

# THE OXFORD STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMME

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICS & FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### OSAP: WHO WE ARE

The Oxford Study Abroad Programme (OSAP) is a private educational foundation that has been sending students to study in Oxford since 1985. During that time, OSAP has brought to Oxford students from over 30 countries who had previously studied in over 650 colleges and universities. OSAP is partnered with four of the top colleges within Oxford University—New College, Magdalen College, Trinity College, and Christ Church—all of which typically rank in the top 25 percent in the Oxford academic league tables (there are over forty colleges and halls in Oxford University). We arrange the housing and academic programs; the colleges provide the social community (with access to the college clubs and societies, dining hall, chapel, borrowing privileges from the library, etc.).

### COLLEGE MEMBERSHIP: OPTIONS FOR STUDYING WITH OSAP

#### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

The majority of undergraduate and graduate students apply to OSAP for Associate Member status. A minimum of 3.0 GPA is required. Many North American universities have indicated a preference for this status because while the fees are lower the high academic quality is still assured by OSAP. While Associate Members are not degree candidates at Oxford University they are taught by Oxford tutors in the same way and to the same standards as Oxford undergraduates. Students with Associate Membership may enroll for one term, two terms, or the entire academic year, in one of three especially distinguished Oxford University colleges: New College, Trinity College, or Christ Church.

Associate Membership for undergraduates also offers affiliation in their respective college's Junior Common Room (JCR). The Junior Common Room is the equivalent of the Student Union of each college. Graduate students with Associate Membership will be affiliated with the Middle Common Room (MCR) of an Oxford college where they can socialize with other Oxford University graduate students.

#### VISITING STUDENTS

OSAP is one of the few programs which has made arrangements to recommend highly qualified candidates for the very limited Visiting Student places in two of Oxford's leading colleges: Magdalen College (founded in 1458) and New College (founded in 1379). While Visiting Students are not degree candidates at Oxford University, they are full members of their college and have university privileges on the same basis as Oxford undergraduates. They have full use of the university library (the Bodleian) and departmental libraries. Students with Visiting Student status receive an Oxford University ID card and email address, and are also able to attend University lectures, seminars and classes on the same basis as degree candidates.

Such highly qualified students, if recommended by OSAP and accepted by the Oxford college, receive letters from the Senior Tutor officially admitting them. Students are academically supervised by their college and are taught in the same way and to the same standards as degree candidates. At the end of their studies they receive an academic transcript directly from their Oxford college, confirming that they were registered by the University as Visiting Students.

Please note that OSAP can only recommend students for Visiting Student status. Admission is always entirely at the discretion of the Oxford college. Visiting Students applicants may apply for one term, two terms, or the entire academic year.

Applicants for Visiting Student status should have completed two years of university with a minimum GPA of 3.7. Applicants for Visiting Student status should submit two strong letters of recommendation from professors. A sample of written work is required.

Because OSAP must pay higher fees to the assigned college and to Oxford University, the fees for Visiting Student status are more than those paid by Associate Members.

## THE OXFORD TUTORIAL SYSTEM, COURSE DESCRIPTIONS, CREDITS, AND CREDIT TRANSFER

### THE OXFORD TUTORIAL SYSTEM

The Oxford University tutorial system is very different from the American system and can be hard to “translate” in terms of credits. Associate Members will take a primary course of eight tutorials plus an introductory meeting, and a secondary course of four tutorials plus an introductory meeting—the equivalent of 14 semester credits. Visiting Students will take two primary courses of eight tutorials each plus an introductory meeting—the equivalent of 18 semester credits.

We expect that a student will have to complete between 35 and 50 hours of reading each week in preparation for his or her tutorials (in humanities courses, an essay of 1,500 to 2,000 words is typically submitted for each tutorial meeting—a weekly meeting which itself lasts up to two hours). This reading and writing is independent of any lectures that the student may also have to attend. Many students keep evidence of all of their written work to be evaluated by the appropriate department committee at their home university.

It might be helpful to review New College’s description of the tutorial system, available online here:

<http://www.new.ox.ac.uk/tutorial-system>

Please also consider an explanation of the tutorial and tutorial system supplied by Oxford University’s Office of Admissions (available online here: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/why-oxford/studying-at-oxford/tutorials>):

- Tutorials are central to study at Oxford. They give you the chance to discuss your subject with a world leader in the field. Your tutor gives individual support and encourages you to develop to your full potential.
- Tutorials take place at least once a week and it’s up to you to research and prepare for them. Then you meet your tutor, perhaps with one or two other students, to discuss an essay or solutions to set problems. The aim is to review your answers or theories and explore ideas that arise in discussion.
- A tutorial relies on the exchange of ideas between you, your tutor and other students. You need not be experienced in debating, you just need to be ready to present and defend your opinions, accept constructive criticism and listen to others.
- Tutorials develop your ability to think for yourself, not only an essential ability for academic success but also a skill that the best employers look for in Oxford graduates.

### COURSE NUMBERS & DESCRIPTIONS

In respect of course numbers and descriptions, Oxford really doesn’t “do” these. There is no pre-arranged list of upcoming tutorials, but students can find popular tutorials that students have taken in the past on our website. Accordingly, there is no regular schedule from which to pick classes. There are two main reasons for this:

1. Because of the highly individualized nature of the one-on-one tutorial system, almost any academic subject can be taught, in any number of ways. In essence, the student designs his or her academic program. If there are particular requirements at the home university for the purposes of credit transfer, we request that the student forward the course description used by the home university (we will use this when securing an Oxford tutor to teach the student).
2. Because teaching and degree programs are arranged very differently in Oxford, concise “course descriptions” of the North

American type are generally not used. Instead, teaching is arranged in three broad areas, corresponding to each year of the undergraduate degree. All of the courses that our students take are junior-/third-year upper division courses and the academic rigor of the programme is amply supported by the evidence—students complete a substantial amount of reading and writing.

## CREDITS AND CREDIT TRANSFER

Associate Member transcripts are issued by OSAP, while Visiting Student transcripts are sent from the student's Oxford University college.

Prior to departure, it is important to get approval from the study abroad office and academic department of your home campus to ensure the credits you earn while studying with OSAP will transfer toward the degree from your home campus. OSAP is accredited by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education ([www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)), the British Accreditation Council ([www.the-bac.org](http://www.the-bac.org)), and is a United Kingdom Border Agency Tier 4 Visa Sponsor. If your home campus requires a transcript from an accredited North American institution of higher education, OSAP usually can arrange for our American school-of-record to issue an "American-formatted" transcript. It is essential to apply in advance of the Oxford term (before September 1st for Michaelmas Term, before January 1st for Hilary Term, and before May 1st for all Summer Terms) in order to be considered for this transcript.

The OSAP Associate Member transcript consists of 1) a cover letter on OSAP letterhead (signed by the Tutor for Associate Members in that particular college) confirming that the student has been attached to an Oxford University college as an Associate Member, and taught in the same way and to the same standard as an Oxford University degree candidate; 2) a grade report with the course titles, tutors' names and grades; 3) a grade conversion scale (converting the Greek grades assigned by Oxford tutors into US grades); and 4) individual tutorial reports from the Oxford tutors (usually these reports are issued on the tutor's department or college letterhead).

The Visiting Student transcript consists of all of the Associate Member transcript components listed above, with the exception of the cover letter; as Visiting Student transcripts are issued by the student's Oxford college, the accompanying cover letter will be on the student's Oxford college letterhead, and will be signed by the Tutor for Visiting Students in that particular college. Our students say that these transcripts are invaluable as they apply for jobs, graduate schools, etc., as each transcript includes reports (doubling as recommendation letters) from their Oxford tutors. These reports demonstrate that the student has been successful in completing work to Oxford University standards. Many of our Associate Members and Visiting Students return to Oxford as full degree candidates each year, due in large part to their OSAP transcript.

## CONTACT US

For more information about any OSAP program, please visit our website or contact us:

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