



Teddy Hall

Junior Common Room

Myth buster for freshers, by Ellie Cassidy

It's going to be really expensive to live and study in Oxford.

This isn't necessarily true. Oxford's living costs might be higher than what you are used to, but that depends where you are coming from - Oxford is expensive in comparison to most cities in the UK, though. Accommodation at Teddy Hall in your first year will only be charged for during term time, so that keeps the cost down quite a lot. Everything is within walking/cycling distance. Alongside the bursaries and grants the university and college offer, the Hall also offers a £300 grant for each student every academic year to help cover the costs of studying, and £100 of this can be spent on books. That being said, you probably won't need to buy many, if any at all, because of our amazing college librarians who literally go to the ends of the earth to find books for you.

I'm worried that I won't enjoy Freshers' week.

While some people really enjoy Freshers' week, it might take some time for you to find your feet and this is entirely normal. It's unrealistic to expect no bumps in the road! If you are finding that you are struggling during Freshers' week, you can reach out to lots of different people for support, including the college network of peer supporters, Welfare Officers, chaplain, counsellor, and college nurse and doctors. All of these people keep any issue that you come to them with confidential - unless they believe you are in danger - and will be able to offer some helpful advice, reassurance and support for anything you might want to talk about.

Freshers' week will only be about drinking.

While lots of people enjoy drinking and clubbing in Freshers' week (and through the rest of their university experience), some don't, and that's okay. Teddy Hall has an inclusive and caring environment and there is never any pressure to drink alcohol. There are also great activities to do in non-drinking environments too, so please don't worry if this is something which concerns you.

The friends I make during Freshers' week will be my friends throughout the rest of my time at Oxford.

It's possible you'll make friends for life in Freshers' week but more often than not, your best friends at university won't be those you spend a lot of time with in Freshers. Throughout your course and time at Teddy Hall, you will meet lots of people who will become your friends, including those who you didn't even know existed during Freshers' week! Not to mention, sports,

societies and clubs all offer opportunities throughout your time at Oxford to meet new people and make friends, so you won't be confined to just making friends at Teddy Hall either.

I'm worried that I won't fit in at the college.

Teddy Hall is a really diverse and inclusive environment, and everyone has a place here! One of the most important things about going to Teddy Hall is our Hall Spirit - we take care of each other, we have fun, and we make sure everyone is included. There are lots of things to get involved with in Teddy Hall, from different sports teams, to drama and music, to creative writing and academic societies.

An apple a day keeps the Freshers' flu away.

Freshers' flu is real, and it sucks. As you come together and meet new people from all across the UK and the rest of the world, you're likely to pick up a bug from somewhere or just feel under the weather. If you're feeling less than 100%, make sure to take care of yourself, and if you are feeling particularly rough, the college nurse and doctor are always there to help you out. It goes without saying that if you are experiencing COVID symptoms, you should self-isolate and get tested to keep the college and wider Oxford community safe.

I won't get enough support as a disabled student.

Teddy Hall and the university does its best to support all disabled students regardless of what this disability might be. The process for disclosing your disability will be through college who can then make adjustments to your accommodation and exam arrangements to help you. The Disability Advisory Service also puts together Student Support Plans to get arrangements in place to help you. This includes hidden disabilities - if you have one, don't be afraid to ask for help.

The tutors only care about my academic achievements, not my wellbeing.

At Teddy Hall, the tutors are incredible and lovely people who share a passion with you - your subject! They treat you like adults and your relationship with your tutor will hopefully be positive. If you need extra support or don't understand something, don't hesitate to ask them, and if you have an issue with your wellbeing - including needing some extra time to get an essay written because you're feeling under the weather! - they will be more than happy to help. They want you to be productive and enjoy your studies.

I'm going to spend all my time studying.

Teddy Hall is a very active college with lots of things going on in the daytime and the evening like sports, drama, creative writing and more, so there'll be things to get involved in at the weekend and in the evenings. Usually, if you plan your time well, you'll be able to fit in all your work. There might be some days where you spend a bit longer at your desk or in the library studying. Try not

to compare yourself to other peoples' working patterns too - everyone plans their time differently and some people choose to spend more time studying than others. If you plan in advance and make sure you enjoy your extracurriculars and time with your friends, it's likely that you won't always be studying.

I can never miss a deadline.

You should try your best to meet deadlines, however, you won't be kicked out for missing one. Just let your college tutors know in advance that you might miss the deadline, and if they are not being helpful, then the welfare team or college nurse might be able to step in and help. If you have to submit formative assessments by a deadline (i.e. coursework which counts towards your final grade), then you can apply for extensions and mitigating circumstances requests if a personal issue such as health or wellbeing has influenced this decision.

I'm the only one struggling.

A lot of the time you spend in Oxford might be exciting and fun and enjoyable, or it might be difficult and taxing. Oxford is a very high-pressure environment and can be quite fast paced. Usually the term is over before you know it, and everyone is in the same boat! However, that also means that **you are not alone**. While some people cope better with this than others, it's important to recognise your own boundaries and know when to rest. If you are experiencing difficulties or having a tough time, it's important to seek help - you can talk to a welfare officer, or peer supporter, or somebody else like the college counsellor or nurse. Everybody is here to take care of you and make sure you have the best possible time you can in Oxford, so remember that you are not alone, and to seek help as and when you need it. It's nothing to be ashamed of.