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# Introduction

Hello and welcome to the Disabled Students’ Guide. This guide aims to give an overview of the services at Oxford that can support you as a disabled student, and to give you a sense of what it’s like to live and study here. When we talk about disabled students, we include anyone who identifies as having a disability, whether or not this is officially recognised or diagnosed. This includes physical and sensory disabilities, specific learning difficulties, chronic and invisible illnesses, and mental health conditions.

Many of us refer to ourselves as being disabled, or having a disability, but a lot of us don’t and this is entirely okay. This guide contains information about Oxford University Student Union (OUSU), who helped in the production of this guide, and are responsible for lobbying the University on political and practical issues affecting students.

There are sections from the major services that provide disability support at the University, and information on your rights and the law. You can also find out more about accessibility throughout the University and services available to you.

Also included are personal perspectives from current students with disabilities. They write about the barriers they faced, how they overcame them and which resources they used. The Careers Service has also given us some examples of what disabled Oxford students go on to do in the workplace after graduation. These personal perspectives are included to demonstrate that disabled students face unique challenges at Oxford, but with support it is absolutely possible to thrive and live to the fullest here.

As with any guide, it is impossible for us to have included everything. If there is any information you want, or you are unsure about the support you can get, you can always contact Oxford University Student Union’s (OUSU) Student Advice Service, advice@ousu.ox.ac.uk. The Disabled Students’ Officer is the part-time executive member who represents disabled students for the whole University, and will be able to point you in the right direction to get the support you want.

Enjoy the guide, and all the best for your time at Oxford!

**Lindsey Lee**

OUSU Disability Officer 2015-16
Myth Busting
Written by Lindsey Lee, OUSU Disability Officer 2015-16

The aim of this section is to highlight some things that are sometimes said about being disabled at Oxford, and how they are not true.

**Myth:**

"There will not be any other disabled students at Oxford"

Oxford has over 2,500 disabled students from all over the world, with all sorts of conditions. Oxford’s disabled student population is comparable to universities across the UK in both size and diversity. It has a successful campaign for disabled students, Oxford Students’ Disability Community (OSDC), where all disabled students can meet to discuss shared issues and support one another.

**Myth:**

"I could not manage Oxford"

Oxford has a reputation for its tough workload and demanding reading. Whilst this is true to some extent, Oxford has mechanisms to help disabled students succeed and flourish, including computer-assisted study techniques for students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs). The University also gives students who need it 25% extra time, just like other universities, and allows some students access to computers in exams, including text-to-speech technology in some cases. There are weekly study skills support sessions available, designed for students, and taught by specially-trained tutors who understand the uniqueness of the Oxford system. Of Oxford’s disabled students, 50% have SpLDs and perform well in their studies.

**Myth:**

"Oxford is not the place for people with mental health conditions"

Oxford recognises that mental health conditions can cause both long-term as well as short-term impact. The Disability Advisory Service (DAS) can allocate mentors to students with mental health problems to help students manage the pace of Oxford and their work whilst recovering. Information can be found here: www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability

**Myth:**

"I will have to leave if something goes wrong"

Oxford has comprehensive systems for ensuring students can get back on their feet following a period of difficulty. This includes options like taking a year out or delaying work, which is achieved through close personal relationships with tutors. Oxford has very low dropout rates among the disabled student population.

**Myth:**

"I won’t make friends or be integrated into the social life of Oxford"

One of the scariest parts of coming to University is making new friends. It is a daunting concept for anyone, but can be especially scary for disabled students who often feel ostracised or excluded because of their disabilities. However, even if you had difficulties in social life before university, you may find that things at Oxford are easier. First of all, Oxford brings together people from all over the world, so you’re more than likely to meet people unlike anyone you’ve ever met before. Secondly, colleges are massive social hubs, and it’s easy to meet people via your college’s common room or through sport. There are also literally hundreds of student societies you could join where you can find people with similar interests.

Oxford is part of the real world, so just like in the real world, you will find people you definitely don’t get on with, but there are also plenty of people you will like and who are considerate of your needs.

www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/clubs/list
Oxford University Student Union (OUSU)

Oxford University Student Union is the organisation that represents you and advocates for you to the University. You are automatically a member of OUSU just by virtue of being a student. You are represented in a variety of ways:

- **OUSU Vice President Welfare and Equal Opportunities, Ali Lennon:**
  I’m Ali Lennon and I’m the current Vice-President for Welfare and Equal Opportunities at OUSU. My overall role is to represent the interests of students and lobby for developments, in the areas of wellbeing and equality, which aim to enhance the lives of University of Oxford students.

  My specific duties relating to the experience of disabled students include supporting the Oxford Students’ Disability Community in their work and supporting the Disabled Students’ Officer in their activities and role. I also represent the interests of disabled students on several University management committees including the Equality and Diversity Panel, the Sub-Committee for Student Health and Welfare, and the Consultative Committee for Health and Safety. When representing and advocating on behalf of disabled students, I aim to work as closely as possible with their specific representatives and campaign bodies to ensure that student voices are heard at the highest levels of University management.

  Jointly, OUSU Officers, Campaign Leaders, my successors, and I will be seeking to address issues such as the cuts and changes to Government support for disabled students, the accessibility of University and collegiate buildings, and the quality and availability of various support services that you may seek throughout your time here.

  As ever, the campaigns and officers are eager for you to get involved and make your voices heard. So if you have any thoughts, questions, and comments or if you would like to get involved in activism and representation, please get in touch and we’ll be happy to help.

  vpweo@ousu.ox.ac.uk

- **OUSU Council:** OUSU Council is the policy-setting body of OUSU, and where students can come and talk about the things that are important to them. All student members of OUSU are welcome to attend OUSU Council, bring motions and participate in debate. Motions are voted on by the Executive Committee, OUSU Campaigns and by representatives from the common rooms of all colleges. Motions can be on a huge variety of different issues. For instance, OUSU has passed policy motions relating to accessibility of OUSU events. Because of this policy, OUSU is required to have all Council meetings in wheelchair accessible locations and to provide clear points of contact for students to request accessibility adjustments to attend the meetings. OUSU Council is a great place to go to find out what is going on in the University, and to talk about things that are important to you.

  www.ousu.org/representing-you/council

- **OUSU Executive Committee:** The Executive Committee of OUSU is made up of six full-time sabbatical officers (“sabs”) and 21 part-time executive officers (PTE). Each officer has a specific remit. For example, the Vice-President for Women works on issues related specifically to women at the University, and the PTE Common Room Support Officer works on—you guessed it—supporting the common rooms! The only executive officer specifically devoted to disability is a PTE called the Disabled Students’ Officer. This person works directly with the sab VP for Welfare and Equal Opportunities, the OSDC campaign (see the next section), and the University administration to advocate on behalf of disabled students. All the contact information for the executive officers can be found at:

  www.ousu.org/representing-you/your-reps/part-time-executives
**OUSU Campaign: Oxford Students’ Disability Community (OSDC)**

OSDC exists to:
- Bring together students with disabilities for social events
- Campaign for better understanding and treatment of disability
- Support and advocate for students with disabilities at Oxford
- Run informative talks and events promoting positive awareness of disability

OSDC runs events every week in term time, including socials, mental health themed art and support groups, disability themed talks, and workshops. They also have close ties with the other OUSU liberation campaigns, (eg. WomCam, LGBTQ Campaign and Campaign for Racial Awareness and Equality) and work closely with them to host lots of intersectional events.

OSDC also host events and activities to commemorate Disability Awareness Week in Hilary term – there’s always a lot to look forward to!

OSDC can liaise with your JCR reps and answer questions you might have about studying at Oxford with a disability. The membership is large and covers an extremely broad range of disability experiences at the University, so there will always be someone who understands and can help you!

**Contact**

**Website:** www.xdisability.com  
**Email:** oxdisability@ousu.ox.ac.uk

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**The Student Advice Service**

OUSU’s Student Advice Service offers free and confidential advice, information and directs Oxford University Students to relevant support services. Independent from Colleges and the University, the service exists to provide an entirely student-focused experience.

**Advisors**

Three friendly and experienced Advisors can help answer your questions and signpost you to services to assist with any problems you are facing. You can speak with them in confidence about academic issues, welfare or anything else affecting you during your time at Oxford.

Advisors can:
- Speak with you on the phone
- Arrange an individual appointment
- Correspond via email
- Chat with you via our online live chat service, Live Advice
- Accompany you to meetings

**Contact**

**Address:**  
2 Worcester Street  
Oxford  
OX1 2BX  

**Website:** www.ousu.org/advice/  
**Tel:** 01865 288466  
**Email:** advice@ousu.ox.ac.uk

**Drop in times**

**During term time (0-9 week)**  
Monday 10-12  
Wednesday 12-2  
Friday 2-4

**Online live chat**

**During term time (0-9 week)**  
Tuesday 3-5  
Thursday 11-1

---
Áine Jackson

I am a Music student at Worcester College and I have bilateral sensorineural hearing loss. My hearing degenerated largely over my teenage years, and I now am a full-time hearing aid user.

I have been open about my hearing impairment right from the very start. Studying a subject so dependent on auditory elements means that challenging situations were always going to crop up on a daily basis. At the Music Faculty, staff use the T loop system and put lecture slides and musical samples online, although I also can record lectures. The benefit of small tutorials is that I do not have to deal with much background noise, and am never afraid to ask for a tutor to repeat a point, play an example again or turn the volume up! In addition to this, staff at college regularly go out of their way to make accommodation arrangements, hire portable T-loop systems and generally make my life easier.

Disclosing my disability meant that a lot of obstacles I may have encountered at University were overcome before I had even arrived — tutors and staff, where necessary, were informed and were full of ideas for solutions to problems I may face. Being open with all of my friends from the outset has been important; we now laugh off my frequent hilarious misunderstandings and the quirks of living life with my often-whistling ‘ear trumpets’. I am now working with the Disability Advisory Service to set up a social group for deaf and hearing impaired members of the University.

Disability Support at the University

Written by Anwen Jones, Head of the Disability Advisory Service

There are over 2,500 students with a declared disability at Oxford, representing around 11% of the total student body — so you are not alone.

Defining Disability

“Disability” is a category that is much broader than many people think. The definition of a disability we use is that described in the Equality Act 2010 and includes a wide range of conditions, both visible and invisible, which have a substantial and long-term impact on day-to-day activities.

Disability can include:

- Specific learning difficulties (SpLD)
- Sensory or mobility impairments
- Mental health conditions
- Autistic spectrum disorders
- Long standing illnesses or health conditions.

Little known facts about common “invisible” disabilities at Oxford:

- Around 40% of students with disability have a specific learning difficulty. This includes dyslexia, dyspraxia and ADHD, for example
- Around 20% of disabled students describe a mental health condition. This includes long-standing clinical depression, an eating disorder, or a bipolar condition.

Why disclose your disability?

You are not obliged to tell anyone, but if you do it makes it much easier for the University to give you any help you need and this may improve your overall experience at Oxford. The University is bound by the Equality Act to make adjustments for its disabled students but beyond that it is committed to encouraging and welcoming disabled students.

You can find a number of disabled students’ profiles sharing their experiences of Oxford at: www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/why-oxford/support-and-wellbeing/students-with-disabilities/students-disabilities-videos?wssl=1
How does Disability Support work at Oxford?
This being a complex, collegiate University, the process of ensuring disabled students can access the facilities they require is a collaborative effort. There are a whole range of people who are here to help.

People who are here to help

Your main contact will be your Disability advisor in the Disability Advisory Service plus:

• If you are an undergraduate – your college disability co-ordinator
• If you are a graduate student – your department disability co-ordinator

You can find a list of useful contacts here: www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability/contacts

You’ll see from this picture that you have a key role. If you decide to declare a disability, you have a part to play in working with the University and engaging actively in support.

Knowing who to talk to can seem daunting and complex but you will find that staff are very happy to help. Please get in touch.

The Disability Advisory Service (DAS)

Who we are
The Disability Advisory Service (DAS) provides information and advice on disability issues at Oxford and facilitates support for all UK and international students with disabilities. Our team of advisors will discuss with you your experiences and expectations of study and support and consider how they might be met here at Oxford to ensure you can get on with your studies.

What we do
The DAS works with you, your college, your department and other relevant University services to identify any support you might need.

One of our key jobs is to make recommendations for your support. To do that we need to talk to you to understand the impact of your disability on your study and gather any medical or educational evidence we might need. We will then write a student support plan with you, to summarise our recommendations. Next we will share this information with colleges and departments who are responsible for implementing your support – we will give you a copy of your plan and you can share it with your tutors too if you wish.

We will consider a whole range of possible support recommendations – here are some of them:
In order to access support you need to follow these steps. Your Disability Advisor will help you:

1. Provide evidence of your disability to meet University guidelines
2. Register with the Disability Advisory Service
3. Apply for funding for your disability-related support needs (if appropriate). We encourage all UK students to consider applying for the Disabled Students Allowance
4. Undertake a “Study Needs Assessment” (if needed)
5. Agree your Student Support Plan with your Disability Advisor
6. Share your Student Support Plan
7. Keep in touch – let us know about changes or concerns

More information about each step of this process is on our website: www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability

Please be aware that arranging individual support can take time – it depends on a wide range of factors – so please get in touch with us as soon as possible.

Contact

The DAS website provide a range of information about the support and adjustments available to students.

If you would like to discuss your individual circumstances, please make an appointment to see one of our advisors by email, telephone or drop in at our office. Our service is open all year round on weekdays from 9am to 5pm.

Address: 3 Worcester Street, Oxford OX1 2BX
Website: www.ox.ac.uk/students/shw/das/
Tel: 01865 280459
Email: disability@admin.ox.ac.uk

‘ARACU’: Accessible Resources Acquisition and Creation Unit
Written by Teresa Pedroso, Disability Librarian

Who we are

ARACU has existed since the mid-1980s to make the resources of the Bodleian Library more accessible to readers who are unable to use printed material in its regular format. When the service started it was aimed primarily at people with visual impairments, but it is open to other disabled readers.

What we offer

For the most part, ARACU sources digital copies of books and other reading material, but they can also produce it in other accessible formats such as DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) audio, Braille or tactile diagrams.

To use the service, talk to the Disability Advisory Service when you are discussing your other needs as you will need to be referred. They will put you in contact with someone who will meet up with you, take a few details of the material you need and how you would like it, take your reading list and go from there. There may be a cost and the Disability Advisory Service will discuss this with you.

As the Disability Librarian, I am based at ARACU. I coordinate support for disabled readers within the Bodleian Libraries. If your disability has an impact on the way in which you can access the Bodleian Libraries and the collections, please get in touch and I will be happy to discuss your needs.

Contact

Teresa Pedroso, Disability Librarian
Website: disability.librarian@bodleian.ox.ac.uk
Tel: 01865 283861.

ARACU
Website: www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/using/disability/aracu
Tel: 01865 283862
Email: aracu@bodleian.ox.ac.uk
Your College Nurse
Written by Yo Davies, College Nurse

Welfare provision within college is important for all students at Oxford University, and enabling students to access support for disabilities is central to that provision.

If you decide to disclose a disability to the College Nurse we will only use this information on a “need-to-know” basis.

Many colleges employ a state registered nurse as part of their welfare team.

What a College Nurse can do for you

The College Nurse is able to:

- Organise any help that you may need for your college interview
- Arrange any special adjustments you may need when you take up your place in college
- Liaise within the college between the welfare team, care providers and academic staff and with outside agencies like GPs, District Nurses and other support agencies
- Undertake certain treatments that you may require
- Help you if you need extra health care on a temporary basis
- Assist with special arrangements, including those for examinations.

Contact

The details of how to contact your College Nurse can be found on your college website.

University of Oxford Counselling Service
Written by Alan Percy, Head of Oxford University Counselling Service.

Who we are

Our staff are professionally trained and widely experienced. We have female and male counsellors, psychotherapists, clinical and counselling psychologists and a psychiatrist, who are all accustomed to helping people from many different backgrounds, identities and cultures, with a wide range of issues.

We aim to help you realise your full academic and personal potential through talking therapy. You may have a long-standing concern you feel you need to get to grips with, or you may be encountering new difficulties here at Oxford. You may be struggling with a specific, well-defined problem, or you may not have any idea what the problem is but just have a sense that something isn’t right. Our team can help whatever your situation.

We often work with students with disabilities. We see students with the type of significant mental health conditions which fall into the category of disability but we also see students with physical disabilities or those who have a long term chronic physical illness, where these conditions are having an impact on their student experience in a way that causes emotional distress.

A professional clinician can help to normalise your experience and place it in context, bring objectivity, critical distance, and experience of dealing with problems of all kinds.

What we offer

The Counselling Service is here to help you address personal or emotional problems which may impact your time at Oxford.

Individual therapy

If you feel speaking with a counsellor may be right for you, the process starts with requesting an appointment. You can do this by contacting us in person, by phone or email: the details are set out below. After you have made this initial contact, you will be sent a pre-appointment form to complete. This will help us allocate the therapist best suited to your situation. You will also receive information about the service, our opening hours and what to expect from an assessment.

The experience of counselling will begin with a single session in which you and your counsellor work together to make sense of your experience, to
conceptualise your problems in new ways, and to think together about how you might move forward. Some problems are more complex and/or long standing and meeting for further sessions may be appropriate. The aim will be to always keep counselling as efficient and focused as possible.

It is most common to have counselling sessions in consecutive weeks. However, you may find it useful to space sessions more widely to enable you to test out new ways of thinking and doing things in between.

The information you disclose to us is confidential. Under normal circumstances, nothing will be revealed to anyone outside the Service without your express permission. The Service will only break this rule if the therapist is significantly concerned about you or someone else that you are talking about.

Other resources
Beyond this individual work we offer a range of resources including workshops, groups and self-help resources such as podcasts.

Contact
Address:
Counselling Service
3 Worcester Street
Oxford, OX1 2BX

During term (0-9 Weeks) reception is open 9am-5pm Monday-Friday.

Website: www.ox.ac.uk/students/shw/counselling/
Tel: 01865 270300
Email: counselling@admin.ox.ac.uk

University Careers Service
Written by Annie Dutton, Careers Advisor

Who we are
The Careers Service is here to support you in making decisions about life after Oxford.

As a disabled student, you may have extra concerns when you are planning your career. It may be that you feel that you are at a disadvantage in the jobs market and uncertain which employers genuinely want to recruit a more diverse workforce and will look beyond your disability to your ability.

You are the expert on your disability and you are the best person to lead the conversation with employers about what you have to bring to the workplace. The Careers Service can support you in the decisions you choose to make.

We run one-to-one sessions from Monday to Friday and we are also happy to run sessions and meet with you in your college, the Disability Advisory Service or the OUSU offices. You can contact us direct by email, telephone or online at www.careers.ox.ac.uk via CareerConnect to arrange to meet us.

What we offer
General Services
The services provided by the Careers Service include:

• One-to-one advice and guidance appointments
• Work experience and jobs vacancy database
• Internships and micro-internships
• Employer events and fairs
• Mock interviews
• CV checking and application form writing
• Skills programmes, such as Insight into Teaching, Springboard for Women, The Student Consultancy and many more.

Specialist Services
As a Careers Advisor I specialise in the issues facing disabled students and graduates. I can:

• Talk through your rights as a disabled person
• Discuss with you the decision to disclose your disability to potential employers
• Advise and signpost you to organisations, such as EmployAbility, City Disabilities, GreatwithDisability and Change 100 who provide internships for disabled students
• Explain about funding schemes for the disabled such as access to work
• Describe specialist employment schemes for the disabled such as the ‘two ticks symbol’

Contact
Address: The Careers Service
56 Banbury Road
Oxford
OX2 6PA
Open Monday-Friday 9am-5pm
Website: www.careers.ox.ac.uk
Tel: 01865 274646
Email: reception@careers.ox.ac.uk

Click the CareerConnect icon on our website to arrange to meet us.

Career Profiles
Here are the perspectives of a recruiter and two Oxford graduates on their experiences of disability and the workplace.

Employer Perspective

Joanna Anufu
Graduate Recruiter, Citibank

We understand that applying for internships or full time jobs can be daunting, especially if you have a disability or a long-term health condition. What you should know is that any organisation that is committed to hiring the best people for their roles will be well equipped to support you through their selection process, regardless of what your condition is. Telling an employer that you have a disability can be very difficult and you may feel that disclosing that kind of personal information will have a negative effect on your application, and that you will be judged on your disability and not on your ability to do the job. However, it is more likely that by not telling an employer about your condition you will not be able to perform to the best of your abilities and may jeopardise your chances of success. We strongly encourage applicants to inform the company they are applying for about their condition or situation at the very start of their application. This information is always treated with complete confidentiality and is used to help them arrange any adjustments to the recruitment process that you may require.
Graduate Perspective

Ruth Goldsmith,
Communications Manager, DrugScope

I graduated in 2002 from St. Anne’s, in English and Modern Languages (French).

I have worked in charity communications since 2004 and am Communications Manager at DrugScope, a drug information and policy charity. I coordinate the organisation’s media work, developing media strategies, writing press releases and handling enquiries from journalists.

There were times when I did not believe I would find myself working in such an interesting and fulfilling career. While at Oxford, I experienced periods of severe depression. I was lucky – my college, family and friends were all supportive and I successfully completed my degree.

After graduation, however, I was ill quite a lot and it was difficult to retain work, even temporary jobs. I felt very left behind as friends from college had got ‘proper’ jobs and were getting on with their lives. It was a difficult time. While I was unwell, I began volunteering at a charity bookshop. It was a great way to build structure and routine into my days, readying myself for paid employment. I also took on freelance work in proofreading and translation.

It was around this time that I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. After the diagnosis, my health began to improve as I was prescribed appropriate medication. My confidence improved too. I decided that I wanted to work in the charity sector and successfully applied for a junior post in the press office at Mind, the mental health charity. In their eyes, my experience of mental health problems was a positive attribute.

Since working at Mind, I have always disclosed my mental health status on application forms and I bring it up myself at job interviews. I would always rather be honest from the start — and will not work for an organisation that doesn’t have an inclusive attitude to disability. I work hard and the vast majority of the time, I am well. Bipolar disorder is something that I have — it is not who I am.

Graduate Perspective

Oleg Giberstein
Analyst, Citi Corporate Bank

I graduated in June 2012 from St Antony’s College with a MPhil International Relations.

I do not have a left hand (the ‘medical’ term for this is Dysmelia).

My personal experience with disclosure has been very positive, however, my disability is not one that requires significant adjustments. But every disability is different — employers are different and there will also be large differences between countries. Generally I would recommend you be as open and confident as possible, in every case, about your disability and any special needs, which might arise for a job interview or a later career. The earlier you contact and inform the prospective employer, the easier it will be to provide required adjustments.

My employer was helpful and quick to accommodate my needs without any problems. In my experience, many companies are proud to be able to offer support and will be happy that diverse applicants are looking for jobs with them. So probably the most important advice I can share here is to be as confident and comfortable with yourself as possible. If in doubt, Disability Networks can also give you further detailed and valuable advice.
College Common Rooms

Most colleges have common room officers who can offer you support. These include Disabilities and Equalities Officers, Welfare Officers and Peer Supporters. For more information about common room support, please visit your college website.

Student Profile

Chris Pike

Going to Oxford can be really hard at times, let alone for someone with Asperger’s Syndrome or Autism. It is also a hugely rewarding experience, and provides you with opportunities that just do not exist anywhere else. I have made some incredible friends here, I have had a chance to explore one of the most incredible cities in the country, and study where world-changing people have been studying for hundreds of years. I have also been involved with some great societies and groups.

During this time I have received great support from the University for the times when things do not feel like they are going quite so well. They supported my application to the government for a Disabled Student Allowance to fund extra costs, and they have provided mentors to assist me in organisation and time management, who give me the opportunity to talk through challenges. Thanks to this help, I have largely been able to live and study here without being held back by my Asperger’s, and in many ways it provides me with a unique perspective to the weird and wonderful world of being a student at Oxford.

Accessibility

Written by Niall Strawson, Accessibility Advisor & OUSU's Student Advice Service

I am the Accessibility Advisor at Estates Services and conveniently also a wheelchair user. I’m on a mission to visit all departments, libraries and museums to conduct audits to check the buildings work for ALL disabilities. The Access Guide is on our website www.admin.ox.ac.uk/access. It’s most easily found by googling ‘Oxford Access Guide’. With over 400 buildings it’s a long task but there is loads of information available. Check it out — oh and follow us on Twitter @OxUniAG.

Departments

We are visiting the departments one by one and we have done loads so far.

Navigate via the icons on the Access Guide website to your department or use the search bar. When you find the page you want, it’s made easy for you. Have a look at Earth Sciences as an example: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/access/dandt/mpls/earthsciences/

If you want a quick decision just look to the right, you’ll find ‘At a glance’. It’s a table summarising the most key factors such as parking, lifts and hearing support. To the left are the contact details, with a generic email and a named contact who is trained in disability issues.

There is also a link to the interactive map to show you where it is and the other buildings related to the department. (See Oxford and the Map section).

There are also floor plans. These have accessible routes, colour coded spaces and print with high contrast in mind (colour and grayscale!)

In the centre of the page there is an image of the front of the building, and below that are sections with headings about different accessibility features.

Expand the ones that you need or expand all. Don’t miss the images at the end of each section and at the bottom of the page. Simply click to enlarge and scroll through — these will help you visualise your experience.

Finally don’t miss the arrow to page 2; this has more detailed information about teaching spaces, break-out areas and other facilities.

Hopefully we have covered everything you should need! If not please hit the feedback button, which is on every page of the Accessibility Guide.

Some of the pages will represent buildings we haven’t yet audited; in this case we have a mini version of the page that has the basics to help you.
Examination (Exam) Schools

The Exam Schools form an important hub of the academic life in Oxford. As I understand it (as a non-student) you will hand in your essays, sit exams, have lectures, access card services and visit the Freshers Fair all in the Exam Schools.

If you have any access needs check out the web page below:
www.admin.ox.ac.uk/access/studentservices/examinationschools/

The building is fully accessible albeit with an alternative entrance – the staff aren’t fazed by any disability-related problems so you are in good hands. Good luck with your exams!

Libraries

In Oxford there are over 100 libraries! We have full Access Guide pages for these main libraries (nick-names and weblinks in brackets):

Old Bodleian (Old Bod)
Radcliffe Camera & Gladstone link (Rad Cam)
Social Science Library (SSL)
Radcliffe Science library (RSL)
Bodleian Law Library (Law Lib)
The Weston Library (Weston)
The Healthcare libraries (Cairns and Knowledge Centre)
Philosophy and Theology Faculty Library (PFTL)
Sackler Library (Sackler)
Taylor Institution Library (Taylor)

Here we have prioritised them by size with the biggest first:
www.admin.ox.ac.uk/access/libraries/

The pages follow the same format as departments, so simply click away!

That does leave a lot of other libraries but thankfully the Bodleian website has access information too. It can be found here:
www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/using/disability/access

Simply click the links and follow the menus to find the library you need. Alternatively, click on the library name in the Access Guide list where you can link to contact details for all libraries.

Some University libraries are within departments and where this is the case we have picked them up. Otherwise watch this space and follow the access guide on Twitter @OxUniAG as we add more.

Museums

Good news! We have assessed all museums including attractions like the Botanic Gardens and the Harcourt Arboretum.
www.admin.ox.ac.uk/access/museumsandcollections/

These pages also follow the same format as departments and libraries so simply click away!

Some of the University Museums have prepared additional information for visitors to improve the experience should you have specific needs:
www.ashmolean.org/events/Talks/
www.oum.ox.ac.uk/visiting/needs.htm
www.prm.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/imported/basic/pdf/Access.pdf
Colleges

The table below contains basic accessibility information about Oxford colleges. If you need to go somewhere specific it’s best to call beforehand and ask about accessibility and your specific requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Front Entrance</th>
<th>Lodge</th>
<th>Chapel</th>
<th>JCR</th>
<th>MCR</th>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Hall</th>
<th>Car Parking</th>
<th>Hearing Loop</th>
<th>Accessible toilets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balliol</td>
<td>Broad Street entrance not accessible. Wheelchair access via the metal gates off Magdalen Street East.</td>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>Access via the Fellows’ Garden and Chapel Passage via a portable ramp.</td>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>8 steps</td>
<td>No access</td>
<td>Lift access</td>
<td>Possible by arrangement.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1 by the Buttery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackfriars</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>1 very shallow step.</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Steps</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>At the front of the Hall.</td>
<td>In the Chapel.</td>
<td>On level ground floor next to JCR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brasenose</td>
<td>Ramp</td>
<td>1 step</td>
<td>2 steps</td>
<td>Ramp</td>
<td>1 step down in MCR.</td>
<td>First floor</td>
<td>3 steps</td>
<td>Possible by arrangement.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campion</td>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>Stairs. A lift and a ramp available.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>Ramp up 3 steps.</td>
<td>Ramp up 3 steps.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ Church</td>
<td>Step free access, cobbles.</td>
<td>Step-free access at the back.</td>
<td>Ramp access.</td>
<td>One step, portable ramp available.</td>
<td>Not accessible.</td>
<td>Ramp access with grab rails.</td>
<td>Lift</td>
<td>As required</td>
<td>In Blue Lecture Theatre/Exhibition Space and Cathedral.</td>
<td>Library and Blue Lecture Theatre/Exhibition Space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corpus</td>
<td>Level from street into Main Quad.</td>
<td>2 steps; ramp access is available.</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Inaccessible to wheelchair users.</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Upper part inaccessible to wheelchair users.</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Possible by arrangement in main carpark.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>In the Auditorium and Cloisters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exeter</td>
<td>1 step, gate access available which is level.</td>
<td>Up 3 steps</td>
<td>Ramp</td>
<td>Ramp</td>
<td>Steps</td>
<td>Level via the back entrance. Front entrance has 1 step up and 1 step down.</td>
<td>Full access, lift available.</td>
<td>Possible by arrangement.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Templeton</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>1 step up and 1 step down.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ramp plus 24 steps.</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Ramp</td>
<td>Blue badge holders only, by request.</td>
<td>Yes, in lecture theatre.</td>
<td>1 with level access and 1 with ramped access (adjacent to Hall).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
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<td>MCR</td>
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<td>Hearing Loop</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harris Manchester</td>
<td>4 steps (level access available from side gate), ramp access.</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>1 step, ramp access.</td>
<td>30 steps – no ramp access.</td>
<td>7 steps (level access through kitchen), ramp access.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Portable induction loops available.</td>
<td>Ground floor of the main building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hertford</td>
<td>Ground floor, 1 step (ramped).</td>
<td>Ground floor, level.</td>
<td>Ground floor, one step, ramp available.</td>
<td>Ground floor, level.</td>
<td>First floor, spiral staircase, no lift access.</td>
<td>Ground floor, one step, ramp available.</td>
<td>First floor, spiral staircase, no lift access.</td>
<td>Parking extremely limited at main site.</td>
<td>Fitted in the Hall.</td>
<td>In Front Quad via short stairlift (three steps).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus</td>
<td>1 step</td>
<td>Ramp</td>
<td>1 step, almost level.</td>
<td>18 steps in 3 flights, each fitted with a wheelchair lift.</td>
<td>Lift</td>
<td>Accessible only on ground floor, staff can make alternative arrangements.</td>
<td>4 steps, with electric stairclimber.</td>
<td>Possible by arrangement.</td>
<td>Induction loops are fitted in the Hall, Chapel and Memorial Room.</td>
<td>Front Quad (Staircase V), the Second Quad (Staircase XI) and in the Junior Common Room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kellogg</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Steps, ramp and lift access.</td>
<td>Steps, ramp and lift access.</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Parking space on site.</td>
<td>Mawby Function Room.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
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<td>College</td>
<td>Front Entrance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linacre</td>
<td>1st floor, clearly signed level path to accessible door and lift.</td>
<td>1st floor, clearly signed path at ground level to accessible door and lift.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1st floor, clearly signed path at ground level to accessible door and lift.</td>
<td>1st floor, clearly signed path at ground level to accessible door and lift, and then 4 steps.</td>
<td>Ground level, accessible.</td>
<td>Possible by arrangement.</td>
<td>There are hearing loops in the Tanner Room (lecture room).</td>
<td>1st floor, clearly signed path at ground level to accessible door and lift.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magdalen</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Lift</td>
<td>Possible by arrangement.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mansfield</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>3 steps</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>34 steps</td>
<td>Level with lift access.</td>
<td>Possible by arrangement.</td>
<td>1 in college chapel.</td>
<td>2 toilets accessible to non-ambulatory persons. 3 others are of extended width.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merton</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>34 steps</td>
<td>Level with lift access.</td>
<td>Stairlift access.</td>
<td>Disabled parking available.</td>
<td>In the TS Eliot Theatre and one in the College Chapel. Fixed loop in the main Lodge, portable loop to be provided shortly.</td>
<td>On the Fitzjames Staircase in Front Quad and in the TS Eliot Theatre Complex at Rose Lane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Steps</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Level via the Kitchen Yard.</td>
<td>Lift</td>
<td>No access, staff can make alternative arrangements.</td>
<td>Lift</td>
<td>Possible by arrangement.</td>
<td>Chapel and Hall.</td>
<td>Under the Hall, lift access or ramp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuffield</td>
<td>Ramp</td>
<td>2 steps</td>
<td>Stairs</td>
<td>2 steps</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ramp</td>
<td>2 steps</td>
<td>No parking</td>
<td>Portable and fixed units throughout.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oriel</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Step, ramp available.</td>
<td>Ramp</td>
<td>Steps</td>
<td>Lower library is accessible. Upper library via staircase.</td>
<td>Stair climber.</td>
<td>No college parking but public disabled bays, opposite.</td>
<td>Portable and fixed throughout.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
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<td>MCR</td>
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<td>Car Parking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pembroke</td>
<td>The main doors can be opened to allow level access to the Lodge and Old Quad.</td>
<td>See front entrance.</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Not accessible.</td>
<td>Level at entrance, collections downstairs, staff can make alternative arrangements.</td>
<td>Lift access.</td>
<td>Disabled parking accessed from St Ebbes.</td>
<td>Mary Hyde Eccles Room; Borough Room; Harold Lee Room; The Pichette Auditorium.</td>
<td>Old Quad, Chapel Quad corridor leading to the dining hall. 1 in ante room to Broadgates Hall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Queen's</td>
<td>6 steps with handrail.</td>
<td>Lodge from Back Quad, 1 step into Chapel.</td>
<td>5 steps</td>
<td>26 steps</td>
<td>Ramp accessible from Back Quad.</td>
<td>Level from Back Quad.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>In the Auditorium.</td>
<td>In the Back Quad Auditorium and Library.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regent's Park</td>
<td>1 step</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1st floor, only accessible via stairs.</td>
<td>1st floor, only accessible via stairs.</td>
<td>Only accessible via downward staircase.</td>
<td>2nd floor, only accessible via staircases.</td>
<td>3 steps</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Fixed in tutorial areas and reception.</td>
<td>There is a disabled toilet but up 2 steps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Anne's College</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>One entrance is level, second has a ramp.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>2 steps</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Slight ramp</td>
<td>Yes, possible by arrangement.</td>
<td>In both lecture theatres.</td>
<td>Located in various buildings on site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Antony's College</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Lift</td>
<td>As JCR</td>
<td>Lift</td>
<td>Lift</td>
<td>1 space available in the Bevington Road car park.</td>
<td>In both lecture theatres.</td>
<td>Hilda Besse, Ghassan Shakar, Gateway, Founder's and Investcorp buildings, Nissan Institute and Lodge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Benet's Hall</td>
<td>Movable ramp can be placed over steps (3).</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>1 section level, 1 step up to main part – movable ramp available.</td>
<td>Common Room on first floor, no lift or disabled access.</td>
<td>As JCR</td>
<td>On first floor; no lift or disabled access.</td>
<td>On ground floor, level.</td>
<td>No nearby parking.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Disabled toilet on ground floor.</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Catherine's</td>
<td>Level, automatic door.</td>
<td>Level, automatic door.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Level, ramps and automatic door.</td>
<td>Level, ramps and automatic door.</td>
<td>First floor, accessible.</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Lecture Theatre</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Cross College</td>
<td>Step</td>
<td>Step</td>
<td>3 steps</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3 steps</td>
<td>3 steps</td>
<td>Public disabled spaces in St Giles and Pusey Street.</td>
<td>St Cross Room</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* From Sep 2016 Disabled access via Pusey Street.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Edmund Hall</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Ramp</td>
<td>Temporary ramp available.</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>1 step</td>
<td>Access (with 1 step) available near Main Entrance.</td>
<td>Level access from Lodge via a ramp and push button door.</td>
<td>No parking spaces are available.</td>
<td>1 in the Lecture Theatre and 1 in the Lodge which is portable.</td>
<td>1 accessible WC off the Front Quad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Hilda's College</td>
<td>Ramp</td>
<td>Ramp</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Ramp</td>
<td>9 steps</td>
<td>Ramp</td>
<td>Ramp</td>
<td>Designated parking for those with disability needs.</td>
<td>No, but possible to loan one.</td>
<td>There are disabled toilet facilities in the main college buildings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Hugh's College</td>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>2 steps</td>
<td>Lift access</td>
<td>Flight of stairs.</td>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>Ground floor is ramp access; first floor is currently unavailable.</td>
<td>Ground floor; accessible.</td>
<td>Public parking adjacent to main entrance.</td>
<td>Portable loops available. Fixed loop in lecture theatre.</td>
<td>In Main Building, Library, MCR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St John's College</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>1 step</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>3 steps but there is a ramp and manual lift.</td>
<td>Lift</td>
<td>Main Library: not currently accessible. Law Library in Kendrew Quad is fully accessible.</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>1 disabled bay.</td>
<td>Fixed loop in the Lodge and in the Kendrew Quad Lodge.</td>
<td>Available in North Quad, Museum Road, Garden Quad, Kendrew Quad, 15 and 21 St Giles, the old Gym.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Peter's College</td>
<td>Steps into main gate. Level access available further down the street.</td>
<td>See front entrance.</td>
<td>Ramp</td>
<td>Level access via the back entrance.</td>
<td>Ramp down</td>
<td>Currently no access to the reading rooms for those who cannot manage stairs.</td>
<td>Lift</td>
<td>1 space</td>
<td>In Lodge</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Disabled Students’ Guide www.ousu.org
<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Stephen's House</td>
<td>Marston Street entrance: 7 steps</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No disabled access. Library is located on the first floor and there is no lift access in the college.</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>None allocated for disabled visitors.</td>
<td>1 in the Church, 1 in the Couratin room and 1 mobile hearing aid device held in the College Office.</td>
<td>1 off the admin corridor, 1 in the cloisters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerville College</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>1 step</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Lift</td>
<td>10 steps</td>
<td>5 steps, level access door available.</td>
<td>Lift</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
<td>Chapel, Hall</td>
<td>Hall, Maitland Building, main car park area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinity</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Steps</td>
<td>Steps</td>
<td>Lift access to Main Hall. Basement and mezzanine not accessible.</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Public parking available on Broad Street.</td>
<td>In Hall</td>
<td>1 on the ground floor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>Steps</td>
<td>Steps</td>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>Not currently – steep stairs to 1st floor.</td>
<td>Not currently – steep stairs to 1st floor.</td>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>Yes, 2-3 parking spaces available.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolfson</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Lift</td>
<td>Lift</td>
<td>Lift</td>
<td>2 disabled bays.</td>
<td>Induction loop systems in the Lodge and Lecture Theatre and portable system available.</td>
<td>Level access to 1 in Main Quad, 1 near college entrance and lift access to a 3rd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Ramp access</td>
<td>Stairs</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Stairs</td>
<td>Stairs</td>
<td>Ramp access</td>
<td>Possible by arrangement.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wycliffe</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>No access</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>No access</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No access</td>
<td>No access</td>
<td>Yes, many spaces available.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

www.ousu.org
Hannah Pothecary

I am a second year mathematics student at Corpus Christi College. I was diagnosed with dyslexia and dyspraxia in Hilary of my first year.

When I first arrived at Oxford, I had a suspicion that I was dyslexic, but having always achieved fairly highly at school, I had been refused testing for many years. I found the first term extremely difficult; I found it hard to follow lectures, was taking much longer than I should have completing problem sheets, and was having trouble reading lecture notes. As the term went on I began to fall more and more behind, and started to feel angry and frustrated with myself. There was no obvious reason that everyone else could do these things and I could not.

Eventually, after a particularly bad problem sheet near the end of term, I decided to speak with the College Disabilities Officer about what was going on. She told me to speak to my tutor about getting referred for an educational physiology test. My tutor was initially sceptical, but agreed that if I was struggling, we should first see whether there were any hurdles in my way.

My test came back with interesting results. A weakness in my auditory short term and working memory explained my difficulties with lectures and problem sheets, while tracking problems were to blame for my troubles rereading lecture notes.

People say success is equal parts intelligence and motivation, but I disagree. The most important lesson I have learnt in my two years at Oxford is that both of these are redundant if you do not understand how you work best, which was what I decided to focus on.

After spending some time with a study skills tutor, I came up with a method that made my life much easier, involving printing on coloured paper, colour coding with pens, coloured glasses to help with tracking, regular study breaks and a diary to help organise my time.

I will not pretend that my diagnosis was a magic wand that immediately sorted all of my problems, but it was the catalyst for change. Now, I feel completely different from the person I was a year ago. I am no longer trailing behind everyone else, and am now much happier with my progress. I know I work in a different way from many people, but that doesn’t mean that the final product is any different. I feel so much more confident handing in a problem sheet!

I have even managed to improve my time organisation skills beyond recognition. This has given me the time to get back into the karate I do at home, which helps me to relax and de-stress, and I also help to run the Oxford SpLD peer networking group, which has helped me to feel less isolated by discussing my experiences with others similar situations.

Sports

Written by Gary Stephens, Oxford University Sports Federation

Participating in sport or physical recreation can be an important part of your student experience at Oxford University. The opportunities are extensive and we cater for a wide range of motivations and abilities.

University Sports

Known as the Oxford University Sports Federation, we support 78 official sports clubs, details of which can be found here: www.sport.ox.ac.uk/student-sport/sports-clubs/

University sports clubs are open to all students, with clubs actively seeking to integrate students with a disability whenever possible. If you are interested in a particular sport please contact us to find out further details. If one of our sports clubs is unable to offer an environment to meet your specific requirements, then we will be able to provide guidance as to suitable local alternatives to participate in a chosen sport or activity.

Inter-University competitive sport is organised through British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS). In recent years we have seen a significant expansion of competitive opportunities within disability sport. A browse at www.bucs.org.uk will provide further details. Alternatively please contact the Sports Fed.

The University is able to provide support services for a number of elite level athletes, so if you are a student who falls into this category, please let us know.

College Sport

Many of the 38 colleges have their own grass pitches and sports facilities; students are advised to access the relevant college website or make direct enquiries.

Sports in Oxford

The Sports Fed has a close relationship with the local County Sports Partnership, Oxfordshire Sport and Physical Activity, and is able to advise you about local opportunities to participate in disabled sport. www.oxspa.co.uk/sports/disability-sport
Keeping Fit

If your interest leans more towards casual physical activity, such as recreational swimming or working out in the gym, we offer student membership of the University Sports facilities. For membership options please visit:
www.sport.ox.ac.uk/membership/membership/student-membership/

Sport: accessibility and the experience

Written by Niall Strawson, Accessibility Advisor

As a member of the University I use the facilities at Iffley Road. There are two disabled parking spaces then a steep-ish ramp and powered doors to get in. Once in it is pretty much all level access.

I usually have a dip in the pool where there is private disabled changing with a toilet and shower in a wet room. It has a folding shower seat should you need it. Once changed, there is a pool hoist to help those who need it in and out. The staff are great as they are used to people with specific needs and are more than happy to help in a friendly and dignified manner.

The gym is also accessible (mostly the bikes and rowing machines are on a raised area). It’s a very friendly gym and often people offer to help or move things out of the way. The other gym goers are used to seeing me and others with disabilities about so no need to feel like a pioneer!

There is access to the track and other parts of the sports complex although some of it is stepped. The sports centre is aware and together we are trying to make some changes. A new section on the Access Guide is pending too, so watch this space!

www.sport.ox.ac.uk/facilities/access-guide/

Student Profile

Lindsay Lee

Oxford is a great place to live and study for many reasons, but unfortunately the lack of physical accessibility can be a real struggle for those with physical disabilities. I use a wheelchair full-time, and I was certainly daunted when I first arrived at how inaccessible so much of the space is. The uneven cobbled stones are alone enough to give a person in a wheelchair serious strife. All colleges have spaces that are only accessible by stairs, though some colleges are much worse than others. Local businesses also often have stairs in front. It takes time to figure out what routes and spaces are accessible for you.

My best advice is this: before you get to know the city, it’s always best to call ahead to check on the accessibility at your destination. Be sure to ask specific questions, because often if you just ask, “Is your location wheelchair accessible?” people will say “yes,” without knowing what that actually means. They may think that it’s perfectly fine if they have one step at their store front because they can help a wheelchair user over it. But for someone like me who uses a heavy, motorized chair, one step might as well be ten steps. Ask questions like, “How many stairs are at your entrance? How far would I need to walk to get from point A to point B? Do you have a disabled toilet?”

But it’s not all bad news: the vast majority of people in Oxford are more than willing to do whatever they can to assist you. The buses in Oxford are all wheelchair-accessible, and there are plenty of wheelchair-accessible taxis as well. It may take time for you to figure out what spaces are easily accessible to you and which ones are more difficult, but once you figure it out, your Oxford experience can be just as full and enriching as anyone else’s!
Shops
Written by Nicky Reed, The Student Advice Service
We’ve gathered together some information about Oxford’s main shops, cinemas and theatres to give you an idea of the facilities available.

Debenhams
Designated parking spaces; accessible entrances; accessible customer collection points; passenger lift facilities; accessible restaurant facilities; accessible toilets; personal shopper facilities; collect by and carry to car arrangements; delivery of purchases to your home; Induction Loops and/or arrangements for confidential conversation.
www.mystore.debenhams.com/store/398-oxford

Boots
Auto doors; uncluttered floor areas and accessible lift.

Marks and Spencer
Auto doors; disabled WC; disabled changing rooms; accessible restaurant/café; uncluttered floor areas and accessible lift.

Boswells
Auto doors/open front; uncluttered floor areas and accessible lift.

Toilets
All accessible toilets are opened by RADAR keys, which can be bought or loaned from the Oxford Visitor Information Centre, 15-16 Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3AS, 01865 686437

City Centre Toilets:
There are disabled toilets in Market Street, Gloucester Green, Speedwell Street and the Town Hall (when open).

A Community Toilet Scheme is in operation in Oxford City. Businesses involved in the scheme show a logo on the door stating that they are part of the Community Toilet scheme and no purchase is necessary: www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20007/communities/182/community_toilet_scheme

Oxford & the Map
Written by Niall Strawson, Accessability Advisor
Oxford can be a confusing place with each street just as beautiful and meandering as the next. In order to help ease this issue we created www.maps.ox.ac.uk. This is a searchable interactive map that uses University owned data to create a University centric map.

It shows all departments, libraries, museums and colleges. It grew from a simple idea that an image of the front of the building would be helpful. It provides an easy gateway to accessibility information. The clever part is that the map shows all related buildings (as departments are often multiple buildings spread out across the city). This means you can visualise your academic life in Oxford.

The map was designed with disability access in mind. Each search result that relates to a single building will have a window containing a button marked ‘access information’ — click it! This will link you to the specific entry in the Access Guide that relates to that building. The link also works the other way — with each page in Access Guide having a map link to place that information within the cityscape.

Don’t forget to check out lifestyle information too, just click the ‘lifestyle’ text under the search box. There are multiple tick boxes to add information to the map for handy things. My favourites are the real time bus information and the restaurants. All work and no play…you know the rest!

Parking
Being truthful, Oxford isn’t necessarily the most car-friendly city. Don’t worry; you’ll get used to it.

My insider tips for disabled parking are Beaumont Street as it has loads of spaces. Broad Street has quite a few too. Also if you’re coming from East Oxford and want to avoid the internal ring road, Oriel Square at the end of Merton Street is a good secret find! All are close to the centre for all the things you may need.

In addition, where the University has provided spaces for disabled users, it is highlighted in the Access Guide. Most departments and libraries will have some allocation, or with some notice can arrange something. We want to make it easy.

Don’t forget that blue badge holders can park in pay and display and residents’ bays too. The council has produced an access guide to the city which contains a useful parking map. Find it here: www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/1272/accessibile_oxford_guide
Glossary

**ARACU** – The Accessible Resources Acquisition and Creation Unit. It creates alternative formats for disabled students who can’t access printed materials. It can provide material in electronic format (both Word and PDF Image), audio DAISY CD, Braille and also tactile diagrams.

**College** – These are independent bodies within the University, which are both halls of residence for students and locations for student teaching.

**Common Room** – A Common Room is a relaxed space in your college for recreation, entertainment, and events. Typically, undergraduates and postgraduates will all have different Common Rooms, they’re confusingly also known as JCRs and MCRs. See below.

**DAISY** – the Digital Accessible Information System is designed to be a complete audio substitute for print material. Students can search, place bookmarks, navigate line by line, and change the speaking speed without distortion.

**DAS** – the Disability Advisory Service provides information, advice and guidance on the way in which a particular disability may impact on a student's experience at the University and assists with organising disability-related study support.

**Department** – An academic centre responsible for setting courses, lectures and maintaining study resources in a specific field.

**DSA** – The Disabled Students’ Allowance is an additional, Government-funded grant for disabled students, following a needs assessment, which pays for equipment, travel costs and non-medical helpers that arise from a student’s disability.

**JCR** – Junior Common Room. The undergraduate student body at a college or Permanent Private Hall.

**MCR** – Middle Common Room. The postgraduate student body at a college or Permanent Private Hall.

**Oxford Students’ Disability Community** – An independent, student-run campaign which raises awareness of issues facing disabled students.

**OUSU** – Oxford University Student Union, which provides representation, campaigning, welfare and support services to all students at Oxford University.

**RADAR** – A large, silver-coloured key that opens more than 9,000 accessible toilets in the UK.
Reasonable Adjustments – Legally required actions for a responsible body, such as the University or its Colleges, to remove physical barriers to access and empower disabled students to succeed, by changing how something is done, supplying alternative equipment or moving to a different location.

Sab – Every year students elect six Sabbatical Officers to OUSU who campaign on student issues and interests to University committees.

SpLD – A Specific Learning Difficulty. These difficulties typically affect a student’s motor skills, information processing and/or memory.

Student Support Plan – A summary document that sets out the recommendations for a student’s support.

Two-Ticks Symbol – This is the ‘positive about disabled people’ symbol. The symbol means the employer is committed to employing disabled people. If a job advert displays the symbol, you’ll be guaranteed an interview if you meet the basic conditions for the job.

Acknowledgements

The Student Advice Service at Oxford University Student Union have co-ordinated the production of this guide with support from the OUSU Communications team. Thanks go to the people who have written articles. Thanks also to all the other people, too many to name, who have given their time to make it possible.

We would like to dedicate this guide to all the disabled students in Oxford we meet as Advisors through our work. Our experiences of working with you have inspired us to produce this guide. We hope you all find it useful, and that you continue to thrive here at Oxford.

Disclaimer

All information correct at date of publication, May 2016.