

ASA

Location-Specific

GUIDE:

Oxford, England

For parents and students

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Student Visa

All students must have a passport that does not expire for at least 3 months after their proposed return date from the UK.

U.S. citizens studying in the UK for an academic year must obtain a Student Visa (Entry Clearance) from the British Consulate BEFORE departure. ASA provides all academic year students with information on how to obtain Entry Clearance. **If you are going to the UK for an academic year, you must have your valid passport in hand no later than 60 days before departure, since you must apply for Entry Clearance 60 days prior to departure, in order to allow time for processing.**

◆ **Please read the document “Student Visa/Entry Clearance - UK” for full details on the Student Visa (for academic year students).**

U.S. citizens studying in the UK for a semester (under 6 months) will get a Student Visitor Visa issued to them upon arrival at Heathrow airport. **If you are going over for a semester but are considering staying for an additional semester, then you must apply for Student Visa (Entry Clearance) from the British Consulate 60 days before departure.**

Students who opt for the **Student Visitor Visa** must present the following documents when they pass through Passport Control/Immigration (*pack these in your carry-on*):

- Valid U.S. passport that does not expire for at least 3 months after your proposed return date from the UK. Check your passport’s expiration date to be sure.
- Your Offer Letter from Oxford Brookes University and Student Visitor Visa letter from ASA. (These are sent to each student by ASA.)
- Proof of funding for the stay in the UK - ***min. \$200 per week of your stay***. This amount should be shown in a bank statement (either yours or your parents) or travelers checks. The purpose is to show you have enough money to live on while you’re in the UK.
- Proof of a round trip plane ticket

◆ **Please read the document “Student Visitor Visa - UK” for full details on the Student Visitor Visa (for semester students).**

Helpful Local Information

Recommended Hotels in Oxford:

Pickwick’s Guest House

15-17 London Road

Headington

Oxford OX3 7SP

UK

<http://www.pickwicksguesthouse.co.uk/>

Red Mullions

23 London Road

Headington

Oxford OX3 7RE

UK

<http://www.redmullions.co.uk/>

The Dial House

25 London Road

Headington

Oxford OX3 7RE

<http://www.dialhouseoxford.co.uk/>

NOTE: Hotel rooms in the UK and Europe, in general, tend to be smaller than what we’re used to.

Host Institution & Housing

ASA students in Oxford will attend:

Oxford Brookes University
Headington Campus
Gipsy Lane
Oxford OX3 0BP
UK

Website: www.brookes.ac.uk
Main telephone: When calling from the U.S. 011-44-1865-741111
When calling within the UK 0 1865-741111

ASA students' main point of contact at Oxford Brookes will be the International Office:

International Office
Headington Campus
Headington Hill Hall
Oxford
OX3 0BP
UK

Laura Ryhänen lryhanen@brookes.ac.uk
Julia Bathgate rep.enquiries@brookes.ac.uk
Natasa Vukadinovic nvukadinovic@brookes.ac.uk
International Office website: <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/international/exchanges>
International Office email address: international@brookes.ac.uk
International Office telephone: When calling from the U.S. 011-44-1865-484890
When calling within the UK 0 1865-484890

International Students Advisory Service (ISAS):

ISAS specializes in assisting international students – they provide information and advice on a range of issues including immigration, academic and financial issues. Website: www.brookes.ac.uk/student/services/isas

Location

The city of Oxford is 1 hour from London by train or bus. Oxford Brookes University is located just minutes from Oxford city center. Currently, Oxford Brookes is home to 19,000 students, 73% of whom are at the undergraduate level, and offers undergraduate classes (called "modules") in over 145 subject areas. Not only does Oxford Brookes have the top-notch academics, facilities, and opportunities that one would expect from any large U.S. university, but it is also located in one of the most historically and intellectually rich cities in the world.

Oxford Brookes University began its life as the Oxford School of Art in 1865 and changed names twice before officially becoming Oxford Brookes University in 1991. Despite being a new university, Oxford Brookes has received several awards for excellence. For the last five years, Brookes has been named "Best New University" by the Sunday Times University Guide, and in 2006 it was named "Leading Modern University." Best of all, in a recent survey, 96% of Brookes' international students would recommend Oxford Brookes University to prospective students - and who better to advocate Oxford Brookes than students who have already studied abroad there.

With approximately 2,500 international students, you certainly won't be alone as a visiting student! Brookes provides support and guidance geared specifically toward international students, not only to help you adjust to life on campus, but also to encourage you take advantage of the countless facilities and opportunities that the university has to offer. Brookes' International Office and the International Student Advisory Service (ISAS) are available for support anytime. These two groups plan orientation (called "induction") and social events, so you can get to know other Brookes students. Upon arrival, you will also be assigned your own personal academic advisor.

On campus you'll find a well-stocked bookstore, cafes, and shops selling school supplies, snacks magazines, etc. The Headington Shops are just a short walk up the road from Headington Hill campus, where you'll find a pharmacy, supermarkets, gift shops, post office, and much more.

OBU's 3 Campuses

Brookes has 3 campuses, all in Oxford: Headington, Wheatley, and Harcourt Hill. The majority of the university's modules are taught at the Headington Campus, located one mile from the city center. The Wheatley Campus covers Business, IT, and Mathematics modules and is the furthest from the city centre, seven miles. Lastly, modules in Education, Philosophy, and Media/Communication take place on Brookes' Harcourt Hill Campus, which is 2.5 miles from the city center.

♦ **Oxford Brookes has its own bus line called the Brookes Bus, which is free to all students living in the Halls of Residence. The Brookes Bus offers free service to all 3 campuses as well as discounted service on the Oxford city buses.** In addition, the Brookes Bus makes a trip to the Tesco supermarket every weekday evening.

Where will students live?

Students will live in one of the Halls of Residence located on the Oxford Brookes University campus. **Room and hall allocations are normally made just prior to the beginning of the semester. Unfortunately, due to the size of the university, students cannot be guaranteed a particular hall or suitemate**, nor can they be guaranteed a non-smoking or all-female flat. Other students from the U.S., the UK and around the world also live in the halls.

What are the Halls of Residence like?

The Oxford Brookes Halls of Residence are modern dormitories, similar to what most American students are accustomed to. ASA students will live in one of the *self-catering* halls (i.e. you are responsible for your own meals). The configuration and number of bedrooms per apartment varies by hall, but each apartment has 5-9 single occupancy bedrooms, a shared kitchen, and an Internet connection called HallNet that costs £2.50 per week (fee is subject to change). Students can choose how many weeks of HallNet to sign up for. (Students will have free Internet and computer access in 37 open-access computing lab facilities on campus but must pay for HallNet if they wish to have Internet in their room.) Students may have shared bathrooms (called non en suite) or you may have your own "pod" style bathroom (en suite). (*Neither ASA nor OBU can guarantee any student an en suite or non en suite flat.*) Bedrooms come complete with a bed, mattress protector, desk, chair, reading lamp, wardrobe and curtains. Utilities are also included. For safety, Hall Wardens and Security Officers are on-site at all times.

♦ **Meals are not included, since in the self-catering halls each flat will have a kitchen, and supermarkets are located within walking distance or a short bus ride from campus.**

♦ **Students must provide their own bedding, towels, and kitchen accessories.** You may bring your own bedding and towels or buy them after arrival. We recommend you do not bring kitchen items with you but instead purchase them after arrival – you may be able to share the cost with your suitemates.

♦ **You may not move in early to your program housing or stay after the program ends. Students who choose to arrive early or stay late must make their own lodging arrangements for any extra days.**

Will students have a roommate and if so, who will this be?

Your son or daughter will 4-8 suitemates, but bedrooms are single occupancy. Their suitemates could be from anywhere in the world!

Where can students do their laundry?

Students will have 24-hour access to the coin-operated laundry machines in their hall.

Induction (Orientation)

Students will have a detailed Induction (orientation) schedule to follow as soon as they arrive. Most arrival days begin with Welcome Meetings at the Halls of Residence, followed by a guided Shopping Tour, where students have the opportunity to buy their bedding, groceries, kitchenware, etc. During the next few days following arrival day, students will enroll for classes, register with the on-campus Medical Centre, meet their personal tutors, and have various mixers and get-togethers so they can meet other students. Fall students normally have a week of orientation before classes start, while Spring students have a shorter induction (about 5 days). Some induction activities are mandatory – this information will be emailed to students shortly before departure.

On-Campus Resources at Oxford Brookes

One of the many benefits of attending a large university such as Oxford Brookes is that there is a multitude of resources meant to enrich your experience. Because Oxford Brookes has offices, departments and organizations that provide all the assistance students need to thrive there, ASA does not have an on-campus coordinator. For assistance with any

problem or concern during your stay, the list below will tell you who to contact. In any case, you can always contact ASA at any time and we will be glad to help.

♦ **Please remember that just as on any university campus in the U.S., it is up to the student to take advantage of the resources it offers, the same goes for when you're abroad!**

International Student Advisory Service (ISAS) – This office specializes in assisting international students. They provide information and advice on a range of issues including immigration, academic and financial issues. Go to www.brookes.ac.uk/student/services/isas or call 01865 424 680/1.

The Students' Union - As an Oxford Brookes student, much of your on-campus life will be intertwined with the Students' Union. This organization is run by students, for students and is the center of campus nightlife and home to Brookes' 70+ active student clubs and societies. Some of these clubs include Amnesty International, Choral and Orchestral Society, Politics Society, and many other cultural and special interest groups. The Students' Union publishes a free newspaper, "OBScene," that has news and reviews, and will keep you up-to-date on what's going on around campus and in the city of Oxford. And don't forget to stop by "The Venue," which hosts several club nights per week and attracts big name bands, such as Franz Ferdinand. Go to www.thesu.com!

The Students' Union Advice Center (SUAC) - The Students' Union Advice Centre provides free advice and information on financial, housing, legal and welfare issues to prospective and current students. The SUAC is located in the Students' Union. Trained advisers can help you out when the going gets tough, be it financial, academic or housing concerns, or if you just want to have a chat to find out the best way of doing something. They can help with the rules and regulations of the modular course and can help you deal with academic problems. They produce a series of factsheets, which give information on academic problems.

Counseling Services – The Oxford Brookes Counseling Services offers you the opportunity to discuss in confidence anything troubling you. For information and appointments, call 01865 484 650 or go to www.brookes.ac.uk/student/services/counselling/.

“Upgrade” Study Advice Service – Any student at OBU is welcome to get tutoring through Upgrade. Upgrade can help with understanding your task set, planning, researching and writing essays and assignments. For details, go to <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/upgrade/index.html>.

Religious Services – The OBU Chaplaincy offers support, friendship, hospitality and information, including details on churches, mosques, temples and other faith communities in Oxford. Regular Christian services are held at the University Chaplaincy in the Student Center on Headington Campus, in the chapel on Harcourt Hill Campus and in the Catholic Chaplaincy in Headington. There are also Muslim prayer rooms on campus and inter-faith events. For information, go to www.brookes.ac.uk/student/services/chaplaincy or call 01865 484 690.

Centre for Sport - ASA students will no doubt be eager to join Brookes' state-of-the-art Centre for Sport, which lets students practice an unusually wide variety of sports for fees that fit a student's budget. There is a different Centre for Sport located on each of Brookes' three campuses. The Headington campus Centre for Sport offers fitness classes, including aerobics, martial arts, yoga, Capoeira, dance, and even cheerleading. The Headington facilities also have exercise machines of all sorts, free weights, sauna and steam room, a climbing wall, squash courts, and a gymnasium with courts for badminton, soccer, basketball, and volleyball. The Wheatley campus Centre for Sport has tennis courts, a fitness trail, a pitch-and-putt golf course, and outdoor pitches for soccer, lacrosse, and cricket. The Harcourt Hill campus Centre for Sport boasts a 25-meter indoor swimming pool, squash courts, tennis courts, and a nine-hole golf course. There are also 41 sports clubs on campus, so you can meet other Brookes students who share your interests. For information about the Centre for Sport, go to www.brookes.ac.uk/sport.

Libraries & Computing Facilities - When it's time to write your papers and prepare for exams, you will be glad to have Brookes' three libraries at your service, housing a total of ½ million books, videos, CDs and DVDs, and thousands of printed journals, online databases, and electronic books and journals. The libraries also have 170 student computers, laptop hookups, and 1,200 private study spaces for solitary or group study. Brookes' libraries are open and staffed over 75 hours per week during semester time. But there's no need to feel overwhelmed—library tours and training sessions are held during induction, just after you arrive.

You can bring your own laptop from home, rent one on campus, or use the public computers, and there are printing and photocopying facilities on campus, to assist you with your course work. Brookes also has over 750 networked PCs in 37 open-access rooms, a number of which are open 24/7.

Accommodations Office – This office handles the allocation of rooms in hall. Go to www.brookes.ac.uk/international/accommodation or call 01865 424 660.

Medical Centre – The Medical Centre is located on the Headington Campus and is fully staffed with doctors and nurses. For information, go to <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/student/services/health/medical.html> or call the Medical Centre directly at 01865 483 193 (during the semester) or 01865 242 334 (all year).

PIP Pages (Personal Information Portal) – As an OBU student, you can login to your PIP pages anytime to keep track of your modules, timetable and much more. <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/students/new/pip>

Website Especially for New Students: BE SURE TO CHECK THIS OUT!
<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/new/index.html>

Counseling Services – The Oxford Brookes Counseling Services offers you the opportunity to discuss in confidence anything troubling you. For information and appointments, call 01865 484 650 or go to www.brookes.ac.uk/student/services/counselling/.

Students with Disabilities

Oxford Brookes asks that students with learning disabilities contact the Oxford Brookes Student Disability Service BEFORE going abroad. If you have a learning disability, please contact ASA to let us know, so that we can put you in touch with the Student Disability Service office. In addition, you must also bring with you to Oxford copies of your medical records and diagnostic evidence of your learning disability. For information about the Student Disability Service Office, go to <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/studying/support/disabilities> or call 01865 424 650.

Medical Care

What happens if I get sick while I'm in Oxford?

There is a Boots pharmacy that's a short walk from campus, where you can ask the pharmacist to recommend some medication. There is also an on-campus Medical Centre that is fully staffed by doctors and nurses. During induction week, students will have the opportunity to register with a doctor at the Medical Centre, which we strongly recommend. If you become sick and need assistance, you can also contact the International Student Advisory Service (ISAS).

Cell Phones

What is the time difference between England and where I live?

The following times are the number of hours BEHIND England each region is:

Pacific	Mountain	Central	Eastern
8 hours	7 hours	6 hours	5 hours

So, if it is 6pm in England, then it is 1 pm Eastern, 12pm Central, and 10am Pacific.

Dialing Instructions for the UK

011-INTERNATIONAL CODE 44-COUNTRY CODE FOR ENGLAND + PHONE NUMBER**

**Drop the zero at the beginning of the local number when calling the UK from the U.S.

For example, if your phone number is (+44) (0) 123-456-7891, you would dial 0123-456-7891 if you're in the UK; and you would dial 011-44-123-456-7891 if you're calling from the U.S.

For more information on calling abroad, go to <http://www.howtocallabroad.com/>

How do the cell phones work?

Each student receives a cell phone from Piccell Wireless. ASA provides the phone, while students are responsible for the cost of all calls. Students will receive email instructions from ASA on how to order the phone about a month prior to departure. (*Please do not order your phone until you receive instructions from ASA.*) Students will get their cell phone number when the phone arrives in the mail. The rates for calls and text messages can be found at www.piccellwireless.com/ASA (click on the UK). Piccell offers fairly reasonable call rates to the U.S. Piccell will bill the student's credit card monthly for their phone calls, text messages, etc

INCOMING CALLS TO THE INTERNATIONAL (UK) PHONE NUMBER ARE FREE. INCOMING CALLS TO THE U.S. VIRTUAL NUMBER ARE **NOT** FREE. Piccell assigns each student an international (UK) phone number and a

U.S. Virtual Number (USVN for short). Be sure to call their international number, since students are charged for calls receive on their USVN. As long as you dial their international number and they are in the UK at the time, the student will NOT be charged for the call.

The U.S. Virtual Number is basically a way for someone in the U.S. to call the student “collect.” The USVN is a U.S. phone number that connects you to the student’s phone abroad. The caller pays only for the local or long distance call. However, while it’s cheaper for the caller, the student is charged for the incoming call at the rate given by Piccell. Check www.piccellwireless.com/ASA for current rates. The USVN is automatically assigned, but students aren’t obligated to use it. If you don’t use the USVN for 45 days, it is automatically deactivated.

ROAMING CHARGES: When you’re outside your home service area of the UK, all phone usage, including calls/text messages received or placed, is considered ROAMING and is therefore, subject to high roaming charges.

To avoid roaming charges, students should NOT use their UK cell phone outside of the UK. Students can order a SIM card online from Piccell for any country they’re going to travel to, in which case you would just swap out your SIM card.

What is the best way to call to/from the UK?

Many students use **SKYPE** which gives you **free international calls** over the Internet. For details, go to www.skype.com.

You can also contact your long distance provider about their international calling plan. Or, use an international pre-paid calling card. To use an international pre-paid calling card, you dial the access number, enter your PIN number/calling card number, then enter the number you want to call.

Try www.nobel.com or www.tel3advantage.com for international pre-paid calling cards for calling U.S. – abroad. Try www.enjoyprepaid.com for international pre-paid calling cards that parents or students can use to call each other, anywhere in the world.

TIPS ON CHOOSING A GOOD CALLING CARD:

- Make sure the rate you’re looking at is for a mobile phone and not a landline. Usually the rate to call a mobile phone abroad is higher than the rate to call a landline.
- Check to see if the card has a connection fee or disconnection fee.
- Some cards charge a small weekly or monthly MAINTENANCE FEE that is deducted from your balance.
- Watch out for MINUTE ROUNDING. For example, if your card has 3-minute rounding and you make a 1-minute call, you will actually be charged for 3 minutes of talk time; if you make a 5-minute call, you will actually be charged for 6 minutes of talk time; if you make a 7-minute call, you will be charged for 9 minutes of talk time. So, 1-minute rounding is much more desirable than 5-minute rounding.
- Most cards will give you a toll-free OR local access number to use. Try to use their LOCAL ACCESS NUMBER, if possible, because some cards charge a per-minute or flat fee for using their toll-free access number.
- Normally, the fewer “fees” a card has, the higher the per-minute rate. Conversely, the more “fees” a card has, the lower the per-minute rate. If a card seems “too good to be true,” with no fees AND a super low rate...then it probably is! Therefore, it’s important to READ ALL OF THE FINE PRINT before purchasing any phone card, and don’t be afraid to call the company to ask questions before purchasing anything.
- Don’t forget that you may have to pay for the call you make to the access number. If you call the access number from your cell phone, that call uses your minutes (or in the case of students abroad, Piccell will bill you for the call to the access number).

Mail, Computers, Internet

Will students have Internet/email access while in Oxford?

All students have free, unlimited Internet access in the computer labs at Oxford Brookes, so **bring your laptop!** Students may also opt to pay for Internet in their room; this is called HallNet and costs £2.50 per week (cost is subject to change). Students can choose how many weeks they want to sign up for.

What kind of adaptor do students need in order to use their laptop in the UK?

In the UK, the power supply is 220 volts/50 cycles, while in the U.S. it is 120 volts/60 cycles. Most laptops have a power supply that supports both 110 and 220 volts and 60 and 50 cycles (dual voltage). If your computer meets these requirements, you will only need to buy a plug adaptor so that the U.S. plug will fit into the UK wall socket. Voltage adaptors and converters can be purchased at most hardware stores or places like Target, Wal-Mart, etc.

Can students receive mail at school?

Yes, if mail is properly addressed, it will be delivered to a mailbox that is assigned to each flat. However,

- We do NOT recommend mailing packages to the UK unless it is absolutely necessary.
- All mail/packages must arrive AFTER the student has moved in.

◆ Please confirm the correct address before mailing anything.

In general, it is problematic to receive packages in the UK— the recipient is usually charged a customs tax to receive the package. Therefore, it is not advisable to mail anything— especially not items such as clothing, gifts, etc. that are of a non-urgent nature. The customs tax can be anywhere from £5 (approx. \$10) to £200 (approx. \$400), depending on the package's declared value and contents. It is difficult to predict what the tax will be when sending a package. If you declare a value, it is not uncommon to pay fees as high as US\$60-\$150 to pick up the package! Remember that all insured packages require a declared value.

If you do choose to send something, the following information will assist you. On the customs form, you should mark your items as “used” whenever possible (i.e. “used books” or “used clothing”), or “FOR PERSONAL USE ONLY – NO COMMERCIAL VALUE,” as packages containing new items will be taxed exorbitantly. You will also have to declare a value on the customs form. The higher the declared value, the higher the tax will be on the receiving end. Declaring a value of less than £10/\$10 may help to keep the customs tax to a minimum.

For sending packages, we recommend FedEx, UPS, or DHL because they will give you a tracking number. Although FedEx, DHL, and UPS are not the cheapest ways to mail items abroad, they are the fastest and most secure. You may contact any of these companies for a price quote and estimated transit time by giving them the weight, dimensions and destination of your package. For sending mail (letters, cards, papers, photographs, etc.), we recommend the U.S. Postal Service.

◆ OVERNIGHT MAIL

“Overnight” from the U.S. does NOT mean overnight to the UK! If someone in the U.S. sends an overnight document to the UK, it will arrive in the UK AFTER 2 DAYS OR MORE. For urgent documents, ATM cards, etc., use a reliable service such as FedEx or UPS. While the express or overnight USPS Global Priority service is reliable, it will actually take several EXTRA days to reach its destination because when the item enters the UK it is placed directly into the British postal system, which delays its delivery.

Example: If a FedEx letter classified as “overnight” leaves the U.S. on a Monday morning, the student will likely receive the item at the *earliest* on Wednesday or Thursday of the same week. Other couriers (UPS, USPS) may take longer.