

According to Somerville

FROM



TO



I am certainly not a slang expert and I'm definitely not down with the hood. But I did my best to provide you with this little Oxford Glossary. Our uni is infamous for its lingo, but you'll get used to it in no time, promise!

~ Michał Pychtin, 2018

This glossary was made by last year's International Officer, so certain things might be more obvious to some of you than others. I've added and edited a couple of bits... enjoy!

~ Aivin Gast, 2019

The Oxford (and everyday British) language takes some getting used to... you could expect to arrive and think the sentence “I lost my Bod Card in the Bod revising for Mods” was a joke. But this glossary will give you a head start, so you can Oxford like a pro.

~ Inês Castro, JCR Internationals Officer, 2020

The 4th edition of the Oxford University Press bestseller! Now available as a pocketbook, and with 25% more Oxford than before.

~ Isaac Tay, JCR Internationals Officer, 2022

A

Alcohol

Be careful, the legal drinking age is 18 and it's strictly enforced. To enter a club you need ID, like your driving licence or passport (but we wouldn't advise bringing this with you on a night out...). To buy alcohol in a shop, every member of the group needs to prove that they're 18 or over. **Your Bod Card is not proof of age, sadly.** You also need ID to buy any knives, lighters, tobacco and some high-caffeine products (e.g. you need to be 16+ for certain energy drinks).

Ashmolean

The oldest museum in England and the world's oldest university museum, which you'll see often on your way to Tesco. (Entry is free!)

B

Battels

The termly bill that students pay to College. It includes your rent, vacation residence, printing charges, etc., and is sent out by email each term. You'll be directed to pay it through **EPOS** (a system which college also uses to manage other payments).

Blue

An award given to student athletes for competing at the highest level of university sport.

[Fifth-week] Blues

A state of feeling down or overworked, which can often hit in 5th week, after you've passed the halfway point of term. Most of your college mates can relate to this, so don't hesitate to contact the welfare reps, peer supporters or your college parents for some support!

BNOC

Pronounced BEE-knock: a kind of student celebrity, short for 'big name on campus'. Almost invariably used ironically.

Bod Card

Your student card, which you'll use for accessing buildings across the uni, taking books out of the library, and paying for meals in **Hall**. If you lose it and need a temporary replacement, you can go to **Plodge** (the Porters might laugh--we've all been there). If you need a permanent replacement, email the Academic Office for a replacement (you'll need to pay £15, unless you just need a new card due to the wear and tear of your current one). When you want to top up the funds on your Bod Card, you do this though **EPOS**.

Bod[leian]

The University's central libraries, where the identifiable, iconic **Radcliffe Camera** stands. This is next to the Old Bodleian Library, where you can study as well.

Bop

A themed party thrown by the college **Entz** team with our own home-made “Bop juice” cocktails (50p each!). Whether you believe it stands for Big Organised Party or Badly Organised Party (or Big Open Party!), a Bop is an event that Somervillians all look forward to.

Bully

Refers to The Bullingdon, a club/cocktail bar down in **Cowley** that sometimes does great live music, among other things. **Boogaloo** is a particularly good club night held here if you’re a fan of 60s 70s and 80s music!

BYOB

Bring your own booze/beverage. Most of our **Formals** are BYOB, but *there is free wine at your Freshers’ Dinner*, and the Subject Dinners that are held in Hilary term.

C

Carfax

The tower at the crossroads between St. Aldates, Cornmarket Street, High Street, and Queen Street.

CHB

The Catherine Hughes Building in Somerville. You’ll spot it behind Penrose--it’s a shiny new one!

Cherwell

The river that flows through Uni Parks, and you go punting on it. Also the name of a student newspaper.

Classes

A lesson with 6-12 students, usually from multiple colleges. Different to a tutorial, and not all subjects have them.

Collections

Mock exams set by your tutors at the beginning of term. These don’t count towards your final degree, but if you do worse than expected, you can expect a word from your tutor. They are meant to be a way for you to check your own progress, in the absence of actual exams. Don’t stress too much about them, they often don’t reflect the grade you get in your real exams.

Coming up/down

Arriving at/leaving Oxford (every term).

Cornmarket [Street]

A very crowded pedestrianised street between Magdalen Street and High Street. It has places like McDonald’s, Greggs and Leon as well as Waterstones, TKMaxx and some banks.

Cowley

An area southeast of the city centre, not too far from Iffley. Houses the O2 Oxford and the Bullingdon, among other decent food and drink options.

Crewdate

An alcoholic dinner between two sports teams (or subjects, societies, etc.) wishing to come together in good spirit. They usually begin at a curry house with **BYOB** and move onto a college bar, followed by a club (for those that make it that far). Usually crewdates are £15/person and we recommend eating something beforehand. You'll play drinking games and **sconce** people. (As they are BYOB, you can also attend and bring something non-alcoholic to drink!)

Cuppers

Intercollegiate tournaments, usually for sport teams and arts societies and usually with lots of amateurs/newcomers to the activity in the team.

CU

The Christian Union, found in Somerville as part of the wider one in Oxford. They often host events in College, so you'll see a lot of their posts on the Somerville JCR **Noticeboard**.

Cycling

The most popular and convenient way to commute around Oxford. Be careful with left-hand-side movement though, especially at roundabouts. If you buy a bike, get a good D-lock or chain, as bike theft can be quite common. We also recommend using a helmet, and front and back lights. There are also some good bike sharing companies, like Ofo and Mobike. Though walking will get you everywhere just as well--Oxford isn't THAT big.

D

Darbs

Short for Darbshire, the accommodation buildings by the main entrance of Somerville. Used for first year accommodation currently.

Deans

The people who look after you during term. To be "deaned" means being called on by them. The Junior Deans work for the College Dean; usually you'll be disciplined by the Junior Deans, and only sent to the Dean if it's serious. You can also contact them in any emergency.

DHQ (Dorothy Hodgkin Quarter)

A graduate accommodation building looking onto Little Clarendon Street.

E

Entz

Every college has an Entz team, who organise social and entertainment events.

EPOS

The website where you can pay your **Battels** and top-up your **Bod Card**. The treasury doesn't put in the rent immediately, but they are very nice, so please contact them if you have questions.

Exam Schools

Aka. Examination Schools, a large building on the High Street where most exams are taken (not collections though) and some lectures are held.

F

FAH

Short for the Flora Anderson Hall, this is a space in college where **bops, collections** and conferences are held.

Fellow

Members of the teaching staff, either from the department but mostly used for teaching staff who are members of one of the colleges.

Finalist

A student taking their final public exams of their degree (mostly third- or fourth-years).

First

The highest classification of degree. This is followed by a 2.I, a 2.II and a third.

FOMO

Short for fear of missing out (which you hopefully won't get this year, we'll see to that ;-) -- but please do get in contact with us, the college welfare officers, or the peer supporters if you are struggling or feeling lonely).

Formal [Hall]

An elegant three-course dinner organised in **Hall**. In Somerville you don't wear a gown, but you do wear a dress or a suit and tie. It costs £14 for you, and £18 for any guests you want to bring along!

Fresher

A first-year student. That's you.

G

G&D's

A much-loved ice cream parlour, opposite Vaughan Gate on **Little Clarendon Street**. There is also one on St Aldate's and on Cowley Road, but ours is the OG one. It can be a bit pricey, but makes for a brilliant afternoon break during exam season and their flavours change every week!

Gaudy

A reunion in college for alumni.

Gown

1. An element of **subfusc** (the 'cape' bit)
2. Everyone connected to the University, as opposed to "Town" (everyone else living in Oxford)

Graduate (or grad)

Someone who already holds a uni degree. Technically, someone taking a course of study after graduation is a postgraduate, but in Oxford the two terms are used interchangeably.

Greats

Classics (also Literae Humaniores if you want to sound fancy).

H

Hacks

People heavily involved in Oxford politics or societies (especially the Oxford Union), contacting you out of the blue so that they can get you to join their side.

Hall

It's like a canteen, but more fancy. Serves lots of good meal options three times a day, which come cheap when you pay with your **Bod Card**.

High Table

The table in a college's dining hall, often on a platform, which the Principal and **Fellows** dine at. Guests may sometimes be invited to the High Table if it's their lucky day.

Hilary

The second term of the year, running from January to March.

Hussains

A brilliant kebab van in Oxford which we love very much. They have cheap chips, burgers and wraps that taste best at 2am after a night out. Located next to the Ashmolean and next door to Solomon's kebab van, they make a famous culinary rivalry.

Hustings

A pre-election meeting, where you can ask candidates running for JCR positions about their manifesto.

I

Iffley

The Iffley Road Sports Centre, where you might go to train if you've joined a sport.

Isis

Oxford's name for the part of the River Thames that runs through the city. Also the name of a student arts magazine.

J

JCR

Junior Common Room, refers both to the actual room (on **Vaughan's** ground floor, near to the **Terrace** bar) and to the entire undergrad student body.

Jericho

A historic suburb of Oxford, at the back of Somerville. It has lots of cafes (Opera makes particularly nice wraps!) and bars, a Co-op, a Sainsbury's and a cinema (Phoenix Picture house). A lot of students and local residents live here.

Jetlag

It can be a scary adjustment, but international students usually deal with it surprisingly well. Just bear with them when they get very tired.

L

LMH

Short for Lady Margaret Hall. They love to think that they're the first women's college, but we actually hold that title...

M

Matriculation

Oxford's initiation ceremony, where you officially become a member of the university. You need to wear **subfusc** and listen to a short speech in Latin. It takes place in the **Sheldonian**. On the day of matriculation, you will take a year group photo on the quad and most people start drinking after that.

May Day

An Oxford tradition on the 1st May when the town and students all gather underneath Magdalen College Tower to hear the choir sing at 6am. Some students will choose to stay up all night beforehand, but setting an early alarm works too!

MCR

The Middle Common Room, which refers both to the actual room and to the *graduate* student body as a whole. They have their own president and officers, although you may not hear much about them during your undergrad years.

Michaelmas

Oxford's first term, which generally runs from October to December. Pronounced like MICKEL-mas. The name sounds silly but you will end up calling it that before long!

Mods or Honour Moderations

Most likely to be your first exams if you are studying Law, EP, or PPL. They take place at the end of Hilary or Trinity and are your first public exams. You need to pass them to continue your degree, but otherwise they don't matter! Classicists don't have any exams in their first year, but have Mods in their second year instead.

MTC

Short for Margaret Thatcher Centre, a conference centre behind Somerville Chapel, under **DHQ**. (She is probably Somerville's most famous alumnus, although isn't very popular in college/Oxford. Her old room is Penrose 5, and it has a little sign above the door.)

N

Noticeboard

A JCR Facebook group with all the undergrads at Somerville, mainly used for important JCR and society updates. There is also a **Somerville Ticket Marketplace** Facebook group where people often post looking for tickets to events or to sell them. Many clubs and societies will have an Instagram page as well as a Facebook one to reach more people.

Noughth (0th) Week

The week before the official beginning of the academic term. Your first 0th week is known as your "freshers week". At the start of your first Michaelmas term, it is filled with lots of exciting freshers' activities. You'll soon end up referring to certain dates by whatever day of the numbered week it is. Here's the twist: Oxford weeks technically start on Sunday.

O

The other place

This is how Oxford students refer to ~~Cambridge~~ the other place.

[OU]SU

Oxford University Student Union, which represents your interests as a student at Oxford. This is different from **the Oxford Union** (where you have to buy membership). The SU can also refer to the actual building they are based in, on Worcester Street (not far from college), where some societies sometimes hold events.

Ox- (Prefix)

An equally oxendearing and oxannoying tradition of attaching the prefix Ox- to literally any word.

Oxfess and Oxlove

Two popular Facebook platforms where people can send in anonymous messages.

Oxmas

Oxford's festive celebrations, taking place a month before Christmas at the end of Michaelmas term (if you really wanted to, you could bring Christmas decorations to college with you--although October obviously feels like far too early to think about it!)

P

Paper

An exam, or part of one.

Papercut

An online printing website: <https://papercut.some.ox.ac.uk>. You need to use it to connect to the printers in the college library. Charges are sent to **Battels** at the end of each term.

Park

A mostly 2nd/3rd year accommodation building found opposite Penrose, next to main quad and the **FAH**. Home to the largest student kitchen in Somerville (and perhaps the whole uni?), some rooms that can be booked out for small events, and a music room which can be booked. Some classes are held there.

Penrose

A (mostly) first-years accommodation building found next to main quad by the **FAH**. See the Freshers Survival Guide for more info.

Permanent Private Hall (PPH)

A college, but a very small one. Formally: "a religious hall which has been licensed by the University to matriculate students for degrees". Note that Teddy Hall and Lady Margaret Hall are colleges, but Regent's Park College is a PPH! (St Benet's Hall used to be a PPH very near Somerville, but it was unfortunately shut down in 2022)

Pidge or pigeonhole

Your little mailbox in **Plodge**. Be sure to check it regularly (you're technically expected to check it every day, as you are your emails, but every few days is usually fine). You can also send mail to people in other colleges or departments for free, if you give it to the porters in **Plodge**.

Plodge [or The Lodge]

Short for **Porters' Lodge**, the first place of contact if you want something from college. This is where you go to check your **pidge**. Porters are an ambitious crossover between receptionists and security staff, and are generally very friendly.

Port Meadow

A large grassland surrounded by the River **Isis** behind Jericho. A good spot for a walk or a picnic (and also a swim!), like the nearby Uni Parks (but don't swim in Uni Parks!).

Prelim[inary Examination]s

Your first exams are most likely to come at the end of Trinity (or sometimes Hilary) term. The ones in Trinity are referred to as Prelims, while the ones in Hilary are usually called **Mods**. They are your first public exams (and they don't actually matter that much, you just need to pass them)!

Pre[-drink]s

Drinking before going out, often hosted in someone's room but sometimes in the JCR or terrace. Some people may also attend pre's without going out after, which is also very fun.

Punting

Gondola-like boats (called punts) which you can rent and take up the **Cherwell**. Some other colleges own their own punts which they can use for free, so if you make friends at other colleges it's worth asking them if they want to take you out punting on their punts. Until 16th October, Somerville has rented a punt from the Cherwell Boathouse, which you can use for free as long as you book it and collect a "punt card" from the **Plodge** -- so try to use it while you have the opportunity for free punting! (Although renting a punt as a group isn't too expensive either, and the punt will likely be hired by the JCR again in Trinity term when the weather gets better and punting becomes much nicer.)

Q

Quad

A quadrangle, square-ish area of grass found in the centre of many colleges. In Somerville you can walk on grass, but don't do it in older colleges, as it is punishable by death :0 (or something like that).

R

RAG

RAG (short for Raise and Give) events are student-run charitable fundraisers. A well-known one is the annual RAG Ball.

ROQ

Modern accommodation behind the Library (ROQ West) and House building (ROQ East). Short for Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, it is mostly used by 2nd/3rd years. The space behind the Library will be opened this year as Oxford's new Humanities centre or 'Schwarzmann Centre'.

Rowing

An Oxford obsession, addiction and all-time favourite sport. It's worth trying out at Somerville Boat Club--a lot of people have never rowed before coming to Oxford. Rowers will often train on ergs (rowing machines found in every gym), and on the river very early in the mornings. They "bump" other boats in races like **Torpids** and **Eights**.

Rusticating

Taking a year off for health, welfare, personal, academic or disciplinary reasons. You may be joined mid-year by a few students returning after rustivating the year before. The decision to rusticate is made between you, your tutors and college. Many people do have moments where they consider this, so do not panic if it feels like things are difficult to handle, and get in contact with college welfare support.

S

Sesh

A party or some sort of drinking session. Sometimes used ironically to refer to any sort of gathering.

Scholar

Someone with a scholarship (these are awarded for a wide range of reasons--be sure to apply if you think you are eligible for one). Scholars or people with top results can wear a scholar's gown. The rest of us are **commoners**.

Sconce

Both a verb and a noun, a sconce is an instance of "never-have-I-ever". If you're called out, you usually have to take a drink, like during **crew dates**. "Friends" like to sconce you for your most outrageous moments at Oxford.

Scout

A lovely person who cleans your room every two weeks and has the potential to wake you up if you haven't put your bins outside your door in a while or you have forgotten your room was due to be cleaned on that day. Please be considerate of the scouts when using communal spaces like kitchens and bathrooms.

SCR

The Senior Common Room, both an actual room and the body of College Fellows/other officials.

Sharks

Older years who sleep with freshers. :{

Sock Exchange

A Facebook group which is basically Somerville's lost & found page, but if you're looking for something you can also ask **Plodge**.

Somerville Ticket Marketplace

A Facebook group where Somervillians buy and sell tickets amongst themselves.

SOLO

Oxford's online library catalogue. There is a useful website with videos on how to use this!

Soloman's

A fantastic kebab van in Oxford which we love very much. They have cheap chips, burgers and falafel wraps that taste best at 2am after a night out. Located next to the Ashmolean and next door to Hussain's kebab van, they make a famous culinary rivalry.

SSO

Stands for **Single Sign On**. Your username and password used to login to your university email address, and a lot of other university webpages (like EPOS or TMS). Signing in once on a device should mean you don't need to sign in to sign into it for at least an hour. Your SSO login usually requires "two-factor authentication", which means you have to download the "microsoft authenticator" app onto your phone (or other device) and use it every time you login. If you are having technical issues, please contact college IT support.

Stash

Clothing that has either your society, sporting club or college on it.

Sub Fusc

Oxford's official 'uniform', which you will wear to **Matriculation**, Graduation, and formal exams. For more details, check <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/dress?wssl=1>. Your gown, mortarboard and tie/ribbon can be bought together in Oxford, or bring a black tie from home.

T

Tab

Someone from **the other place** (~~C~~*mbridge). Short for C*ntabrigian. I know, the joke writes itself.

Torpid

A boat race that takes place in **Hilary**. Inevitably cold and rainy.

Trashing

After finishing exams and walking out of **Exam Schools**, we get showered in shaving foam, champagne, silly string, and confetti by our friends, while in our **sub fusc**. After this we often jump in the river in Christ Church Meadow or Port Meadow. Participation is voluntary, and there are many fun alternative ways to celebrate (I can personally recommend jumping in a river!). The practice has been officially banned by the university, but many people do it anyway in areas away from university buildings to avoid being fined. If you do trash, please use eco-friendly materials to avoid any damage to the environment, property, or people.

Trinity

The summer term at Oxford. This is typically filled with picnics, **punting**, Pimms (fruity alcoholic punch) and pressure before **Prelims**. Also the name of a college.

Tutes

Short for tutorials, those meetings with your tutors where you go over a given topic. They are way less scary than they seem! Get tips on how to approach them from your college parents.

U

Union

The Oxford Union (note that this is quite different from the Oxford University Student Union).

Uni Parks

The University Parks, a spot where picnics, sports and strolls coexist in harmony.

UTV

“Up The Ville!”. Scream this during sports matches (and possibly other occasions!).

V

Vac

Short for vacation, approximately 6 weeks when you go home, but vacs are not necessarily free from work due to **collections** or other work set by your tutor. In special circumstances, you can ask College for an extended stay in college (vacation residence).

Varsity

1. The term for any sports (or other activity) match between Oxford and Cambridge, the most notable of which is the Boat Race.
2. The Ski Trip organised for Oxbridge students every year. Places for this are usually taken very quickly at the beginning of Michaelmas.
3. Also (confusingly) the name of a club, often hired for private events and entz nights.

Vaughan

The biggest first year accommodation building. Infamous for the appearance of its exterior. Not as bad as people say though (it's actually worse).

The Ville

The nickname for Oxford's greatest college. Not used much by people outside the Ville itself though (yet).

W

Welfare tea

A regular college event on Sunday afternoons. Come to meet up with Welfare Officers, to chat over heaps of yummy free snacks. There'll be garlic bread if it's a good day.

Westgate

The main shopping centre in Oxford. Including big retail shops and lots of restaurants on the rooftop.

* Lots of subjects are often abbreviated: PPE (Politics, Philosophy and Economics), E&M (Economics and Management), CAAH (Classical Archaeology and Ancient History), Hispol (History and Politics), AMH (Ancient and Modern History), PPL (Psychology, Philosophy and Linguistics), etc...

* Plush and Bridge are some clubs you will hear often about. 'Freud' is a bar behind Somerville, and the Wetherspoons (much cheaper!) on George Street is also popular, called The Four Candles (there is also another Wetherspoons near the Westgate centre).

* The Bullingdon Club and Piers Gaveston Society (Piers Gav) are some notorious and mysterious dining clubs. We have no idea if anyone really attends them or not.

* Unpredictable pronunciations: Magdalen is pronounced more like MAWD-lin and not Mag-DA-lin. Notice also the pronunciation of Balliol (BAY-liol), Hertford (HART-ford), Keble (KEY-ble) and Worcester (WOU-ster). Vaughan is pronounced Vawn. Like many place names ending in -shire, Darbshire is pronounced like Darbishər.

If you're not familiar with a particular term and it's not on our list, please don't worry. It's never stupid (and not weird at all) to ask someone about it, like your college parents. Also don't try to learn every term here, you may not use all of them and you will learn a lot of them just by being in Oxford!