

PART A – INTRODUCTION

Principal's Preface

I am delighted to write the introduction to this excellent handbook and to welcome you here. It is my fifth year as Principal and I have learnt a great deal from the Blue Book myself, as I am sure you will too.

This historic College is often described as the friendliest in Oxford. We aim to offer graduates access to a stimulating academic, social, and cultural environment. I encourage you to give back to as well as to take from that community and to participate fully within it.

You are of course primarily here in the College to pursue academic excellence. Beyond this, we hope that you take up every opportunity to participate in music, sport, drama or one of many other extra-curricular activities that Brasenose offers.

You are likely to make lifelong friends in the College. The key thing we ask of you is that you take every opportunity that is offered and treat all others, whether staff or fellow students with respect.

The Blue Book sets out a great number of items of information and guidance which you will find invaluable. It also sets out rules which govern your relationship with each other. We know that many of you are international students living in the UK for the first time. The sources of information and help are set out in detail – please use them should you need to. A problem shared is a problem on the way to a solution.

I look forward to getting to meeting you at graduate “Blurbs”, graduate dinners and other events and very much hope you flourish as an individual whilst you are here.

John Bowers QC, Principal

A.1 Arriving at Brasenose

Welcome to Brasenose! University life provides a unique opportunity for personal development and the great majority of students look back on their experience here highly positively. Many long-term friendships are also forged at College. Brasenose aims to admit talented individuals who will respond positively to the educational opportunities Oxford offers, and who then go on to flourish in whatever field they ultimately choose to enter after graduation. The College provides an environment for you to nurture skills and aptitudes that can help make realisation of these aspirations possible. The City, University, and Colleges of Oxford also offer exceptional facilities for academic, sporting, and cultural pursuits. Wherever your interests lie, you will find others sharing these passions and there will be more activities and events taking place than any one person has time to attend. One of the most important life-skills learned at University is how to balance the freedom to pursue what you enjoy doing with the commitment necessary to realise specific goals. Of course, your academic work must be given priority over all other activities, but with careful organisation of your time you should be able to find the right work-life balance.

Post-arrival, you can expect to have a busy schedule of important introductory meetings ('Induction') in the College and in your Faculty or Department. There will also be a number of social events to welcome you, providing opportunities to meet fellow students. These are organised by the Junior Common Room (JCR) for Undergraduates, and by the Hulme Common Room (HCR) (the equivalent of the Middle Common Room or MCR in other Colleges) for Graduates. Undergraduates and Graduates are each assigned student mentors, known as a 'parent', who should greet you on arrival and provide guidance about the College's organisation and conventions.

New students are often referred to as 'Freshers'. Your formal welcome as new members of the College takes place at the Freshers' Dinners. These are special meals in Hall with the Principal and Fellows held in the week before term starts, usually on the Tuesday for Undergraduates and on the Thursday for Graduates.

The formal admission of new members of the University takes place at the Matriculation ceremony, which is usually held at the end of the first week of term and features a short address by the Vice Chancellor. Brasenose's Freshers are presented by the Deans of Degrees. The College's 'Entry Book', which you will probably have signed when you first arrived, contains the names and addresses of all new students. The first volume was started in 1509 and the tradition of recording fresh names has continued to the present day.

A.2 Who's Who

The *Principal* is the head of the College and chairs its Executive Council and Governing Body. The *Executive Council* consists of the Principal and Official Fellows and has authority to deal with most matters concerning Junior Members (this term denotes both Graduate and Undergraduate members of College). The *Governing Body*, which has ultimate authority within the College, consists of the Principal and Fellows elected to membership of Governing Body. The JCR and HCR Presidents attend Governing Body in their capacity as elected student representatives.

The *Senior Tutor* exercises general oversight of all the academic activities of the College. He is also the Tutor for Admissions and coordinates both Graduate and Undergraduate admissions, as well as outreach and liaison with schools. Among the Senior Tutor's responsibilities are Undergraduate academic progress and discipline, representations made on behalf of College students to the University Proctors, and oversight of student support funds allocated by Disbursements Committee. Any Junior Member can ask to consult the Senior Tutor about a matter of concern (senior.tutor@bnc.ox.ac.uk), although a subject Tutor is usually the first point of contact for academic or pastoral matters, and the College Accountant in the Domestic Bursary for financial (including hardship) matters.

The *Tutor for Graduates* is responsible for keeping under review the academic progress of Graduate students, and may be consulted by Graduates about any matter, whether academic, personal or financial (tutor.graduates@bnc.ox.ac.uk). The Tutor for Graduates also makes recommendations for the award of Scholarships and Prizes.

There are two individuals with bursarial roles. The person referred to simply as the *Bursar* is

the chief Financial and Administrative Officer of the College, while the *Domestic Bursar* is responsible for the 'hotel keeping' side of College life, as well as being the College's Health and Safety Officer and Fire Officer

The *Dean* is in charge of non-academic discipline and also works with the Chaplain and Senior Tutor to co-ordinate pastoral support within Brasenose. The College appoints three *Junior Deans*, who are resident in the College and in Frewin Annexe. They represent the Dean and also act as a channel of communication between the Junior and Senior Members of College. They can also suggest ways in which students can access the welfare support network available within the College.

One of the key roles of the JCR and HCR committees is to represent Undergraduates and Graduates respectively to the College authorities. If you wish to raise an issue concerning the functioning, facilities, or rules of the College, you should ask for their help in the first instance. The HCR and JCR Presidents invite you to contact them should need arise.

A.3 Student Handbook

This Student Handbook, prepared at the request of the Governing Body by the College Officers, is designed to introduce you to the College and help you understand how it functions. The Handbook provides information on academic matters, domestic matters, welfare, financial information, and College and University codes of practice. In addition, the College's regulations governing discipline are explained. Colloquially, it is known as the 'Blue Book'. **It is one of the most important documents you will be given at Oxford and contains information and guidance on nearly all matters that affect your status as a student.**

On joining the College, you will sign a contract of membership which refers you to the Blue Book for details of your rights and obligations as a Junior Member of Brasenose. **It is a condition of membership of the College that you abide by the rules laid down in this Handbook.**

If you have a particular problem which is not addressed in the Blue Book, you should consult the appropriate College Officer (normally the Senior Tutor, Tutor for Graduates, or Dean). If you have a comment on the Handbook itself, you should contact the Senior Tutor (senior.tutor@bnc.ox.ac.uk), who has overall responsibility for maintaining it. Your feedback is welcome and will be taken seriously.

The Blue Book should be read in conjunction with the *University Student Handbook* (available at www.proctors.ox.ac.uk/handbook/handbook/), which provides details of your rights and obligations as a member of the University. **Consequently, the *Student Handbook* is also a very important document.** Detailed information about degree course requirements and examinations is provided in the University's *Examination Regulations*, which are available online (www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/). You will probably also receive a handbook or similar document from your faculty or department giving further information about your chosen course. Students sometimes treat these documents lightly, but should you have cause to refer to them you will appreciate their significance.