: 2023	Sunday, 3 December–Saturday, 9 December
Students return by:	Sunday, 7 January 2024 (0th Week)
Hilary Term begins:	Sunday, 7 January 2024 (beginning 0th Week)
Hilary Term ends:	Saturday, 9 March 2024 (end 8th Week)
Ninth Week:	Sunday, 10 March–Saturday, 16 March 2024 (we will have our overnight trip in this week)
Students return by:	Sunday, 14 April 2024 (0th Week)
Trinity Term begins:	Sunday, 14 April 2024 (beginning 0th Week)
Trinity Term ends:	Saturday, 15 June 2024 (end 8th Week)
Farewell Party	Wednesday, 19 June 2024
Students must vacate rooms by	Sunday, 23 June 2024, in the morning

Students may not arrive before the opening day, Wednesday, 27 September 2023, because housing cannot be prepared before that date. **You should arrive and collect your keys from Merifield between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, 27 September 2023.** If you are unable to arrive in Oxford at this time, you must email the SLP Office at Oxford in advance.

Personal effects may be shipped to arrive at Merifield on 27 September 2023 or after. Mail for you may be sent to Wadham College to arrive after 27 September 2023 and throughout the year. Parcels and packages should be sent to:

Your name
Merifield,
Ferry Pool Road,
Summertown,
Oxford, OX2 7DU,
United Kingdom

WELCOME TO OXFORD

Welcome to the Sarah Lawrence Programme in Oxford! We look forward to your arrival in this beautiful and stimulating university city. As a member of the Programme you are enrolled as a member of Wadham College and a Visiting Student at the University of Oxford. This status gives you access to all University facilities, including sports venues, clubs and societies, lectures, and of course libraries, ranging from specific subject collections to the world-famous Bodleian Library.

Oxford is a collegiate university – that is, it is made up of 39 colleges which are self-governing institutions. The colleges range from the very old (University and Balliol, founded in the mid-thirteenth century) to the very new (Reuben College, founded in 2019). Wadham is the only Oxford college founded in the seventeenth century, and retains its original historic – and very beautiful – buildings. Colleges are not only residential halls, but also communities grounded in academic life, and many students feel much more strongly attached to their colleges than to the University as a whole. Sarah Lawrence Programme students are encouraged to become part of the college community: an active engagement with events and activities in college will enhance your experience of Oxford considerably. You will be given the same access to academic, social and dining facilities as Wadham undergraduates.

Additionally, you will benefit from the practical and pastoral support provided by Wadham, ranging from the porters in the entrance Lodge to the Chaplain, who is available to speak to those of all faiths and none, and including the various student organisation officers who can offer advice on many issues and help to integrate you into the college community. The Wadham–SLC Exchange students will be present during your initial orientation period, and important in developing the links between Programme students and Wadham students.

Please note that you will be considered a full member of Wadham College, and a full member of the Junior Common Room community with voting rights in the Student Union. However, you may not be able to stand for office in or vote for the Oxford Student Union. When you leave Wadham College, you will be eligible for Associate Status as an Oxford Alumnus.

THE SARAH LAWRENCE PROGRAMME OFFICE

The Sarah Lawrence Programme has an office in Wadham's central Oxford site (staircase 28, room 4). The Programme Director and Administrator both work out of this office. With their expertise in academic, social and practical matters, they provide an invaluable source of information and advice during Orientation and throughout the year, as well as arranging the tutorials which are the centrepiece of students' educational experience during the year. The

Programme Director meets with students on a regular basis to plan and review their academic programme, and also offers regular and frequent office hours. The Office works with the University, Wadham College, Sarah Lawrence College and the other home institutions of Programme members to create an effective network of communication and support. The office is open during regular hours in term-time and also provides a full emergency back-up service during evenings, weekends and vacations.

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Oxford is the oldest English-speaking university in the world. While there is no clear date of foundation, teaching existed in some form in 1096 and developed rapidly in 1167 as a result of Henry II banning English students from attending the University of Paris. By 1200, Oxford was providing a structured course of study and Oxford's first University Charter was granted in 1214.

In the University's early days, students lived in private lodgings but, before long, licensed academic halls were established, presided over by 'Masters'. Students were young men who needed 'book learning' - future monks and priests, as well as 'clerks' destined for royal or civic administration. They would 'come up' or enrol at around the age of 16 and would study liberal arts for a first degree, the *trivium* of grammar, rhetoric and logic. The Master's degree would follow, with the *quadrivium* of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music. If they took a Doctorate, they could spend up to sixteen years studying. Teaching and examinations were conducted orally in Latin.

Colleges gradually evolved from the academic halls. This evolution was not without its struggles. In the thirteenth century, rioting between 'town and gown' - townspeople and students - spurred the establishment of the fortress-like colleges (and the exile of some scholars, who went off to the Fens to found the University of Cambridge – the 'other place'). University, Balliol and Merton colleges, established between 1249 and 1264, are the oldest. New College, founded in 1379 by William of Wykeham to educate candidates for the clergy, was the first to be planned in what became the established manner - quadrangles with 'staircases' for living accommodation, a hall for eating and a chapel for worship. The arrival of the colleges marked the beginning of the takeover of the city centre by the University.

The University library began to grow in the fifteenth century, when Humfrey, duke of Gloucester, donated his manuscript collection to the institution; to house it, a library room was built above the Divinity School. This room, known as Duke Humfrey's Library, is still in use as a reading room today. After a period of disuse, the library was revived in the late sixteenth century by the diplomat Thomas Bodley, after whom it is now named. The main Bodleian quadrangle (the Old Schools Quadrangle) was built in the early seventeenth century; you can still see the names of the scholarly disciplines of the time over the entrance doors. The early modern period also saw the foundation of Oxford University Press; the opening of the Ashmolean Museum, the first museum open to the public in Britain; and the construction of the Sheldonian Theatre, which is used for University ceremonies and concerts, and of the Radcliffe Camera. These buildings remain the central site of the

University to this day.

It was also in the seventeenth century, during the Civil Wars, that Oxford served as the Royalist headquarters when Charles I was forced to leave London. Charles created a Royalist parliament in Oxford, which met in Convocation House, and the city was besieged and eventually surrendered to the Parliamentarians. This was Oxford's most active involvement with national politics, but many alumni have become leading politicians – including thirty prime ministers, from the eighteenth century to Rishi Sunak. The list of notable members in all fields of human endeavour is long and includes 70 Nobel laureates, and well-known figures from Nigella Lawson to Tim Berners-Lee.

Only men could attend Oxford until 1879, when Lady Margaret Hall and Somerville College opened; but it was not until 1920 that women were permitted to matriculate and graduate in the university. From the 1970s, the men's colleges began accepting women students, Wadham being one of the first, and in the present day all colleges are coeducational (unlike Cambridge, where two colleges still admit women only). Seven of Oxford's colleges are for graduate students only, and one - All Souls - has no students at all.

The university has no campus in the manner of an American institution. The colleges, libraries, departmental buildings and lecture halls are scattered around the city, mixed in with shops, offices and even homes. The city, which has a population of around 160,000 people, has a life of its own outside the university, and there is always plenty going on. For students, the colleges are focal points, each with its own history, traditions and atmosphere. Each student is affiliated to a particular college, which provides tutorials, supervision, social activities, dining and accommodation. Colleges vary in size and character: Wadham has just over 600 students, and is one of the larger and livelier. There are in all over 11,000 undergraduates and 10,000 graduate students at the university.

WADHAM COLLEGE

Wadham was founded in 1610 by Dorothy Wadham, a wealthy landowner. It was built just outside the old city walls (still visible in New College, just across Holywell Street) on a site which had been used by a monastery before the Reformation. The original buildings were designed by a famous master builder from the west of England, William Arnold, and the front quad, the Hall and the Chapel remain almost unaltered to this day. Twentieth- and twenty-first-century buildings have been erected behind these older edifices and include a library, student rooms, lecture and drama theatres, and a new student centre. The College buildings also include the Holywell Music Room, completed in 1748 and often considered to be the oldest purpose-built music performance room in Europe. It's still used as a concert venue today.

In 1648, the Warden of Wadham (the head of the college) was the scientist John Wilkins, who (among other things) designed a number of flying machines and wrote two books on reaching the moon. He brought together an impressive group of scientists and philosophers who established the Royal Society in London. One of the group was Sir Christopher Wren,

also an alumnus of the college, whose first commission at Oxford was the Sheldonian Theatre. He went on to design many of the churches in London after the Great Fire, most famously St Paul's Cathedral. Other famous Wadhamites have included John Wilmot, earl of Rochester, the Restoration libertine and poet; Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury; Michael Foot, leader of the Labour Party in the 1980s; and the actresses Rosamund Pike and Felicity Jones.

Despite the fact that the college was founded by a woman, the original college statutes forbade women from entering the college (with the exception of the laundrywoman). In a more enlightened era, Wadham was one of the first colleges to become co-educational and admitted women in 1974. Nowadays, a high percentage of Wadham's 450 undergraduate students are from state schools. It is one of the most diverse of all the colleges and has the reputation of being progressive, friendly and politically active.

Sarah Lawrence Programme students are welcomed and integrated into the college during Orientation. They are encouraged to join in with all college and university activities open to Oxford undergraduates (except for sitting examinations). There are many opportunities for political and social involvement: Programme members elect a SLP Representative Officer to Wadham's Student Union (SU) Committee and all students are entitled to vote at Wadham SU meetings. Visiting students are encouraged to involve themselves in different aspects of college life and by doing so become part of an engaging community and a continuing tradition. Those who have the best Oxford experience are often those who become the most involved.

WHAT TO BRING

Important Paperwork (bring these items with you in carry-on luggage):

All documents required for entry into Britain and your arrival in Oxford, including:

- A valid passport and visa for the duration of your stay in Oxford. It is a good idea to make two photocopies of important documents such as these; pack one separately from your passport and leave the other somewhere secure, such as home, in case you lose the original. Also make a copy on your phone.
- Any supplementary visa documentation which you have received. Please note that your initial visa is valid for 30 days only. You will need to collect a Biometric Residence Permit from the St Aldates Post Office in Oxford or another designated place. Full instructions on this will be given during the initial orientation period.
- A letter from Sarah Lawrence College certifying your status as a student on the Programme.

Money

Please bring enough money, in the form of cash or available to you by accessing an ATM machine upon arrival, to cover the first two weeks in Oxford. You will need easy access to about £500 to cover the Orientation period and the first few weeks. You can use your debit card in most ATMs or cash machines. **Expenses during Orientation will be higher than in subsequent weeks as you will be purchasing domestic items and books, shopping for food,**

joining University and College societies.

Clothing and Personal Items

- Please plan to purchase a cell phone or SIM card soon after arrival as there are no telephones in the flats. There are a variety of providers to choose from. Most students buy a pay-as-you-go phone.
- Bring sufficient personal items and clothes to see you through the first term or until any luggage that you may have chosen to send via a carrier arrives in Oxford. Ideally, you will be able to bring everything you need on the plane as this is generally the cheapest option, but check weight restrictions with your airline.
- Be sure to pack waterproof shoes for walking around Oxford and some rainwear. The temperature in late September/early October can be warm enough for short sleeves during the day but also chilly enough to require sweaters and a warm jacket. Winter in Oxford will be cold and is often wet. Clothes in Britain are expensive: we recommend wearing layers to keep out the winter dampness and chill.
- Please bring bath and hand towels.
- Hairdryers and other such appliances will require a voltage conversion plug (British voltage is 240), which you can purchase in Oxford. You may prefer to invest in inexpensive British equivalents. Please refer to the section 'Bringing Electronic Goods from the US' (page 17 below).
- Computer - please bring a laptop with you. See below for further details.

How to Bring It

- Check weight limitations for luggage with your airline. The best option, as noted above, is to carry all that you require for the year on your flight. Otherwise, you may arrange to have extra items sent by air or sea carriers or pay for extra baggage.
- Do not pack anything valuable in your checked baggage.
- Make copies of any important documentation and carry these separately.
- Be sure that you are properly insured for travel.
- Anything irreplaceable should be carried with you at all times.
- If you are bringing a musical instrument, call your airline for full instructions about packing and checking it through.

Shipping Items

Consult each company for specific size limits, costs for packing, taxes, insurance and any additional costs for retrieval of luggage at point of destination. Ask for advice on customs tax and filling out customs forms. Keep copies of all the forms you complete.

Always read your shipping agreement closely and bring all documents with you. Declare any used belongings that you send by carrier as 'personal property' to avoid paying customs duty. Do not send trunks: they are unwieldy, may not fit in your room, and cannot be stored. Two services you may want to investigate are the US Postal Service and DHL Worldwide Express.

YOUR ARRIVAL IN ENGLAND

The Programme asks that all participants arrive in at Merifield in Oxford between 9.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 28 September 2022. Please contact the SLP office if this is not possible. (slp@wadham.ox.ac.uk)

You are likely to arrive at one of the two major London airports: Heathrow or Gatwick.

If possible, please go through the staffed immigration gates and NOT the e-gate. You may need proof of entry on your temporary visa.

Heathrow Airport

Heathrow is served by a regular coach service (large blue buses called 'the Airline') to and from Oxford. If you arrive at Terminals 1, 2, or 3, exit Customs and follow signs to the Central Bus Station and go to Bay 15. If you arrive at Terminal 4, take the free transfer to T1, 2, and 3 and then get the bus at Bay 15. From Terminal 5, it is not necessary to go to the Central Bus Station: instead, find Bay 10 outside the terminal. Buses to Oxford run approximately every 30 minutes between 4.00 am and 10.00 pm, less frequently during the night. Check the timetable at <https://airline.oxfordbus.co.uk/heathrow/>. A one-way fare costs £25, a period return (round trip), valid for 3 months, costs £35. The ride should take about an hour, perhaps a little longer in heavy traffic.

Gatwick Airport

Students seldom arrive at Gatwick Airport but transport information from there can be found at <https://airline.oxfordbus.co.uk/gatwick/>.

- The luggage allowance on both routes is two suitcases per person in the luggage compartment and small carry-on luggage inside the coach.
- The driver may ask for your destination. Your journey will end at Gloucester Green (pronounced 'Gloster'), the Oxford bus station.
- Neither of these coach services offers a student fare rate.
- You may also want to check the latest schedule available online at <http://www.oxfordbus.co.uk>.

Taxis from the airports are expensive. If booked in advance, Heathrow prices generally start at £100; Gatwick prices range from £110 to £125. If not booked in advance, these fares can triple in cost, so always prearrange such journeys. If you require further information on pre-booking a taxi from the airport, please ask Prema Samuel at Sarah Lawrence College.

If you are making your way to Oxford from central London, trains leave from Paddington Station and Marylebone Station (telephone 08457 484950 for timetable information, or visit <http://www.thetrainline.com>), and a one-way ticket will cost £12–£39, depending on the time of travel; they can be cheaper if booked well in advance online. Coaches (Oxford Tube) leave from Victoria Coach Station and other central London stops every 15 minutes or so. The coach services offer a student ticket one-way for £12; £18 for a period return valid for three months. Information is available online at <http://www.oxfordtube.com/>.

Arrival in Oxford

If you have taken a coach from the airport, travel to the last stop, the central bus station in Oxford, known as Gloucester Green. From here you will need to find the taxi stand or 'taxi rank' (ask or follow signs) and take a taxi to Merifield in Ferry Pool Road, Summertown. The fare from Gloucester Green to Merifield is about £10, with a possible charge for each item of luggage. If you have taken the train, you will find the taxi rank outside the main entrance to Oxford rail station. The fare is about £10 with a possible charge per item of luggage.

Arrival at Merifield

When you arrive at Merifield you will need to use the buzzer at the front gate to contact the Manager, Lindsay Kennedy. You will be met by SLP staff and Wadham students, who will show you to your room. Please feel free to call Merifield (01865 432259) if you have difficulties en route.

We will have prepared information to help you settle in, including maps, housing information and an Orientation schedule which provides introductory and essential information for your year in Oxford. As many of you will have flown overnight to reach England, procedures on arrival day will be kept to a minimum. Your first day will be a quiet one and a time for you to settle into your flat and meet your flatmates. We will have a meeting at 4.00 p.m. and we will notify you of the details on the day. While you may feel tired after 'losing' a minimum of five hours, it is a good idea to try to keep awake until at least 9.00 p.m. Otherwise, you may prolong jetlag and delay adjustment to local time.

ORIENTATION WEEK

Orientation week (actually ten days) is designed not only to introduce you to many aspects of your life in a new place but also to fulfil the registration requirements of the University. You will be busy with talks, tours, enrolment at the Bodleian Library, registration with the College medical practice and various social events. We also run an SLP-specific orientation programme during the first few days of your time in Oxford.

During Orientation, every student will meet the Director to discuss their course of study over the first term and the remainder of the academic year. You will also use Orientation time to organise your finances, explore your surroundings, and orient yourselves within Oxford.

Families and friends are welcome to accompany you to Oxford, and they are invited to coffee at our first formal Orientation meeting at 10.00 am on Thursday, 29 September. A tour of Wadham will be arranged for any family or friends that morning. For the rest of Orientation, your time with them will be limited due to the demands of the University and the Orientation timetable, and all other SLP Orientation events are for Programme members only. As Wadham Freshers' Week coincides with the second week of Orientation, and you will be attending many of the events, this will be a very busy time.

ACADEMIC STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAMME

The Academic Year

The academic year at Oxford is divided into three eight-week terms: Michaelmas (fall), Hilary (winter), and Trinity (spring). Officially, all lectures and tutorials take place within each eight-week term, but students should also be in Oxford for the week preceding Full Term (0th Week) and the week following Full Term (9th Week). You will discuss your studies with the Director in individual meetings in 0th Week of Michaelmas, Hilary and Trinity, and mid-term meetings in Michaelmas and Hilary.

Course Structure and Credit

Students pursue two courses of study each term and will have seven tutorials for each course. Students receive a written evaluation and a grade from each tutor at the end of each term, which is then placed on their transcript. Guest students must consult with their home institution advisors to ensure that their credit requirements will be fulfilled during the year in Oxford.

Tutorials

Tutors for the Programme are drawn from throughout the university (not just from Wadham College) and sometimes beyond, if we wish to take advantage of an expert in the field who is not affiliated with the university. Students meet seven times over the course of term with their tutor in each subject and in most subjects they write a paper, or 'essay', for each tutorial based on assigned reading. Sometimes the tutor expects the paper to be delivered or emailed in advance of the tutorial; sometimes the tutor will only receive the paper in the tutorial; sometimes a tutor will ask a student to read a paper aloud. Tutorial discussion centres on the ideas contained in the paper. Work assignments may differ in some subjects (such as lab-based disciplines), but the weekly tutorial remains a core component of all courses.

We may suggest that you experience a double tutorial. This means that one of your termly tutorials may be shared with another Programme student or an Oxford undergraduate (as would be the case for most Oxford undergraduates). Double tutorials allow for lively discussions with a fellow student in and out of tutorials.

The contents of tutorial courses are modelled on the tutorials followed in Wadham and the rest of University. The following website shows how the University's Departments design their respective degree courses:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses/course-listing>

The Director will meet with students during the term to ensure that the tutorials are progressing in a satisfactory manner and to provide support where necessary. The Director will also liaise directly with each tutor before and during term. **Do not contact any Oxford tutor directly before your academic year begins** unless the tutor or the SLP office has told you to do so. If you have not heard from your tutors by 0th week, consult the Oxford office. The Director is always available to discuss any issues that may arise in relation to tutorials or tutors.

University Lectures and Classes

As Visiting Students, everyone on the Programme is entitled to attend normal university lectures. These are offered in the full range of academic disciplines and are often given by world experts in the field. They are an excellent means of extending the scope of tutorial work. Full lecture lists are published at the beginning of each term, and are also available online at <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/lectures>. The SLP office will provide guidance on lectures which are especially relevant for each student.

You may be able to pursue University classes in modern languages to complement your tutorials. For further information, see <http://www.lang.ox.ac.uk/>.

CORE PROGRAMME

The Core Programme is designed to introduce students to British culture and society, and to broaden their intellectual horizons. Consisting principally of theatre and museum visits and trips to sites of historic and cultural interest, it runs through all three terms. Core Programme events are not compulsory but they do provide a good opportunity for the group to come together on a regular basis and we expect you to attend when possible. We will discuss your interests and ideas at the beginning of the year and see what we can incorporate. Previous trips have included visits to London; Bletchley Park (Second World War codebreaking facility); exhibitions at the Ashmolean Museum, followed by afternoon tea; the seaside at Brighton; Shakespeare productions at Stratford upon Avon; Stonehenge; Bath; overnight in Wales; and various stately homes, including Blenheim Palace. There is also a regular afternoon tea on Tuesdays during term-time, with (mostly) home baking.

PROGRAMME HOUSING

Students live in the housing provided by the Programme. We are fortunate to house all SLP students in Merifield, Wadham College's housing for graduate students and some senior undergraduates. This enables the creation of a Programme community as well as providing opportunities for mixing with Wadham students.

Merifield is in Summertown, North Oxford, a ten-minute bus or bike ride or 25-minute walk from town. You will generally be sharing a flat with other members of the Programme, although you may share with other University students. Housing assignments are carefully thought out and are made on the basis of the information you convey in your housing questionnaire. While we cannot promise you everything you ask for, we do our very best to ensure a comfortable and congenial environment. You will find out about your housing assignment when you arrive in Oxford. Please do not expect to have access to your flat before 27 September 2023.

In all the flats, there is a single bedroom for each student as well as a shared kitchen, living room and bathroom facilities. Each bedroom is furnished with a bed, dresser, desk and

chair, and lamp. One set of linen, a comforter and pillow with covers will be provided. Each kitchen has a fridge and oven and is equipped with crockery, cutlery, and cookware. All flats have central heating and access to the Internet. Washing machines are available on site. **You are responsible for keeping your flats clean and tidy.**

Residency

As a Visiting Student, you are entitled to University privileges and subject to University regulations. The University stipulates that, during Full Term, permission needs to be sought for absences from Oxford of more than three consecutive nights. Except in an emergency, all requests for leave of absence must be made in advance to the Director. Allowing for occasional weekend excursions, students are expected to remain in Oxford throughout the term.

Visitors

It is against Wadham regulations for parents to stay overnight in the flats at any time. Other overnight visitors may be permitted for short stays, although it is important that the Merifield Manager and Director of the Programme are consulted first.

Damage

You will be responsible for looking after your flat during your residency and will therefore be charged for any damages incurred during your stay. A schedule of damages will be conveyed to you upon departure. This may delay refund of your bond.

BANKING, FINANCE AND BUDGETING

Many students choose to open bank accounts upon arrival in Oxford, while some simply use ATMs (cashpoints) to draw money from their US bank accounts. British banks offer the same sort of accounts as in the US. You will have the chance to investigate the various options when you arrive. We strongly recommend setting up a British account; this can be with a new provider such as Revolut, or with a traditional high-street bank. Please be sure that, on arrival, you have at least enough cash to get from the airport to Oxford, allowing extra for food and contingencies.

Before you leave for the United Kingdom, ask your home bank for advice. Ask about cash transfers and any services that may help you during your year abroad. Can you access your account details via the Internet, for example? A letter of recommendation from your bank may prove useful if you decide to open an account in Oxford but is not necessary. The Programme will also write you a letter of support. If you wish to bring a credit card, bear in mind that Visa and MasterCard are far more widely accepted in the UK than American Express. The best way to get money into your UK bank account is to get someone to transfer it across or ask your US bank to do so.

Your Home Bank Account: Points to Bear in Mind

- It is a good idea to inform your bank in writing of your travel plans so that your account record is up to date. You should do the same if you have a credit card so that overseas

use of your card for a year is not seen to constitute 'abnormal usage'.

- Make a note of your bank's routing number as well as their procedures for transferring and depositing money.
- Consider adding a parent or sibling to your account so that deposits can be made on your behalf while you are away. This is the best way to get money to the UK.
- Most overseas ATM machines cannot provide you with account balance information. Although most banks have toll-free information numbers, you are likely to have to pay if dialing from the UK. The easiest way to keep track of your accounts from overseas may be to view your accounts on-line.
- Most banks charge a conversion commission, either a fixed or a percentage charge. Be aware that some banks may charge you for each international withdrawal in addition to an exchange commission proportional to the amount withdrawn.
- Not all international ATM cards will work with UK ATM machines. ATM networks (e.g. NYCE, CIRRUS, PLUS) vary in availability. Any card with a Visa mark on it will be accepted in most places in Europe.

Financial Assistance

If you are dependent on financial aid, it is crucial that you resolve any questions you may have about your package before leaving. If you are expecting a refund, bear in mind that it may not be issued until late October for the fall and late January to mid-February for the spring. This applies to most government loans and grants, particularly the Stafford loan.

Be aware of restrictions on work stipulated by your visa. Also, Oxford University requires that students get permission to work even part-time during the term because of the academic intensity of each term. Part-time jobs can be difficult to find in Oxford. Therefore, when drawing up your budget for the year, do not, under any circumstances, rely on being able to earn money. You are not permitted to be self-employed or run a business. This will violate your visa conditions with serious consequences.

Budgeting for the Year

It is essential that funds are available to you for the duration of your stay. Plan a budget – however provisional – before you leave for Oxford. Bear in mind that your expenses continue during vacations and that the academic year is a full nine months and runs through to the end of June. The cost of living in the United Kingdom is high.

After the Orientation period, which may entail higher expenditure, students find that they settle into a steadier pattern of purchasing by the start of Full Term. To give you some guidance, the average student then spends £200 per week on food, personal expenses, and entertainment. A student eating both lunch and dinner in College could expect to spend about £15 per day on food. Obviously, spending varies according to whether students choose to eat mainly in the College dining hall, at cafes and restaurants, or by cooking at home.

In Wadham, you have access to dining facilities, allowing you to purchase inexpensive breakfasts, lunches, and dinners during Full Term. **We have a happy arrangement with Wadham that entitles you to 10 free dinners a term.** Eating in College is an excellent way of meeting Wadham students. More information is available on the Wadham website and

will also be communicated upon your arrival.

Books are expensive. Most students choose to use the many libraries (lending and non-lending) that are open to them. If you intend to buy your textbooks, anticipate spending as much as £100 per term and between £10 and £40 per textbook. Remember that books are heavy and can be costly to transport home at the end of the year. There is a £50 book grant available to all.

Travel during Breaks

Travel expenses for the two breaks can be minimal since students can stay in their flats throughout the academic year. However, many students choose to travel around Europe or the UK during at least one break.

Remember to budget for vacation travel. Check the cost of tickets and travel passes. Eurail passes must be purchased in the States and must be validated for initial use within six months from the issue date, although you will be able to purchase a rail pass for travel within a single European country once you are in England. If you are not planning to travel in Europe until the Easter vacation, therefore, you should have someone in the States purchase the pass for you and mail it to you in Oxford. You can consult www.railpass.com for more information about rail passes. Many students also make use of the many inexpensive, no-frills airlines operating in Europe. See <https://www.kiwi.com/en/cheap-flights/> or www.whichbudget.com for details. There are many other sites also available.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mail

Mail should be sent directly to you at Wadham, where it can be collected from the Lodge:

your name,
Wadham College,
Oxford,
OX1 3PN,
United Kingdom

You will also be able to use your Merifield flat address, which will be confirmed with you on arrival.

Telephones

As mentioned, most students choose to purchase a cellphone for the year. You will be able to find an affordable pay-as-you-go option to suit your needs. Information about mobile phones is easily obtainable upon your arrival.

Email and Internet

The flats are wired for internet connection. You will also have access to the computer facilities available at Merifield and Wadham College. You will receive information about

your Oxford account before you arrive in September. Please follow instructions and activate your account as soon as possible. From your arrival, all communication from the SLP office will be via your Oxford account. Free WiFi is available throughout Oxford and in Merifield, but the connection can be variable, so we recommend that after arriving you buy an Ethernet cable for use in Merifield – further information will be provided during Orientation.

Computers

Bring your own laptop with you to Oxford. (Be sure you do so as carry-on luggage and check any rules for laptops on airplanes.) Students are generally expected to write an essay for each tutorial each week, so there will be lots of writing to do during your academic year.

Bringing Electronic Goods from the US

If you intend to bring your laptop computer with you, check with the manufacturer or place of purchase that it will function in the UK. Most new laptops are equipped with built-in adapters in their power-supply cords. If the AC adapter states INPUT: 100V-240V, it is compatible with the UK power supply. A plug adapter will be required, but not an electric transformer.

Other electric goods will need a transformer and / or a plug adapter. Again, you should check with the manufacturer or a retailer before purchasing or bringing over goods. If you are concerned about compatibility, you may find it easier to buy appliances on arrival. Computers are much more expensive in the UK so it is best to purchase them at home.

HEALTH

Medical Insurance and Services

All students will be covered while abroad by a policy administered by HTH Worldwide. A pamphlet regarding this coverage is in your application portal. **Please note, however, that students still need to have their own medical insurance through the Sarah Lawrence plan or through their parents. This is to ensure they have adequate health insurance before they leave the US and upon their return.** You will receive information on the Sarah Lawrence plan from our Business Office. Included will be a waiver form if you have your own insurance.

National Health Service

As residents in Britain for more than six months, you are entitled to use the National Health Service (NHS). Under this system, all consultations (whether routine or emergency) are free of charge, although you pay a nominal sum (currently £9.65) for any medication you may be prescribed. You will pay £470 as part of your visa application to enable you to use this service.

Oxford is well provided with hospital emergency services. It has a number of clinics and hotlines. Under the NHS, you are entitled to free contraception: this can be obtained from the College medical practice, the College nurse, or various clinics in Oxford.

Wadham College Doctors and Nurse

As a Wadham student, you should register with the college medical practice, 19 Beaumont Street Doctors, who are affiliated with the NHS. Please do this as soon as you receive the relevant information. Except in an emergency (when you should go straight to the hospital or call an ambulance), your first port of call with any illness will be with your practice doctor (or 'GP', 'general practitioner'), whose surgery is in the centre of town. The surgery offers an appointment service which will be available to you after registration. You can also request a telephone consultation.

Consultations with your GP are free of charge and generally brief. If necessary, your GP will refer you to a specialist. Wadham also has a resident (part-time) nurse who can deal with any minor ailments and help to arrange appointments with the doctor.

Private Medical Care

If you prefer, you may register with a private practitioner while you are in Oxford. Fees for private consultation can start at £100. Names can be provided by the SLP Office or the Wadham College nurse. Be sure to keep all receipts if you intend to submit a claim to your insurance company.

Prescription Drugs

In Britain, prescription drugs often have different names from those in the US. **It is important to bring a sufficient supply of your medication for the first few weeks.** Any medication you bring with you should be clearly identified in its original packaging. Please also bring a letter from your doctor giving full details of any medication you require, including generic name and chemical profile. This should assist you in obtaining your prescription in Oxford. However, you are strongly urged to check with your own doctor for any restrictions that may apply.

If you discover that your prescription medication is not licensed in Britain, it is essential that you address this with your physician before you arrive. The SLP Office can arrange for further advice from a healthcare professional in the UK. It is not advisable to arrange for non-licensed medication to be shipped into Britain.

Dental Care

You may want to have a thorough dental check-up prior to leaving the US, as it is hard to access dental care that is subsidized by the NHS. You will generally have to pay for dental work in Oxford and it may take some time.

Mental Health

Every college has Fellows and students who volunteer to act as student welfare supporters. Wadham has a dedicated Welfare Advisor, and Wadham's Chaplain is available to speak to students of all faiths and none. There is an excellent University Counselling Service which all Visiting Students are entitled to use but it offers problem-based counselling rather than long-term therapy. Your GP will be able to refer you for more specialist help, if necessary, and it is also possible to access private therapists for a fee. The Programme has a relationship with a local psychotherapist and you will be able to book appointments. These will need to be paid for and claimed back against your health insurance. The Director is

always available to help any student in setting up appropriate support.

Other Health Practitioners

There are plenty of specialists in Oxford: opticians, chiropractors, physiotherapists, osteopaths, acupuncturists, homeopaths, psychotherapists, etc. You will have to pay for such services. The college medical practice and the Programme Office will be happy to investigate on your behalf: full listings are also available online.

Travelling in Europe (beyond Britain)

Once you leave British shores, you are no longer entitled to state-funded (NHS) health care. If you are intending to travel within Europe during vacations, you must have appropriate medical coverage. You should therefore ensure that your US medical insurance remains active for your entire year abroad. You can also purchase short-term travel insurance packages from a range of banks and travel agencies in Oxford or online.

VISITING STUDENTS AND THE LAW

As Visiting Students, members of the Programme are subject to English law and the Wadham College disciplinary code. If a student commits a serious offence that is open to police action, such as physical assault, sexual assault, drug abuse, computer misuse, theft, fraud, or harassment, the college's policy is to refer the matter to the police. The college also has the right to deal with any offences under its own internal disciplinary procedures.

You will be issued with a copy of the Wadham College Handbook. Read it carefully, especially the section 'Decanal Matters - Living in the College Community'.

Sarah Lawrence College and the Sarah Lawrence Programme expect to be kept informed of any financial, academic, medical or mental health issues that challenge a student. Confidentiality will be strongly respected but there are circumstances in which appropriate people may need to be informed of difficulties facing a student.

It is in the discretion of the Director, in consultation with the Dean of Wadham and the Dean of Sarah Lawrence College, to suggest that any student who acts beyond the bounds of appropriate, reasonable expectations, legal or otherwise, be asked to leave the Programme.

GLOSSARY

Like any ancient institution, Oxford and Wadham College have both developed a distinctive vocabulary. Not all of these terms will be directly relevant to you, but it can be useful to know what other people are talking about!

In Wadham

AC or Access Centre – the glossy new building on the main college site, which houses meeting rooms, the JCR and the bar.

Battels – college accounts (for meals, printing etc.) which need to be cleared every term.

Bops – college parties, usually held every couple of weeks during term.

DWB – the Dorothy Wadham Building, which is located outside the city centre on Iffley Road and houses second-year undergraduates.

Fellows' Garden – the garden accessed through the doorway by the Chapel entrance, which is open to all (the Fellows' Private Garden, however, is not).

Hall – the main college dining hall.

Holywell Music Room – concert venue, also used for sessions during Freshers' Week; the front is on Holywell Street, but the back is in Wadham itself.

JCR – the Junior Common Room, the common room for undergraduate members of the college. In Wadham this just refers to the room itself, but in other colleges it means the undergraduate body (the equivalent of Wadham's SU).

Maggie Mae – the Chaplain's dog.

Merifield – college accommodation in Summertown, which houses fourth-year undergraduates, graduates – and SLP students!

Pidge – your pigeonhole, where post, messages and other items can be left for you; SLP pidges are opposite the desk in the Porter's Lodge.

Porters' Lodge (or Plodge) – at the main entrance to college; contains pidges but also functions as the main point of information about where rooms and events are in college, and security.

SU – Wadham's Student Union, which means both the undergraduate student body of the college and the committee of elected student representatives who organize undergraduate life in the college. SLP students elect their own SU rep every year.

In Oxford

Bod – the Bodleian Library, meaning both the central Old Bodleian site and the library collections more generally. Older tutors will sometimes say that a particular book is ‘in Bodley’.

Bod card – your student card, which gives you access to pretty much everything and should not be lost!

Collections – internal college exams which undergraduates take at the beginning of each term. Collections monitor progress and do not contribute to degrees.

Cuppers – intercollegiate competitions in sport, drama etc.

Finals – undergraduate exams taken at the end of the final year, which determine degree results.

Glink – the Gladstone Link, a subterranean passage and reading room linking the Old Bod and the Rad Cam.

Isis – the River Thames, as it flows through Oxford.

KA – the King’s Arms, city-centre pub on the corner next to Wadham.

Paper – course, as well as essay.

Prelims (or in some subjects Mods) – preliminary undergraduate exams, most often taken at the end of the first year, which do not contribute to degree results.

Rad Cam – the Radcliffe Camera, another part of the central Bodleian site, which houses undergraduate collections and the History Faculty Library.

Sub fusc – formal University dress, including gown, worn for University examinations among other occasions.

Summer Eights (or just Eights) – rowing races held in Trinity.

Torpids – rowing races held in Hilary.

Tute – tutorial, which in Oxford means the individual tutorial session rather than the course.

FURTHER READING

Internet Sources:

Welcome to the City of Oxford (www.oxfordcity.co.uk)

University of Oxford (www.ox.ac.uk)

Wadham College (<https://wadham.ox.ac.uk>)

Daily Info (<https://www.dailyinfo.co.uk>)

Virtual Tour of Oxford (<https://oxfordtour.chem.ox.ac.uk>)

When you arrive in Oxford you will find current information in the following publications:

- * *Alternative Student Prospectus* (<https://apply.oxfordsu.org/>) and the *Oxford Student Handbook* (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/student-handbook>).
- * Wadham Prospectus, produced by the college. The Wadham handbook is also available online at <https://www.wadham.ox.ac.uk/current-students/student-handbook>
- * *Daily Information* is a large-format single sheet of paper that is posted up around the colleges and the city, giving listings of talks, theatre and cinema events, as well as maps and information about Oxford and classified ads for second-hand items. It is published daily during full term, otherwise weekly, and can also be consulted on the web (address listed above).
- * You may also want to check the events and lecture listings in the Oxford University Gazette: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/gazette/>
- * The SLP office sends a weekly email bulletin, and will also highlight various events throughout the year.

Literature

There is a multitude of books set in Oxford or based on an author's Oxford experiences – and there is genuinely something for everyone among them. Many people will have heard of the classics of Oxford literature – Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, Dorothy L. Sayers's *Gaudy Night*, Javier Marías's *All Souls*, for example; but there are also numerous detective novels, thrillers, fantasies, historical fiction, and literary novels.

Fantasy enthusiasts will know all about Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy, which begins in an alternate-world Oxford, but may also enjoy Deborah Harkness's *A Discovery of Witches*, Samantha Shannon's *The Bone Season*, and R.F. Huang's recent *Babel*. Those looking for crime fiction may like to try Edward Crispin's *The Moving Toyshop*, or Elanor Dymott's *Every Contact Leaves a Trace*, or Guillermo Martínez's *The Oxford Murders*. Fans of historical fiction might find interest in Iain Pears's intellectual thriller *An Instance of the Fingerpost*; those looking for literary novels could try Naomi Alderman's *The Lessons*.

Many books about Oxford have also been turned into films of varying quality (as with *The Oxford Murders*), and television series (most notably the long-running *Inspector Morse* series and its spin-offs, *Lewis* and *Endeavour*). It is also entertaining to spot Oxford locations

in other films – in *X-Men: First Class*, for example, and of course the *Harry Potter* films.

Those looking for nonfiction will find plenty of memoirs (including Chiang Yee's *The Silent Traveller in Oxford* [1944], and Muriel Beadle's *These Ruins are Inhabited* [1961]). There are also some well-known books dealing with the city and the university, including Geoffrey Tyack's *Oxford: An Architectural Guide* and Jan Morris's *Oxford*; a different view of the city can be found in James Attlee's *Isolarion*, which deals with the history of Cowley Road in East Oxford.

Anyone seeking maps, city walk suggestions and guidebooks need only step inside Blackwell's bookshop on Broad Street, which always has a large selection near the tills!

We are greatly looking forward to welcoming you to Oxford.
Safe travels and see you soon!