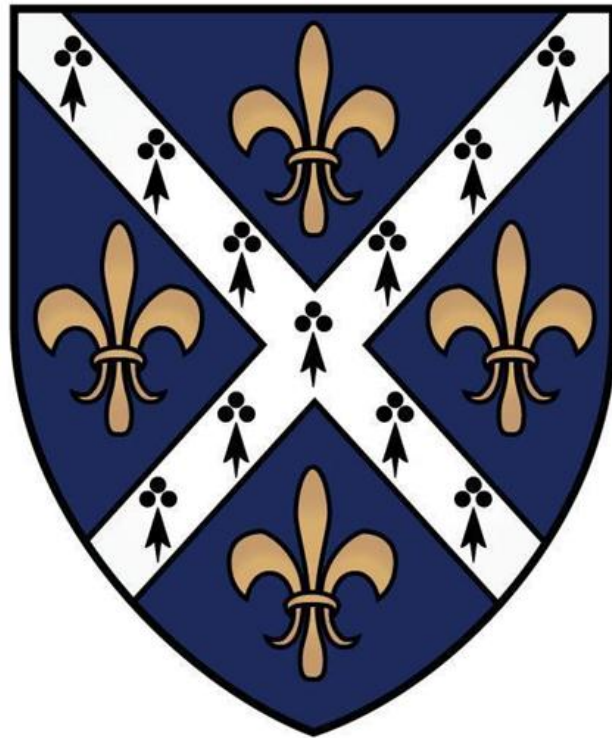


St Hugh's College MCR



Freshers' Guide

2025–26



A Word of Welcome!

Dear incoming St. Hugh's College Graduate Students,

On behalf of all the members of the St Hugh's College Middle Common Room (MCR), I am thrilled and honoured to welcome you to St Hugh's College! The arrival of new Hughies is always an auspicious occasion and as such, we've planned numerous events to assist you with making friends, orienting yourself to the College and University, and settling in prior to the start of term.

Building on the college's storied history, St Hughs' community remains one of the most sociable and vibrant in Oxford. Freshers' week marks the start of your chapter in this story. Be it rowing for bumps glory, unleashing your creativity as a writer, diving into new academic discoveries, improving your mallet maneuvers in croquet, or honing your pitch in the college choir, there are so many ways to make your mark. I encourage you all to immerse yourself in these experiences and our community where you will make lasting friends and memories.

In this guide, you should find everything you need to know about life in college from navigating the college's facilities to tackling Oxford's eccentricities. If you can't find an answer to your question here, I encourage you to post on the MCR Facebook page or the WhatsApp group. You are also most welcome to message me directly about anything that could help improve your experience here at Oxford.

I wish you all the best for your studies and hope that you will have a fantastic time here, embracing all the exciting things both St. Hugh's College and the University of Oxford have to offer.

Sincerely,

Lily Harris,

St. Hugh's MCR President

and

The St Hugh's Middle Common Room (MCR) Committee



About St Hugh's

St Hugh's was established in 1886 as a college for "women of lesser means". It first began accepting men on its centennial in 1986 and now has an equitable mix of both women and men. The college was founded by Elizabeth Wordsworth, the great-niece of famous poet William Wordsworth. Her father was the Bishop of Lincoln and, for this reason, she named St Hugh's College after the 12th century Bishop of Lincoln, St Hugh of Avalon (1140–1200). At that time, the Diocese of Lincoln included Oxford, so you can find statues of St Hugh (and his swan) throughout the city of Oxford (e.g. St Mary Magdalen Church, the New College cloisters, etc.).

St Hugh's is now one of the largest colleges at the University of Oxford, in terms of both size (approximately 15 acres) and students (about 900 students, split roughly equally between undergraduates and postgraduates). Notable graduates of St Hugh's include Theresa May (former Prime Minister of the UK), Aung San Suu Kyi (former State Counsellor of Myanmar and Nobel Peace Prize winner), Amal Clooney (human rights lawyer), and Barbara Castle (former First Secretary of State of the UK).

Read more about the [history of St Hugh's](#).



Pre-Arrival

Pre-Arrival Communications

You will have already received information from the University and College on your personal email, but as term approaches this email traffic will quickly divert to your Oxford email. You will want to set that up and begin to regularly check it *as soon as possible*. You will also want to avail yourself of the Facebook group set up to connect all 2024–25 St Hugh's MCR students. You may also want to peruse [Oxford's Welcome Guide](#), along with the [St Hugh's MCR page](#) and the [St Hugh's New Students page](#).

Facebook MCR 2025-2026 Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/784475300767504>

WhatsApp MCR Group: https://chat.whatsapp.com/InsgyCV8tHmJxSW4yckQIn?mode=ac_t

Freshers' Week

Although according to the [Dates of Term](#), Michaelmas Term doesn't officially start until Sunday, 13 October (Week 1), there will be a number of events taking place in Week 0 ('noughth week') and even Week -1 to help you settle smoothly into Oxford and make sure everyone has a place to meet other Hughsies before term starts. The St Hugh's MCR Committee (postgraduate student committee) is hosting a full roster of events especially for you, including but not limited to: pub nights, dancing, and casual meet-ups. These events will start at the end of Week -2 (~ Sept 28) and ramp up throughout Week 0 (Oct 6–12). Additional information and a schedule of events will be sent to your Oxford email in the coming weeks.

Your Department

In addition to the roster of events put on by the St Hugh's MCR Committee, your department may also be hosting welcome and meet-and-greet events. You have likely heard from someone in your department already, but if you have questions related to your course, contact your departmental director of graduate studies or course advisor.



Getting to Oxford

Flying

For those of you flying, try to arrive via either Heathrow or Gatwick. Luton or Stansted are also options, but it's a bit tougher to reach Oxford from either of those airports. From the airport, it's usually easiest to reach Oxford by bus rather than other means of transportation.

Buses

There are two main bus services to be aware of:

1. **The Airline Bus**—The easiest way to get to Oxford from Heathrow or Gatwick. Check times online but they run regularly. Gloucester Green is the main bus station and the closest to St Hugh's.
2. **The Oxford Tube**—Despite the name, this is a bus service and NOT actually a train/metro service. It runs regularly from multiple stops in London to Oxford. It also puts in at Gloucester Green. The train is also an option for getting to/from London.

You can use the National Express to get to Oxford from Luton or Stansted.

Trains

If you are arriving by train, then the closest station is Oxford (Central). Oxford Parkway is also nearby. After you settle in, trains are great for getting around the country—more on that later.

Cabs

If you arrive in the City Centre, you can walk or take a bus (just check Google Maps, CityMapper, etc.), but if you're heavily laden with baggage then you might want to take a cab. Uber works but is expensive—001 Taxis or RoyalCarsOxford are other app-based taxi services.

Arriving at college

If you're living in College, you will pick up your key from the Porters' Lodge. If you're using Google Maps, simply type in "St Hugh's College" and it will take you to the lodge.



Top 5 Tips for Incoming Freshers

1. Arrive as early as possible

Despite the official dates of term listed online, we recommend you arrive as early as possible to take advantage of all of the opportunities to meet people and get settled in during Week 0 and even during Week -1.

2. Bring formalwear

Oxford is unusual in that students will routinely have occasion to wear formalwear. Strange as it may sound, suits, tuxedos, cocktail dresses, ball gowns, and any/all cultural equivalents are routinely seen around Oxford! Whether this is to attend formal dinners, galavant at balls, or matriculate and/or sit your exams during the day, your future self will thank your present self for packing formalwear (read up on '[sub fusc](#)' requirements and ensure you bring all constituent elements).

3. Join a Freshers Family

Incoming Freshers have the opportunity to join a 'family' with 1-2 returning students acting as 'parents' who will show incoming students around, organize outings to pubs, and generally show them the ropes. It's a fun tradition in which we encourage everyone to partake!

4. Download a Few Apps for Getting Around

We previously mentioned 001 Taxis and RoyalCarsOxford as cheaper alternatives to Uber. In terms of nationwide rail service, try downloading Trainline or TrainPal for buying train tickets. If you intend on traveling around the UK via train at all, you will want to buy a [student railcard](#) — it will pay itself off quickly.

5. Freshers' Fair

There is a [wide array of clubs and societies at Oxford](#) ([see also](#)) and nearly all make an effort to recruit new members during the [Oxford Student Union Freshers' Fair](#), currently scheduled for **9–10 October**. You won't want to miss it!



Student Resources

University & College

A number of resources available to students through two avenues: the University and the College. The dual nature of the system is rooted in tradition and, while at times redundant, it also helps to provide a capacious safety net. Often the College points of contact are a good place to start because they are in a position to give you more personalized attention.

Health & Welfare: Who's Who?

St Hugh's maintains a broad array of [resources for personal welfare](#). Sarah Dragonetti serves as the [College Nurse & Wellbeing Coordinator](#), Dilys Codrington as the [College Counsellor](#), and the Reverend Katie Tupling as the Interim [College Chaplain](#) — to name only a few. In addition, the Porters are all trained in First Aid.

The [MCR Committee](#) maintains hygienic items, sexual health items, and a first-aid kit in the MCR House (87 Banbury Rd). The MCR Committee Welfare Officers also lead welfare initiatives, along with members of the University-wide [Peer Support program](#). You can access the [Oxford Nightline](#) at 01865 270270 which is a self-described “listening, support and information service run for and by students of Oxford and Oxford Brookes universities”.

As a student in the UK, you will also have access to National Health Service (NHS) resources. To access these you MUST register with a surgery upon arrival. You will receive separate instructions/exhortations about this. If you live in College, you will want to register at [Summertown Health Centre](#). If you live outside of College, you will want to consult the [NHS Directory](#) for your closest location. In the case of an emergency, you can reach the NHS at 111 (you should dial 999 for other emergencies – 112 will also work).

Academic & Financial Matters

Academic matters can often be addressed with Thea Crapper, [Academic Registrar](#). Sometimes you may also wish to consult your College advisor, a Fellow of the College who is in your field of study (but probably not your exact course of study). They will reach out during the first few weeks of term. If unforeseen financial circumstances threaten your studies, consult the [Financial Assistance webpage](#). Watch your email throughout the year for info on Research Travel Grants.



Facilities & Services

Food & Formals

From 0th to 9th weeks, the dining hall provides three meals a day during the week and brunch at weekends for St Hugh's students living either on College or off. There are always vegetarian and vegan options, and many dietary requirements can be accommodated by writing to the Catering Manager in advance ([additional information and contact details here](#)).

[Formal Halls](#) take place during termtime on a weekly basis (and sometimes more often). Intercollegiate Exchange Formals are facilitated by the MCR Committee with other colleges and also occur regularly during termtime.

Bod card

Your Bod card (short for [Bodleian Libraries](#) card) is about the most valuable thing you will own in Oxford. It is used to:

1. Swipe into University and College buildings
2. Check out library books
3. Identify yourself at exams and University and College events
4. [Pay for meals](#) in College
5. Secure student discounts throughout Oxford

Post & Parcels

The College maintains a pidge ('pigeon hole', i.e. a mailbox) for each student in the Lodge where post (mail) can be delivered. Post and parcels should be addressed thusly:

[Student Name]
St Hugh's College
St Margaret's Road
Oxford OX2 6LE

Email, Internet, & Data

You will receive instructions about [setting up your email](#) before you arrive to Oxford. [Requests for name changes](#) can be made in the case of problems (or preferences). You can [access the internet](#) by completing only a few short steps. You can contact the [St Hugh's IT team](#) if you have any issues. You may also easily purchase a [data plan](#) through one of several phone carriers.

Laundry

Low-cost laundry facilities are located in the MCR House (87 Banbury) and 13 Canterbury Rd. Additional laundry rooms can be found in Maplethorpe Building, though these are mainly for undergraduate use. Some laundry rooms have irons.

Gym, Sport, & Societies

The [St Hugh's Gym](#) is available to students for a nominal fee. Private gyms, like [Buzz Gym](#), are also a popular option depending on your needs. The MCR also maintains croquet, badminton, and other sports equipment for use by students. Meanwhile, MCR members have access tennis & football courts shared with Keble College on Woodstock Road and squash courts at Wolfson College at specific timeslots. Talk to the MCR Sports Rep for more details.

Like all colleges, St Hugh's is immensely fond of its rowing teams and the Torpids and Summer Eights races are considered by many to be highlights of the year. There are however several other sports teams including [football](#), cricket and more! The JCR (undergraduate body) also maintains [several clubs and societies](#) which are also open to MCR members. With the exception of rowing, the College clubs tend to be more casual than the [University-led clubs and societies](#) discussed previously.

Cycling

Because Oxford is relatively compact and St Hugh's relatively close to City Centre many students get by walking. However, others (particularly those who live in Cowley, Botley, etc.) may find it convenient to invest in a bicycle. There are several places to buy a [secondhand bicycle](#). You can also purchase [discounted locks and lights](#) through the University. The St Hugh's Porters' Lodge has a bike pump and WD40 for jammed locks.

Further Reading

We hope that this guide will help to make your introduction to the College (and the University!) to be stress-free and hug(hs)ely enjoyable! You will find several other

1. [University of Oxford's 'Preparing for Oxford' Guide](#)
2. [St Hugh's College](#)
3. [St Hugh's College MCR](#)



The Complete Who's Who

Principal: [Lady Elish Angiolini](#)

The Principal is the head of college, ultimately responsible for all that takes place within its walls. You may be invited to her house or garden at some point this year. Lady Elish previously served as the first female Lord Advocate of Scotland.

Most likely to be... saying grace at Formal Hall

Can be found... in her office in Main Building

Academic Registrar: [Thea Crapper](#)

The Academic Registrar is your first point of contact for all academic matters in college. She is also the disability contact and the person to email if there are problems with exams or submissions. She can put you in touch with the Senior Tutor, Professor Vilain.

Most likely to be... working hard for students to make sure all is going well with their degrees

Can be found... in the College Office in Main Building

Senior Tutor: [Professor Robert Vilain](#)

Professor Vilain is responsible for the academic progress of the College's postgraduate and undergraduate students, working very closely with Thea Crapper, Academic Registrar.

Most likely to be... singing the praises of the students' research

Can be found... by contacting Thea Crapper

Dean: [Dr Damian Jenkins](#)

The Dean is responsible for discipline in College. He heads the decanal team of an assistant and four junior deans, who are all graduate students and whose job is to prevent fun in inappropriate places.

Most likely to be... laying down the law to any misbehaving students

Can be found... if you're up to no good, you don't find him, he finds you...

Accommodation Manager: [Ciara Cronin](#)

Magdalena is your first contact for all accommodation issues within College.

Most likely to be... juggling all the room bookings in College

Can be found... in her office in Main Building, by the entrance

Estates Team: Headed by [Richard Noonan](#)

Door knobs, chairs, walls, windows: if anything breaks, the Estates Team is your best friend. Fill in the [Maintenance Request Form](#) and they will arrive at your door (usually that day or the next).

Most likely to be... holding College together

Can be found... through the magic of the Maintenance Request Form

Domestic Bursar: [Rahele Mirnateghi](#)

Rahele is responsible for catering and household matters at St Hugh's, from the sandwiches at lunchtime to the high table menu at Formal Hall.

Most likely to be... deciding what you're going to be eating in the hall

Can be found... in her office in Main Building

Nurse & Wellbeing Coordinator: [Sarah Dragonetti](#)

Sarah will help you if you get sick, or want a chat, and can also refer you to your GP. She can liaise with your department if you need extensions for medical reasons and helps organize wellbeing events — particularly those in relation to the gardens!

Most likely to be... emailing you about her Friday gardening events

Can be found... in her office on the first floor of the main building

College Counsellor: [Dilys Codrington](#)

Dilys is an accredited NCPS (National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society) counsellor available for St Hugh's students to talk to.

Most likely to be... helping students work through personal issues

Can be found... by emailing her!

Chaplain: [The Reverend Katie Tupling](#)

The Reverend Katie Tupling is our Interim College Chaplain College Chaplain and holds weekly chapel services featuring a choir consisting of both students and faculty. She is available for all students of any religion (or none).

Most likely to be... filling Main Building with song on Sundays!

Can be found... at her office next to the Chapel

IT Office

The [St Hugh's IT office](#) is in Main Building, along the corridor with the other College offices. They are primarily there to help with any problems that can't be solved on your own.

Most likely to be ... solving all of your technical difficulties

Can be found ... in their office in Main Building

Porters: The Porters are responsible for the security of College. They also sort the post, delivered to your pigeonhole in the lodge. They can help in the event you're locked out or would like to make an anonymous noise complaint. The Porters are very friendly and incredibly helpful!

Most likely to be ... emailing you when your Amazon Prime order arrives

Can be found ... in the Porters' Lodge ('Plodge') by the front gate

Scouts: For those living in College, the scouts will normally clean your rooms once per week (vacuuming carpets, wiping down hard surfaces) and communal facilities (e.g. kitchens) each weekday. If you want to make any special arrangements about room cleaning (fortnightly instead of weekly or whatever) they are very approachable.

Most likely to be ... the unsung heroes of college!

Can be found ... in three places at once (rumours of their magical powers abound)

Gardeners: The gardens are the pride and joy of St Hugh's and the gardeners can be found busying themselves in the flowerbeds or trimming shrubs to maintain them. You may not have much to do with them, but if you are a keen gardener, I'm sure they would be more than happy to have a chat!

Most likely to be... making the gardens bloom

Can be found ... in any green space, but particularly near the greenhouse by 13 Canterbury Road

Felines in Residence: [Professor Biscuit and Admiral Flapjack are the College Cats](#) who may be very friendly/persuasive, but should not be fed treats! They are welcome to roam free, but you should always make sure they can get out of any buildings in which they may wander.

Most likely to be... sunning on the lawn or posing for close-ups

Can be found... where the cuddles are

You may also consult the [complete list of St Hugh's Faculty and staff](#) online.



The Life of St Hugh (1140-1200)

The Boy Hugh was born in the alpine village of Avalon, Burgundy, in what was then the Holy Roman Empire, and what is today southeastern France. Hugh's father was the *sieur d'Avalon*, making him a knight in the high medieval era, when chivalry was beginning to take shape. Hugh's mother, known for her kindness, died when Hugh was young. Upon her death, Hugh's widowed father, brokenhearted and war-weary, divided his lands among his two eldest sons and retired to a nearby community of Augustinian Canons Regular – taking young Hugh with him.

The Monk Canons Regular were not exactly monks nor were they parish priests, but priests abiding by a monastic rule (usually the Rule of St. Augustine). While Hugh enjoyed their mission of ministering to the community, he ultimately sought a more contemplative existence in the cloistered confines of a secluded monastery. This led him to leave the canons to become a monk at the Mother House of the Carthusian order, the Grande Chartreuse. And thus he spent bulk of his 20s immersed in prayer and contemplation in a lofty alpine monastery (the first monastery on the site had been destroyed in an avalanche). Sometime in his 20s, he was ordained a priest and, in his early 30s, made *procurator*, responsible for the temporal affairs of the monastery. After a decade in this office, Hugh had (unwittingly) cultivated a reputation for efficiency and piety that reached far and wide – even across the channel to Henry II of England.

The Prior At this time, King Henry II found himself in a difficult situation (to put it mildly). Indeed, not long before, he had (implicitly or otherwise) precipitated the death of his one-time friend, the Archbishop of Canterbury: Thomas Becket. This was a sin for which he famously suffered himself to be scourged (flogged), but part of his penance also involved the foundation of three monastic houses in England. One of these was a Carthusian house (corrupted into English as 'charterhouse'): the Witham Charterhouse, Somerset. It had been founded in 1178/79 by Carthusian monks sent from the Grande Chartreuse itself, but was floundering. The first prior found he was not up to the task and when the second prior died unexpectedly very little had been accomplished. And so Henry sent for Hugh (personally) to become the third prior. Hugh, long accustomed to a life of contemplation and worldly detachment, accepted only with the utmost reluctance. At Witham, however, Hugh quickly turned things around, ensuring that local peasants who had been evicted for the building of the monastery were fairly compensated by the king. Dispossession had made for a poor foundation but with this obstacle removed work proceeded

apace. With construction swiftly completed, Hugh once again returned to the life of contemplation and prayer he had always sought. It would not last.

The Bishop In 1186, Hugh was elected Bishop of Lincoln – the largest diocese in England, encompassing some nine counties including Oxfordshire (the previous seat of the diocese had in fact been Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire). He toured his diocese for much of the year, attending to pastoral and administrative issues (and occasionally refreshing himself at Witham). As bishop, he left a dual legacy.

The Builder: He began to rebuild the magnificent Lincoln Cathedral (which had been all but destroyed by a recent earthquake). He insisted upon performing some of the humblest tasks in the building of his cathedral – digging ditches and laying bricks with his own hands. Upon completion of its central spire in 1311, the cathedral became the tallest building in the world – a distinction it would retain for more than two centuries. Hugh also had a number of other churches built in his massive diocese, including St Mary Magdalen's Church, Oxford. He also consecrated St Giles' Church, Oxford.

The Man of Conscience He stood up to three Plantagenet kings: Henry II, Richard I (Cœur de Lion), and King John (of Robin-Hood infamy), resisting royal encroachment on the rights of the Church and the downtrodden. He once missed an appointment to dine with King Richard to perform a funeral, explaining, "It is better the King dine without me than I leave my Master's work undone." He stood down mobs in defense of the Jewish community of Lincoln, defied custom by inviting women to dine at his table, and established hospitals for lepers on episcopal estates – washing their sores with his hands and soothing their spirits with his words.

The Saint There are two criteria for canonization: one's life and one's miracles. Miracles after death were particularly important as they affirmed one's presence in heaven while obviating the possibility of a fall from grace. After Hugh's death, dozens of reports of miracles began to circulate, largely about the curative properties of his tomb. It is fitting that Hugh is entombed in his beloved cathedral. He rests near the tombs of Bishop Richard Fleming (founder of Lincoln College) and Bishop Christopher Wordsworth, father of Elizabeth Wordsworth who founded St Hugh's College in 1886 – 700 years after Hugh was consecrated bishop.

Feast Day 17 November (Anglican) and 16 November (Roman Catholic)

Patron Saint of Sick people (especially children), cobblers, swans

The Swan of Stow While at the episcopal Stow Manor (near Lincoln), Hugh befriended the swan that would become his symbol. The creature enjoyed a reputation for viciousness and let no man approach him – save Hugh, from whose hand he would gently eat bread. The great bird was said to have cried plaintively when Hugh died far away in London.

Man around Town You can find statues of Hugh not only at St Hugh's College, but at New College and St Mary Magdalen's Church. The most important hagiography of Hugh, by Adam of Eynsham, is housed at the Bodleian.



Glossary

Battels	(n, pl) Bills from College
Bod	(n) contraction of Bodleian library
Bod card	(n) Library card/ID/access card/payment card for meals. Without it, life gets rather difficult.
Bop	(n) Party in the College bar, normally fancy dress (costume/theme dress). At St Hugh's, we call the Friday night MCR social event 'TFS', for 'The Friday Social'.
Common Rooms	(n) JCR —Undergraduate student body (and physical common room) (n) MCR —Postgraduate student body (and physical common room) (n) SCR —Academic faculty
Fellow	(n) A member of the College teaching staff (tutors, lecturers...) A fellow or tutor is also known as a Don.
Formal	(n) Formal Hall
Fresher	(n) First-year student, whether undergraduate or postgraduate
Hall	(n) Dining hall; food provided therein

Noughth week	(n) 0 th week is the week before term starts, preceded by -1st week
Oxford Union; Union	(n) University debating society (n) the building where Union debates and speeches are held
Pidge	(n) contraction of pigeonhole, meaning your mailbox in the Plodge
Plodge	(n) contraction of Porters' Lodge
Principal	(n) Head of the College, currently Lady Elish Angiolini for St Hugh's
Punt	1. (n) A long, flat water vessel propelled by a long pole 2. (vb) About the most inefficient means of propulsion through water. Great fun!
Sub fusc	(n) Fancy dress worn when sitting exams and for matriculation.
Terms	(n) Michaelmas —Autumn term: October to December (n) Hilary —Winter/Spring term: January to March. Also known as 'Hellary' for the combination of weather and workload. (n) Trinity —Summer term: April to June
TFS	(n) St Hugh's-specific abbreviation for The Friday Social, our MCR's weekly Friday night social activity
Tilly	(dog) St Hugh's dog-in-residence—she can often be seen walking around College with her mum (Elish, our Principal) or dad (Dom). Friendly but hates poodles.
Tutorial; Tute	(n) Small class or one-to-one teaching
Vice-Chancellor	(n) Head of the University of Oxford, currently Professor Irene Tracey.

Map of College

